

James 1:1-4

1. Key Themes
 - a. Introduced in 1:2-11
 - i. 1:2-4 - “trials” or “temptations (*peirasmoi*) – positive side – GROW and MATURE
 - ii. 1:5-8 - “wisdom” (*sophia*)
 - iii. 1:9-11 - riches and poverty
 - b. Repeated in 1;12-27 (second cycle)
 - i. 1:12-18 – trials and temptation – negative side – SIN
 - ii. 1:19-26 – Wisdom
 - iii. 1:27 – widow and orphan example
 - c. Body of Letter begins in 2:1
2. The “trials” require “wisdom” to understand how to maturely handle the struggle of poverty under the oppression of the wealthy
3. Main idea – Respond to trials rejoicing in the knowledge you will be maturing as wisdom from God leads you. Ultimately your response and God’s plan will reverse the roles and the poor will be the wealthy and the rich will fade away

James 1:1 – “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

< *The Sender*

To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:

< *The Recipients*

Greetings.

< *The Greeting*

3385 [e] Iakóbos 1 Ἰάκωβος James N-NMS	2316 [e] 2532 [e] 2962 [e] 2424 [e] 5547 [e] 1401 [e] Theou kai Kyriou Iēsou Christou doulos Θεοῦ καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δούλος of God and of [the] Lord Jesus Christ a servant N-GMS Conj N-GMS N-GMS N-GMS N-GMS N-NMS	3588 [e] 1427 [e] 5443 [e] 3588 [e] 1722 [e] Tais dōdeka phylais tais en Ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν To the twelve tribes - in Art-DFP Adj-DFP N-DFP Art-DFP Prep
3588 [e] 1290 [e] 5483 [e] tē Diaspora Chairein τῇ Διασπορᾷ : Χαίρειν . the Dispersion Greetings Art-DFS N-DFS V-PNA		

1. Greek-Roman style of letter opening: Sender, recipient, greeting
2. After opening there is no typical letter format. It begins to introduce the three key themes.
 - a. No body of letter
 - b. No closing
 - c. No salutation
 - d. No thanksgiving
3. “James” is *Jakobos* in Greek which became both Jacob and James in English.
 - a. The Greek *Jakobus* directly became the English *Jacob*
 - b. The Greek *Jakobus* became *Jacomus* in Latin which developed into the English *James*.
4. “Slave” better communicates the Greek *doulos* often translated “servant”
 - a. A *doulos* had a master
 - b. A *doulos* served with unconditional allegiance to their master

- c. The will of the master was the will of the *doulos*
 - d. Jude (James' brother) also only calls himself "servant" or "slave" (*doulos*):
"Jude, a servant (*doulos*) of Jesus Christ and brother (*adelphos*) of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ." – Jude 1:1
 - e. In the OT it was an honor to be called a servant of God. Moses, David, Amos, Jeremiah and Daniel are a few of those called "servants"
5. "of God and of Jesus Christ"
- a. James is not mentioning two of the three members of the Trinity: Father and Son. No.
 - b. These two titles identify God as Jesus Christ
 - c. The master of the slave (*doulos*) is identified:
 - i. by two titles:
 - 1. God
 - 2. Lord
 - ii. This master who is titled both God and Lord is Jesus Christ
 - 1. Jesus, the man
 - 2. Christ, the anointed one or the OT Messiah (Anointed One)
 - d. The master of the *doulos* is identified as Jesus who is:
 - i. God
 - ii. Lord
 - iii. Christ (Messiah)
6. The author is simply "James" without a title or description other than "*doulos*"
- a. Since there is no title the readers (including us today) would consider this "James" to be the most obvious person...the pillar of the Jerusalem church from 30-62 AD, James, the brother of the Lord Jesus.
 - b. Also, since James is writing **to** the Jewish Dispersion and **not from** the Jewish Dispersion it is clear he is writing from Jerusalem where James, the brother of the Lord, lived.
 - c. James does not identify himself as an apostle, possibly because he was not one of the Twelve.
 - d. James does not refer to his "brother" Jesus, possibly because that fact has nothing to do with his letter, his position or his authority.
 - e. In fact, all of these facts would have been known by the recipients of this letter if this was from James. They would have known and assumed this author was:
 - i. "brother" of Jesus'
 - ii. From Jerusalem
 - iii. Head of the Jerusalem church
 - iv. Leader of the church, even an apostolic figure
7. "Twelve tribes" – *dodeka phylais* - Question here is to which group is James addressing.
- a. Ethnic Jews scattered in foreign lands
 - b. Believing ethnic Jews who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah who were living in foreign lands.
 - c. Any believers in Christ - Used as a metaphor to refer to anyone, either Jew or Gentile, who had trusted in Jesus :
 - i. Christians or believers scattered among the nations
 - ii. Christians or believers "scattered" anywhere in the world waiting to be taken to their home in heaven or the Kingdom of God. Thus, a spiritual dispersion

