

## Bondservant of Christ = Endurance: Part One

### Key Verses:

*"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." James 1:2-4*

*"Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 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. In the exercise of His will, He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures." James 1:12-18*

*"Therefore, be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful." James 5:7-11*

*"Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit." James 5:13-18*

### Teaching Outlines:

- A. Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials (1:2)
  - 1. Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance (1:3)
  - 2. And let endurance have its perfect result (1:4a)
    - a. So that you may be perfect and complete (1:4b)
    - b. Lacking in nothing (1:4c)
- B. Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial (1:12a)
  - 1. For once he has been approved (1:12b)
    - a. He will receive the crown of life (1:12c)
    - b. Which the Lord promised to those who love Him (1:12d)
  - 2. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God" (1:13a)
    - a. For God cannot be tempted by evil (1:13b)
    - b. And He Himself does not tempt anyone (1:13c)

- c. But each one is tempted by evil when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust (1:14)
      - 1) Then when lust has conceived; it gives birth to sin (1:15a)
      - 2) And when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death (1:15b)
  - 3. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren (1:16)
    - a. Every good thing given, and every perfect gift is from above (1:17a)
      - 1) Coming down from the Father of lights (1:17b)
      - 2) With whom there is no variation of shifting shadow (1:17c)
    - b. In the exercise of His will (1:18a)
      - 1) He brought us forth by the word of truth (1:18b)
      - 2) So that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures (1:18c)
- C. Therefore, be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord (5:7a)
  - 1. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil (5:7b)
    - a. Being patient about it (5:7c)
    - b. Until it gets the early and late rains (5:7d)
  - 2. You too be patient (5:8a)
    - a. Strengthen your hearts (5:8b)
    - b. For the coming of the Lord is near (5:8c)
  - 3. Do not complain, brethren, against one another (5:9a)
    - a. So that you yourselves may not be judged (5:9b)
    - b. Behold the Judge is standing right at the door (5:9c)
  - 4. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience (5:10a)
    - a. Take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord (5:10b)
    - b. We count those blessed who have endured (5:11a)
      - 1) You have heard of the endurance of Job (5:11b)
        - a. And have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings (5:11c)
        - b. That the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful (5:11d)
- D. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed (5:16a)
  - 1. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much (5:16b)
    - a. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours (5:17a)
      - 1) And he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain for three years and six months (5:17b)
      - 2) Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain that the earth produced its fruit (5:18)
  - 2. And the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick (5:15a)
    - a. And the Lord will raise him up (5:15b)
    - b. And if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him (5:15c)
    - c. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises (5:13b)
    - d. Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church (5:14a)
      - 1) And they are to pray over him (5:14b)
      - 2) Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord (5:14c)

It is easy to be a Christian in America. What does that statement mean? For most Christians living in the United States, abundance is a way of life. We are inundated with messages from various sources that we not only can achieve success and enjoy abundance here in America, but that we deserve it. As Americans we are steeped in a mindset of achieving the “good life.” And, for the most part, there are opportunities to attain that life. We have jobs that pay us an average of \$63,795 per year according to the Social Security Administration. Apparently, if you have a college degree that average jumps up to just over \$80,000 per year. According to the United Nations Economic Commission, there are several countries in the world where the average income is less than \$500 per month, or \$6,000 per year. According to a study conducted by CEOWorld and published in March of 2024, Lesotho and Angola have average incomes below \$30 per month and there are 43 countries with average incomes below \$100 per month. Be honest about this! You can be political all you want and make comparisons about who has what, or who makes what, and whether it is fair or equal. There are plenty of sites you can go to and get all the input you want regarding equality of pay and opportunity. I know inequalities exist. Believe me! But that is not my point. My point is that, as a Christian, on average here in the United States of America, we have it pretty good compared to many other places in the world or to other times in history. And we would really like to keep it that way.

