



Faith and Testimony

The Testimony of Personal Faith

Main point: The kind of person you are will be revealed in the words and actions of your life.

Expositional Outline:

A. The Author (v.1a)

1. Who is James?
James,
2. What kind of man was James?
a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

B. The Audience (v.1b)

1. Who were the twelve tribes?
to the twelve tribes
2. Why were they dispersed or scattered?
who are dispersed abroad:

C. The Aim (v.1, 4c)

"Greetings...And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Joy amid the trials of life and spiritual maturity.

How do you get the most out of this study?

- First, we must be *born again*. (1 Pet.1:22-23, Titus .3:5)
- Second, we must honestly *examine ourselves* in light of God's Word. (James 1:22ff)
- Third, we must *obey* what God teaches, no matter the cost. (James 1:25)

- Fourth, we must be prepared for some *extra trials and tests*. (James 1:3, 12)
- Finally, we must measure our *spiritual growth* by the Word of God. (2 Cor.10:12)

Observations:

- Read** Matt.13:55; John 7:5; 1 Cor.15:7; Acts 15:13-19; 21:17-25; and Gal.2:9. **James** is spoken of as the brother who did not believe until after the resurrection and the leader of the church at Jerusalem.
- Read** Deut.15:12-18. A **bond-servant** or *doulos* (slave) was one who voluntarily bound himself to His master in permanent relationship of total service, desiring to do His will and His will alone.
- Read** Ezek.36:16-21, John 7:35; and 1 Pet.1:1. The **Twelve tribes** refer to people of Jewish descent who live outside of Israel "among the nations" in the dispersion (Diaspora). Since the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity, many of the Jews were scattered like seeds throughout different nations.

Interpretative discussion questions:

- Try to get in James' shoes as the half-brother of Jesus. What do you suppose it was like growing up with a perfect brother?
- What is the significance of the way James is describing himself in the opening verse?
- Read Acts 8:1-4. Why were these Jewish Christians dispersed abroad and why does it matter?

Applicational questions:

1. If you were writing a letter to God's people, how would you honestly describe yourself?
2. What do you need to do to become a better servant of Christ this week?

Memory verse for Lesson 1:

- James 1:17—*Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*



Insights on Our Testimony:

Keith Brazier

When we talk about *our* faith and *our* testimony, it is easy to zero in on individuality. Either through carelessness or ignorance, one can unintentionally overlook or simply forget that Christianity is a relational faith. From the first pages of Scripture, the triune God illustrates the manifestation of an intertrinitarian relationship. In the creation account, we see the relationship between the Father and His creation.

We are able to catch a glimpse of how He relates to the apex of His creation—man. The pattern continues with the introduction of the marriage covenant, the subsequent birth of many children, and the establishment of societies throughout the world. As it was in the beginning, it is so today: God-to-man; man-to-man; men (collectively) to God. At the onset of the epistle, James establishes his identity, and qualifies it with his relationship as a bondservant to God/Jesus Christ, and to fellow Jewish believers who were dispersed abroad (*James 1:1*). Like James, our intentions should be clearly demonstrated in words and actions. It is necessary that I confess that, until this study, I did not see the value in the epistle introductions. My approach was like that of Detective Joe Friday with regards to the text, "Just the facts." Often, I would skip the salutations and dive right into the meat of the Word not realizing that they were an essential part of it! Thanks be to the Lord for grace and illumination. The New Testament letter writers model a practical pattern for us to follow. Keeping in mind their relationships, they take the time to rejoice and call upon them before issuing directives or instruction. Our faith and our testimony are intricately connected to our relationships. We are identified and driven by whom we belong to in this world as we look towards eternity. "*Born once—die twice; born twice—die once.*"—Martin Luther

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible: 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.