- iii. This is unlikely since there is a literal Dispersion of Jews there should be some literary clues that this term is now being used as a metaphor. Such things as seen listed below are necessary, but missing here:
 - 1. Use of “as” or “like”
 - 2. It should be impossible to read it any other way than as a metaphor
 - iv. Dispersion used by James to refer to Jews living in other lands:
 - 1. Is typical of Jews referring to themselves as a people outside Jerusalem
 - 2. This is both ethnic and geographic language:
 - a. The people of Jews
 - b. Jews outside of the Promised Land
 - 3. The dispersed people are clearly identified as “the twelve tribes” which is what Israel and the Jews were called
 - 4. James never picks this metaphor up again or builds on it. This seems to simply be the address to which the letter was sent and nothing more. There are no more metaphors to use to identify this people as anything other than the Jews living outside Jerusalem.
 - 5. Jesus referred to the twelve tribes in reference to the Jewish people and spoke of them in the present and future tense.
 - a. This is example is seen used by James in Acts 15:13-21 where James quotes Amos 9:11-12 referring to the restoration of Israel and rebuilding of David’s house after the Gentiles have come to the Lord.
 - v. Before the “church” had actually both separated from synagogues and expanded to the Gentiles the believers were located among the Jews and met yet as synagogue assemblies.
 - 1. Here the reference to the Twelve Tribes is referring to believing Jews meeting in synagogue settings in Gentile lands
 - 2. “Twelve tribes” refers to people who are both:
 - a. Followers of Jesus Christ
 - b. Jewish
8. “in the Dispersion” – *en te Diaspora* –
- a. *Diaspora* literally means “scattering abroad of seed by the sower”
 - b. *Diaspora* means “a dispersion” and is used generally to refer to “Israelites in Gentile countries”. Thus, the “dispersion” became a technical term used especially of the Jews who had migrated and were scattered over the ancient world.
 - c. In this usage James could be referring to the Jews who had believed in Christ, but had fled persecution in Jerusalem by entering Gentile lands.
9. “Greetings” – *chairein* –
- a. This was a customary greeting
 - b. Based on the cognate used for the word “grace”, but was not yet Christianized.
 - c. This was a normal greeting also used by James in his letter recorded in Acts 15:23-29 meaning, “Greetings to you.”

1:2 – “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

3956 [e]	5479 [e]	2233 [e]	80 [e]	1473 [e]	3752 [e]	3986 [e]	4045 [e]	4164 [e]
Pasan	charan	hēgēsasthe	adelphoi	mou	hotan	peirasmois	peripesēte	poikilois
2 Πᾶσαν	χαρὰν	ἠγήσασθε	, ἀδελφοί	μου	, ὅταν	πειρασμοῖς	περιπέσητε	ποικίλοις
All	joy	esteem [it]	brothers	of me	when	trials	you might fall into	various
Adj-AFS	N-AFS	V-AMM-2P	N-VMP	PPro-G1S	Conj	N-DMP	V-ASA-2P	Adj-DMP

