



The Book of  
*James*

# A Word to the Wise

James 3:13-18

# James at a Glance

- Written by the half-brother of Jesus
  - Ya'aqov (Hebrew) or Iacobus (Greek)
  - James is the English derivative of the Latin, French, and southern European derivatives of Iacobus, which is itself derived from the Hebrew
- Written around 50 A.D.
- 1<sup>st</sup> book of the New Testament in order of authorship
- New Testament's "book of wisdom" (Proverbs, Sermon on the Mount)

# James 3: The Main Players

- James
  - Head of the Jerusalem church
- The Jewish Christian diaspora
  - Acts 8:1, 11:19
- Solomon
  - Son of King David and his successor
  - Renowned for his wisdom



# James 3: Setting the Stage

- James 1
  - Find the joy in trials and tribulation
  - Ask God for wisdom
  - Human anger does not produce the righteousness of God
  - Be doers of the Word, not just hearers
  - Reign in your tongues
  - Pursue pure faith – care for the lowly and keep yourself from being corrupted by the world

# James 3: Setting the Stage

- James 2
  - Do not show favoritism
  - A violation of any part of the law is a violation of the entire law
  - Works are evidence of a living faith
- James 3
  - Teachers of the Gospel are held to a higher standard
    - Watch your mouth!
      - Can't praise God & curse people made in His image with the same tongue
    - Seek and display God's wisdom, not that of the world

# James 3: Setting the Stage

“James wrote this chapter for every Christian, but he purposely pointed to teachers challenging them to look at their reflection in God’s mirror to see if they reflect Him and His glory. As one called to teach, preach, or minister by teaching for the Lord, are you reflecting God and His righteousness? James gave us a stark reminder in verse one; God will judge teachers, pastors, evangelists, etc. more strictly than non-teachers. What you say and do has an amplified impact because more people listen to you. Do you need to give Him the keys to your life again and let Him be the Master?”

*~ Gail Davis, Missionary, International Missionary Board*



# James 3:13-16

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.



# James 3:17-18

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

# The Pyramid of Wisdom



# The Journey to Wisdom

- Information – How do we know it's right?
  - Trust in the source?
  - Reliability of the information?
  - Our biases and desired outcomes?
- Knowledge
  - Enough information? The right information?
  - Experiences ~ just mine or others?
  - Study techniques?
- Wisdom
  - Whose wisdom am I applying?

# Two Kinds of Wisdom

- If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ~ James 1:5
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever! ~ Psalm 110:11
- For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. ~ Luke 12:15



# Two Kinds of Wisdom

- Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil. ~ Proverbs 3:7
- Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! ~ Isaiah 5:21
- For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. ~ Isaiah 55:8
- For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. ~ 1 Corinthians 1:25

# Two Kinds of Wisdom

- Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become “fools” so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: “He catches the wise in their craftiness”; and again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile. ~ 1 Corinthians 3:18-20
  - He catches the wise in their own craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are brought to a quick end. ~ Job 5:13
  - The Lord knows man’s thoughts, that they are but a breath. ~ Psalm 94:11

# Two Kinds of Wisdom

- The world's wisdom is greedy and self-absorbed:
  - James 3:14, 15
- The world's wisdom is not of God
  - James 3:15-16
  - *Daimoniodes* – “that which is associated with demons”



# Two Kinds of Wisdom

- The Lord's wisdom is undefiled, "gentle and lowly," conciliatory, other-focused, and self-evident:
  - James 3:17
- The natural outcome of God's wisdom is peace
  - James 3:18



# King Solomon

- Son of David and Bathsheba
- Ascended to the throne after David declared him king over his older brother Adonijah (1 Kings 1)
- Solomon asks for and receives wisdom from the Lord (1 Kings 3:7-14)
- Solomon's wisdom was known throughout the nations (1 Kings 4:29-34)
- His wisdom didn't prevent him from disobeying God (1 Kings 11)
- He concluded that all his worldly pursuits were meaningless and the whole duty of man was to obey the Lord (Ecclesiastes 1, 12:13)



# Wisdom from Heaven

- When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. ~ Proverbs 11:2
- Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice. ~ Proverbs 13:10
- Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end. ~ Proverbs 29:11
- Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise. ~ Proverbs 19:20



# Wisdom from Heaven

- Does not the ear test words, as the palate tastes its food? ~ Job 12:11
- Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ~ 1 John 4:1
- Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. ~ 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21
- Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. ~ Acts 17:11

# Wisdom from Heaven

- The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps. ~ Proverbs 14:15
- The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him. ~ Proverbs 18:17
- Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. ~ Acts 17:11



“Christianity does not require people to disregard their reason, or to be credulous. It does not expect them to believe anything because others say it is so. It does not make it a duty to receive as undoubted truth all that synods and councils have decreed; or all that is advanced by the ministers of religion. It is, more than any other form of religion, the friend of free inquiry, and would lead people everywhere to understand the reason of the opinions which they entertain... Other religions require their votaries to receive everything upon trust; Christianity asks us to examine everything.”

~ Albert Barnes Notes on the Whole Bible

# Questions for the Wise

- Pure – Is your faith “unmixed, unalloyed, untainted” or is it corrupted by cultural or personal agendas?
- Peace-Loving – Are you patient and kind, or always spoiling for a fight? Do you want to win the argument even if it destroys the person or puts distance between you? Is it about God or you?
- Considerate – Do you exhibit self-control? Do you restrain yourself when listening? Can you discern when to stand firm and when to yield?

# Questions for the Wise

- Submissive – Do you welcome questions and challenges? Are you unafraid of alternative points of views? Are you open to change when presented with new information?
- Full of mercy – As you as gracious toward others as God is gracious with you?
- Full of good fruit – Are you a doer of the Word and not just a hearer? Do your words and actions reflect God's wisdom?
- Impartial – Are you open to all who seek to engage you or just to those whom you're comfortable with?
- Sincere – Are you transparent and real, without guile or hidden agendas?



Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

~Matthew 7:24-25