Still not convinced. Okay. When is the last time you really had to pray and ask God to provide your next meal because you literally could not get food. When we need food, we go to the grocery store and buy it. If your income falls below a certain level, you can get food stamps. There are organizations in almost every city that have food drives and give out food to those in need. Again, be honest about this! What about health care? If you or someone you know gets sick you can go to a doctor’s office, an urgent care facility, or to an emergency room. You will get treatment and, if needed, medication. We have abundance in many ways, and we relish it. Do you own a dog? According to a recent study conducted by USA Today and published in February of 2024, around 51% of dog owners spend over \$100 per month on their pet. And of that number, around 12% spend more than \$500 per month. Recall that there are 43 countries in the world where human beings make less than we spend on our dogs. We could go on and on about this. I am not simply pointing the finger at others. Frankly, I would like my share just like everyone else. I have bills to pay and mouths to feed. We own a dog and like to go on vacations. Would I like to have a higher income? Of course! Who wouldn’t? I enjoy the comforts of this “American Dream” just as much as the next person. And I can also honestly admit, I do not feel as though I rely on or truly trust in God as a follower of Christ should. The American way of life provides me with a lot to fall back on and to become comfortable with. It is so easy to rely on modern conveniences. That is, until the bottom falls out and the testing begins.

Life will present you with challenges. You will be tested. No matter your country or income, no matter your gender or race, no matter the size or location of your home, your education level or job title, in some form or another, difficulties will come. And that is when, as followers of Christ, we really begin to see what our faith is about. Recently, I’ve faced a challenge that caused me to see some truths about myself. There is no need to get into the specifics, but it was an ongoing challenge of a type that I prayed about repeatedly. I saw what I believed to be the answer, or the resolution, to the matter so that is what I prayed for. I had a successful end in mind that would allow me to return to a comfortable routine. But the answer did not come. I did not get what I was praying for, and never did. One morning, as I was again praying over this issue, I saw my error. It came about as I was considering 2 Corinthians 12:9 where Paul says, “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.” Paul had a “thorn in the flesh” and asked

for it to be removed. Instead of getting what he asked for, he received the instruction from the Lord, "My grace is sufficient."

I saw that I had been praying for an answer, for a return to normalcy, for a resolution. I wanted success over my challenge. And for the most part, that is what I've always prayed for – a successful resolution to any challenge I face. But what if that is not what Christ wants to achieve in me? To simply give me a successful resolution in the form of an answered prayer so I can return to my nice, comfortable life. I believe that is what most Christians in America pray for. We see the answer to our challenge and that is what we ask for. We desire a successful outcome. But what if we don't get the answer we desire. Many prayers from people in desperate circumstances go unanswered in our world. What about the mother in another country who prays for food for her baby, but that food does not come? What about the young girl who was kidnapped from her family and placed into the awful situation of forced prostitution but is not rescued? What about the parent whose child is diagnosed with a fatal disease and does not get a cure? Very serious circumstances go on every day, day after day, without resolution or answer to prayers. What does it mean? Does it mean God doesn't care? Or that He isn't listening or isn't interested? No, it doesn't mean that at all. When we are tested, when challenges come, the point is not to get us to pray for a successful outcome. The reason we are tested is so that endurance will be produced.

This is not intended to belittle the circumstances that people face in real time every day. There are people living in very dark places praying for light, but that light does not come. I cannot simplify those situations with a simple admonition. But what I do want followers of Christ here in America to see is that too often we pray for the wrong thing when it comes to tests, trials and challenges. We are very comfortable with our lives as they are and want to maintain that level of comfort. We face a challenge. We see an answer in the form of a resolution to our challenge. So, we pray for that resolution to come about. We pray for a successful outcome. Instead of successful outcomes in the form of answered prayers that give us what we want, we need to be praying for persistence amid trials so that endurance can be produced. And that brings us to the next theme in the epistle of James – Endurance.

The first section to consider is James 1:2-4. *"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."*

First, James tells us to direct ourselves, our mindset, our attitudes, toward joy when we enter trials. The term he uses may be better translated as examinations or auditing. The IRS conducts audits on the finances of individuals or businesses. I have never been audited but I've been told it is not a pleasant experience. James is telling us that when our faith is audited, we are to direct our focus on joy. Why are we to be joyous? Because when our faith is audited or examined, this will result in obtaining endurance. If you have ever trained for a marathon, and are not a seasoned runner, you know that you begin with short runs that build up so that you will develop the endurance to complete the full 26.2-mile run. You can enjoy your training runs by envisioning yourself crossing the finish line of that marathon. It will be a joyous accomplishment. This word "*endurance*" derives from the root verb meaning "to stay" or "remain under present circumstances". And just as training develops endurance with the result of being able to stay in the race until the completion of the marathon, so does the auditing of your faith have a result, the production of endurance. The production of endurance is a deliberate action taking place during the auditing, but the auditing, like the training runs, must take place and must be completed. This is a process that needs completion to bring about the result of endurance.