1. 1:2-27 is a single section addressed to a very specific audience. These readers are:
 - a. Now poor, having been driven from their families, lives, culture and economic setting by oppression and persecution for accepting Jesus as the Messiah. They have been canceled by mainline Jewish culture and have fled.
 - b. Jews who have accepted Jesus Christ within the first 15 years of the church age (30-45 AD)
 - c. Fled Jerusalem and Judea for security in lands north of Israel such as Syria and Phoenicia.
2. General outline:
 - a. The purpose of trials is to help the Christian mature
 - b. To understand and embrace this concept is a hard task and requires wisdom. So, since it is God’s plan ask him for wisdom when facing this.
 - i. This process is not the over simplified philosophy that claims, good things happen to good people.
 - ii. This is not a promise and a reminder to have faith, because God is going to answer your prayer.
 - iii. This concept is difficult because these people have faith, they have followed Jesus, but their world has been turned upside down.
 1. They want to fight back against the world, the oppressors, the system
 2. They are not going back to the time before Christ and they do not want to regain the system of the world.
 3. They want things they will never have again, so they fight among themselves.
 4. No one in history has been in this position before in the sense that they have enter a new age waiting for the return of the Messiah.
 5. So, they need wisdom:
 - a. Wisdom to know what to think
 - b. Wisdom to know what to do
 - c. Wisdom to know what to value
 - d. Wisdom to know what to let go of
 - e. Etc.
 - c. The first thing they need to come to grips with is poverty due to their faith. And, a poverty among people of wealth.
 - i. This challenges their faith in the goodness of God.
 - ii. The believers have trusted God, but lost so much. How can this be God?
 - iii. James says the believers are on the right side of history being poor here, but gaining a great wealth. While the powerful and wealthy are already passing away like a wild flower. Understanding this is part of the wisdom.
 - d. God is good.

- i. The trials come from the world. They become tests that expose the sin that is in all men.
 - ii. God is not causing the trials. God is not causing the sin.
 - iii. These trials and tests reveal provide an opportunity for growth.
 - iv. The born-again person can now grow because of the new birth.
 - v. These people have been separated by God and are growing into God's image and God's community.
 - vi. This is great news! Figure this out! This is a reason for joy!!
3. James addresses his readers as *adelphoi* which translates as "brothers"
- a. This word *adelphoi* can be used to refer to males born of the same mother or father.
 - b. But, when used to refer to members of the same group (national, religion, etc.) or associates in employment or office this word *adelphoi* is gender neutral. Examples of Jews seeing fellow nationals as "brothers":
 - i. Leviticus 25:46 – "...over your brothers the people of Israel you shall not rule, one over another ruthlessly."
 - ii. Deuteronomy 15:3 – "Of a foreigner you may exact it, but whatever of yours is with your brother your hand shall release."
 - c. *Adelphoi* used here by James does not mean male believers, but all members of the faith, or more specifically, all who are also servants of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. It refers to the community of believers as a "brotherhood":
 - i. Matthew 23:8 – "You are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers"
 - ii. Matthew 25:40 – "The King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' "
 - d. It is proper to translate this *adelphoi* as "brothers and sisters" in our Western culture since the concept here is gender neutral, but at the same time it is reading our twisted, overly sensitive issues into a word that could just as well be translated as "members", "associates", "comrades", "coreligionists", or "fellow believers" without making gender an issue.
 - e. It is silly we have to translate this so as to not offend the ignorant and the overly sensitive.
 - i. Especially since the author of this book could have used *adelphos* to refer to Jesus as his own *adelphos*, and could have also mentioned that Jesus was not the *adelphos* of any of the readers. Just James and Jesus were *adelphoi*.
 - ii. Faithfulness to the original meaning would require that this word be translated to make it clear that James is not only talking to males, but to the "group".
 - iii. At the same time to take a non-gender specific first century Greek reference "*adelphoi*" and translate it as two genders ("brothers and sisters") for the feelings of our post-modern Western culture is missing the point of "members", "associates", or as it is about to say, "partners in trials".
 - iv. None of this has to do with gender, but instead with association with Jesus, the Son of God (or, do we need to say Son/Daughter, the only One, of God?!?!?)
4. "All" is *pasan*
- a. Does NOT mean "everything" in this verse
 - i. It is not part of the direct object as in "consider everything joy"
 - b. In context it is an adjective meaning "pure" or "entire"

