

James 1:1-4

- Intro:
- Who is the author of this letter? (James 1:1)
 - Biblical options of persons named James:
 - James, father of Judas - Lk. 6:16
 - James, son of Alphaeus - Matt. 10:3; Lk. 6:15
 - James, the less - Matt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40
 - James, son of Zebedee - Matt. 10:2; Lk. 5:11
 - James, the Lord's brother - Matt. 13:58; Mk. 3:21; 6:3; Jn. 8:5; Acts 1:4; 12:17; 15; 21:18-25; I Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19; 2:9
 - Who were the recipients of this letter? (James 1:1)
 - Options for identifying recipients:
 - Christians of Jewish heritage throughout Roman Empire
 - Christians of any physical heritage, spiritually represented as Israel (Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16)
 - What is author's intent in writing this epistle?
 - Some characteristics to note:
 - Jewish background - 2:9-11,21,25; 4:11,12; 5:4,11,17,18
 - Similarities to Jewish Wisdom Literature - 1:6,10,11,15,17,18,23,24; 3:3,4,5,8,10, 11, 4:1,4,14; 5:7,8
 - Why is this letter called a "general epistle" or "catholic epistle"?
 - Why has this letter been faulted, criticized and denied Scriptural status?
 - Jesus only mentioned by name twice (1:1; 2:1), but alluded to 5:7,8,9
 - No reference to events of Jesus' life such as death and resurrection.
 - Alleged theological variance with Paul's writings: justification by faith? works?
- Vs. 2
- What is your first reaction to James' opening statement?
 - Does this initial statement probably indicate that James' readers were facing trials?
 - Does James mean that we should...
 - be happy whatever happens?
 - jump for joy when tragedy strikes?
 - deny unpleasantness or pain, and stoically smile about misfortune?
 - cheer up; it could be worse?
 - stuff happens; deal with it!?
 - What does it mean to "*encounter* various trials"?:
 - Does it mean that we have sought them out and found them?
 - Does it mean that we have fallen into situations? (cf. Lk. 10:30)
 - What are "*various* trials"? (KJV - "*divers* temptations")
 - situations that divers encounter underwater?
 - the diversity and variety of situations confronted in life? (financial, interpersonal, physical health, etc.)
 - "Trials" are obviously an important theme of this epistle - Note 1:12-14; 5:7-11
 - How would you define "trials"?
 - Which of the following words could be used as synonyms for the word "trials"?
Experiences, situations, circumstances, temptations, tribulations, troubles, hardships, problems, difficulties, afflictions, injustices, sufferings, persecution, adversities, insults, pressures, turmoils, oppression, ordeals, crises, disasters, accidents, calamities, annoyances, confrontations, inconveniences, nuisances, hassles, changes, opportunities, adventures, unknowns?

- What does it mean to “*consider* it all joy”?
 - call it so, even if it ain’t?
 - gloss it over as a privilege?
 - play “mind games” about the situations of life?
 - develop a “mind-set” about life’s experiences?
 - learn to logically evaluate what happens to you?
 - carefully reckon and account for the goods and evils of life?
 - Is “joy”...
 - a feeling of ecstasy?
 - happiness?
 - a feeling of well-being?
 - acceptance of the circumstances?
 - recognition of the grace of God?
 - a “fruit of the Spirit”? (Gal. 5:22,23)
- vs. 3
- Do Romans 5:3-5, I Peter 1:6-8 and II Peter 1:5-9 deal with the same theme as is addressed in James 1:3,4?
 - Are trials...
 - a threat to faith?
 - a proving-ground for faith?
 - an opportunity for faith?
 - Do trials serve to...
 - make us stronger?
 - make us more dedicated and committed?
 - make us patient?
 - develop more “staying power” in us?
 - make us “hang in there” and persevere?
 - How does this verse relate to...
 - stoicism? - “bite the bullet; you can bear it”
 - fatalism? - “what will be, will be; accept what is dealt to you”
 - passivism? - “just go with the flow”
 - Is it true that the trials of life have a positive purpose?
 - What might the purpose of trials be?
- Vs. 4
- What is the “perfect result” of enduring trials?
 - What does it mean to “be perfect and complete”?
 - Is this some kind of “perfectionism” or “triumphalism”?
 - Is James referring to the same thing that Paul refers to in Phil. 3:12,15?
 - Does the “perfect” that James mentions twice in this verse refer to...
 - perfection?
 - maturity?
 - God’s objective in our lives?
 - developing the character of God in our behavior?
 - Note the other references to “perfect” in James’ letter: 1:17,25; 2:22; 3:2
 - If a Christian is “lacking in nothing” does he/she...
 - have everything he wants?
 - have power to fulfill anything he desires?
 - discover that he has everything necessary in Jesus Christ to meet the trials of life?
(cf. I Cor. 3:21,22; II Cor. 9:8; Col. 2:10; II Pet. 1:3)
- Conc.
- Do these verses represent the Christian life as a process?
 - Are the results of endurance, joy, and full sufficiency being experienced in your life in the midst of your various trials?