The purpose of endurance is “*so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*” The word translated “you may be” is in the subjunctive mood in the Greek which indicates probability or possibility. To reach this stage of being “perfect and complete,” the process of auditing has to be brought to completion. When your faith is being audited you must be able to stay within or remain under the auditing. Your being tested has a purpose, but it must be allowed to complete its work. Therefore, do not pray to simply be released from the trials you face, but ask for the strength, courage and perseverance to see it to completion. When it is allowed to complete its work, you will attain a level of completion and soundness in your faith. This will make more sense when James begins addressing the differences between genuine faith and useless faith, between being a doer of the Word instead of merely a hearer. After explaining you will be “perfect and complete,” James then states that you will be “lacking in nothing.” This literally means that you will leave nothing behind. You will be tried and not be found wanting. In other words, persevere in this trial so that when they come along in the future you will face them fully and completely. Think of it this way. Once you have trained for and completed that initial marathon, when another one comes along that you want to try, you will know what to expect and how to be prepared for it. For that initial marathon, you left nothing behind. You had a standard to meet, and you attained it, both in training and in the run itself. The course of the race may not be the same, but you will have the experience of having completed the training, the auditing, and then having reached the completion of the marathon itself. Trials will continue to come along and because you persisted through this one you will be better prepared for future auditing.

In the first chapter of his epistle, James goes on to discuss the actual trial of testing. Verses 2-4 discussed more of the result of trials, and in 12-18 he will discuss what is going on during the trial.

*“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good thing given, and every good gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. In the exercise of His will, He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.”* (James 1:12-18)

James explains that those who persevere beneath the auditing and examinations of faith are “blessed.” What does James mean by “blessed.” The word “blessed” is very general so a look at this word from the Greek and its history provides context and understanding. The Greek word is an adjective and is commonly translated “blessed.” The adjective comes from the noun *makar* that describes someone that is untouchable, as in someone very wealthy and powerful. It also referred to someone of substance and could be used in reference to someone who is incorruptible. I am reminded of a movie released in 1987, *The Untouchables*, that told the story of Eliot Ness and his pursuit of Al Capone in the late 1920s. When Ness became a treasury agent in Chicago his initial efforts failed due to widespread corruption in the police departments due to bribery and threats of violence from Capone and his mafia. Ness recruited a team that became reputable for being fearless and incorruptible earning the nickname “The Untouchables.” Ness needed to be certain that his team, when tested by bribery and intimidation, would not give in and become corrupted thus undermining his pursuit of Capone. This gives us a context in how to view someone who James describes as “blessed” after being tested. It is a person who becomes untouchable and/or incorruptible, a person who endures the auditing and trials, and is then “approved.”

These untouchables “*will receive the crown of life the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*” We saw in verses 2-4 that trials produce endurance and a completed process brings about a faith that is “perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” This is also a good way to describe someone who has become “untouchable.” And as a reward for enduring the audits and being approved, these can also be assured of eternal life. James inserted the important statement “*for once he has been approved.*” Going back to the previous verses of allowing the audit to go to completion, the one being audited needs to receive the “approved” status. The word “approved” implies that the assessment made by qualified people has been conducted and completed, and the one being assessed has passed the audit. They are indeed untouchable, approved. So, it isn’t just anyone who goes through an audit who will receive the crown of life, but those who persevere, stay with it, and are approved.

James explains that the crown of life has been promised “*to those who love Him.*” The Greek word he used is *agapao* from the root *agape*. The noun *agape* is translated “love” but is not a saccharine type of love or the eros, lustful, kind of love. It is a sacrificial love meaning that you have given yourself to someone in a long-term relationship with the intent to yield to their needs. The verb *agapao* means “to do agape” and is a gradual integration or assimilation of two parties. This is not a brief fling but a gradual process of merging together and becoming unbroken. So, when James states that the crown of life is promised to those who *agapao* the Lord, he is referring to someone who has passed the auditing and is merging their life to Christ so that they will have an unbroken relationship with Him. The crown of life is promised to those who have endurance, who have been audited and found to be untouchable, approved, and who are in a long term, constantly merging relationship with Jesus Christ.

James then offers advice to those who may be in the middle of the auditing, who are experiencing trials. In this brief speech in 1:12-18, he makes an opening statement in verse 12 and then centers two points in verses 13-18 around a central point. That central point is verse 16: “*Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.*” In other words, do not get distracted. How can one in the middle of trials get distracted? First, by claiming that God is tempting them, that He is out to get them. And second, by forgetting that only good things come from God. When one is being audited their focus needs to be on the completion of the audit and the resulting benefits, not getting distracted by untruths and lies.