- i. “pure joy”
 - ii. “entire joy”
- 5. “Joy” is *charan* means “joy”, “delight”
 - a. *Charan* comes from *chairō* meaning “cheerfulness” as in “calm delight”
 - i. “Greetings” in 1:1 is *chairein* which is also from *chairō*
 - ii. “Joy”, *charan*, and “Greetings”, *chairō*, are cognates
 - 1. A cognate is a word that is related in origin to another word or two words that come from the same original word.
 - 2. James uses cognates several times:
 - a. 1:4 and 1:5 –
 - b. 1:12 and 1:13
 - c. 1:15-18 –
 - d. 1:26-27 –
 - e. 2:12 and 2:13 –
 - f. 3:11 and 3:13 –
 - g. 3:17 and 3:18 –
 - h. 5:9 and 5:12 –
 - i. 5:13-16 –
 - j. 5:19 and 5:20 –
 - b. referring to a state of being
 - c. NOT an emotion
 - d. A person’s state of being might be joy, but feel an emotion not referred to as joy, happy, etc.
 - i. This does not say Christians should always be happy
 - ii. This does not say a true Christian should smile at everything
 - e. This does say that in everything Christians should have an understanding of a settled contentment
 - f. This “joy” in the midst of “trials” or “suffering” is going to allow the Christian to produce the fruits of the Spirit:
 - i. Endurance (1:2-4)
 - ii. Justice (1:20)
 - iii. Love/Compassion (1:26-27; 2:1-13; 2:14-17)
 - iv. Peacemaking (3:18)
- 6. “Count it” or “esteem it” is *hegesasthe* (from *hegeomai*) meaning “to lead”, “to consider”, “to deem”, “to account”, “to think”, “to judge”, “to suppose”, “to reckon”... “Do the math”...
 - a. Imperative, this is a command
 - b. This is a command “to figure” it is pure joy or to mentally figure into the equation “pure joy”
 - c. This is a verb commanding thought, not emotion.
 - i. DO – Consider your trial as an opportunity with entire joy...yes...THINK JOY...
 - ii. NOT – Feel emotional joy when facing trials...no...Do Not Feel Joy...
 - d. Paul and other NT authors often used “considered” in view of his situation, or refer to others doing the figuring or thinking:
 - i. Acts 26:2 – When Paul addressed King Agrippa II in 57 AD he said, “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews.”

- ii. Philippians 2:3 – “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”
 - iii. 1 Thessalonians 5:13 – “We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves
 - iv. Philippians 2:6 – Concerning Jesus, “who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.”
 - v. Philippians 3:7 – “Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.
 - vi. Hebrews 11:11 – “By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.”
 - vii. Hebrews 11:26 – “[Moses] considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.
 - viii. 2 Peter 3:15 – “count the patience of our Lord as salvation
7. “when you might fall” or “when you meet”
- a. “when” or “whenever” – *hotan* – the idea is you know (or, assume) it is going to happen, but you do not know when and you do not control when.
 - b. “you might fall” or “you meet” – *peripesete* –
 - i. Aorist Subjunctive Active
 - 1. The active is not saying we seek out the trials or that we create them, but we are falling into a situation or we are happening upon a thing
 - 2. *Peripipto* means “to fall around”
 - a. “I fall into the midst of”
 - b. “I am involved in”
 - c. “I happen upon a place”
8. “trials” – *peirasmois* – meaning “an experiment”, “a trial”, “a temptation”
- a. It can refer to:
 - i. A trial
 - ii. A test
 - iii. A temptation
 - iv. A calamity
 - v. An affliction
 - b. It can be:
 - i. An outward trial or test
 - ii. An inward temptation of enticement to sin
 - c. In this context here in James 1:2 it refers to outward situation. This is an outward test or trial.
9. “various” – *poikilos* – meaning “many colored”
- a. Translated as:
 - i. “various”
 - ii. “of different colors”
 - iii. “diverse”
 - b. This principle or command applies to many types of tests, trials or temptations.
10. Reasons for trials and how to deal with them:
- a. Trials are of this age and will be overcome in the age to come:
 - i. Matthew 5:10-12 – “Blessed are those who are **persecuted** for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you

and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely **on my account**. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- ii. 1 Peter 4:12-14 – “Beloved, do not be surprised at the **fiery trial** when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

b. Trials are the destiny

- i. 1 Thessalonians 3:3 – “that no one be moved by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are destined for this.”

c. Trials are an opportunity to imitate Christ

- i. Acts 5:41 – “Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.”

d. Trials are an opportunity for growth and developing the character of Christ:

- i. James 1:2-4

11. Trials and persecutions mentioned by James:

- a. Economic poverty (1:9, 27; 2:15-16)
- b. Favoritism for the wealthy and against the poor righteous (2:1-4, 9)
- c. Economic oppression, injustice and abuse (2:5-7)
- d. Blasphemy of Jesus by the wealthy and politically powerful (2:7)
- e. Economic exploitation of the poor by the rich/powerful (5:1-6)

12. The above is possibly a contextual list of “trials of any kind” or “trials of many kinds” in 1:2, but clarified in 2:6-7:

“But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?”

13. James will focus on how his readers should respond to these trials and these oppressors:

a. First, what they are not to:

- i. Do not respond with physical violence

“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.” (4:1-2)

- ii. Do not resort to verbal abuse

- iii. Do not become angry:

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” (1:19-21)

b. Also, do not passively endure it

1:3 – **“for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.**

1097 [e]	3754 [e]	3588 [e]	1383 [e]	4771 [e]	3588 [e]	4102 [e]	2716 [e]	5281 [e]
ginōskontes	hoti	to	dokimion	hymōn	tēs	pisteōs	katēgazetai	hypomonēn
3 γινώσκοντες	ὅτι	τὸ	δοκίμιον	ὑμῶν	τῆς	πίστεως	κατεργάζεται	ὑπομονήν .
knowing	that	the	testing	of your	-	faith	produces	endurance
V-PPA-NMP	Conj	Art-NNS	N-NNS	PPro-G2P	Art-GFS	N-GFS	V-PIMP-3S	N-AFS

1:4 – “And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

3588 [e]	1161 [e]	5281 [e]	2041 [e]	5048 [e]	2192 [e]	2443 [e]	1510 [e]	5048 [e]	2532 [e]	3648 [e]	1722 [e]
he	de	hypomonē	ergon	teleion	echetō	hina	ēte	teleioi	kai	holoklēroi	en
4 ἡ	δὲ	ὑπομονή	, ἔργον	<u>τέλειον</u>	ἔχέτω	, ἵνα	ἦτε	<u>τέλειοι</u>	καὶ	<u>ὀλόκληροι</u>	, ἐν
-	And	endurance	work	[its] perfect	let have	so that	you may be	perfect	and	complete	in
Art-NFS	Conj	N-NFS	N-ANS	Adj-ANS	V-PMA-3S	Conj	V-PSA-2P	Adj-NMP	Conj	Adj-NMP	Prep

3367 [e]	3007 [e]
mēdeni	leipomenoi
μηδενὶ	λειπόμενοι .
nothing	lacking
Adj-DNS	V-PPMP-NMP