You have either heard the question being asked or have asked it yourself, “Why would God allow this to happen?” Most of the time this question is an indirect accusation that God is not just allowing a trial to occur but is also responsible for it. The underlying belief is that God is doing the tempting, or the testing. James responds to this with a clear explanation in verse 13. “*Let no one say when he is being tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.*” In this verse we see the English word tempt being used four times, so obviously this is significant. The words being translated here are two, one a verb and one a noun. The verb *peiro* means “to pierce” and the noun *peira*, which means “a piercing or probing,” that is derived from the verb *peiro*. Let’s look at the four usages:

First is *peirazomenos*. This is a participle in present tense (indicating the action is taking place now) and passive voice (indicating the subject is receiving the action instead of performing it) and means “being pierced, probed, tempted.”

Second is *peirazomai*. This is a 1<sup>st</sup> person singular verb “I” in present tense and passive voice and means “I am being pierced, probed, tempted.”

Third is *apeirastos*. This is an adjective that is in nominative case (indicating the subject) and is singular and masculine. It is constructed with the particle of negation “a” meaning not or without. It

means “unable to be pierced, probed, tempted.” This only appears in James 1:13 and it is inserted here to mean precisely that God cannot be pierced, probed, tempted” by *kakon*, meaning bad or evil. We will come back to this in a moment.

Fourth is *peirazei*. This is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular verb “he, she, it” in present tense and active voice (indicating the subject performs the action instead of receiving it) and indicative mood (describing a situation that actually is as opposed to a situation that might be). This needs to be translated with the following adjective *oudena* meaning “no one.” It means “he pierces, probes, tempts no one.”

So, someone can ask why God would allow trials to enter their lives, but that must be as far as the questioning goes. James instructs us very clearly that God does not pierce, probe, tempt a person. God may allow it, and we have learned that there is a purpose for the trials and testing, but He does not actually carry it out. What is interesting in this verse is where he states that God is not tempted by “evil.” James does not throw this in there without purpose. He wants the person experiencing trials to know both that God does not tempt nor is He tempted “by evil.” This is explained in verse 14, “*But each one is tempted with he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.*”

James uses yet another form of the verb *peiro*. His fifth use of the verb is *peirazatei*. This is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular verb “he, she, it” in present tense and passive voice (indicating the action is being received) and indicative mood (describing an action that is actually taking place). It means “he is pierced, probed, tempted.” This is followed by the Greek preposition *hupo* meaning through that is most often translated “by.” It is indicative of an action occurring either from something or because of something. But the action referred to (being pierced, probed, tempted) is NOT coming from God. It comes through, or because of, you! The evil James indirectly refers to back in verse 13 is defined in verse 14 as “*being carried away and enticed by his own lust.*” When studying this phrase, I had the image of a fish swimming along, following its own course in the water, seeing bait floating in the water, and biting the bait. And suddenly the fish is snagged with a hook and pulled off its course and out of the water. That is illustrative of what has happened to the person who is under examination from trials and tests. And now that you have been “carried away and enticed,” you have two courses of action to choose from.

You can allow your lust to take its course by distracting yourself with blaming God for your present troubles and angrily refusing to take any responsibility for your own part in it. James says that this course is clear in verse 15. “*Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*” The second course is to accept responsibility for where you are and to “persevere under trial” to allow the testing to run its full course and be “approved.” This is where James inserts the focus of the short speech, “*Do not be deceived.*” Do not get distracted. Recall that there are two ways you can get distracted during times of trial. The first is an incorrect view of God as the one who is testing you. James addressed that. He now turns to the correct way to view God for those who have lost sight of this as they experience trials.

“*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.*” (v. 17) First, James uses the Greek noun *dosis* which emphasizes the act of giving rather than the gift itself. Second, James juxtaposes *dosis* with the Greek noun *dorema* which means “free gift” describing a one-way gratuitous gift. The word *dorema* is described by the adjective *teleios*, translated here as “perfect” but more fully means a thing brought to full completion. This takes us back to chapter 1 verse 4: “*And let endurance have its perfect result,*” where he uses the same adjective to describe the result of endurance, which is “*so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*” This is what comes from God, not the testing itself, but the outcome of testing if you will allow it to run its full course. Both the act of giving,

including the motivation for the giving, and the gift itself are from God. You may get yourself into a time of trial and testing due to allowing your lust to entice you, but God can and will bring about good things both during and resulting from trials for those who endure.

James then inserts a statement that is challenging to understand, *“coming down from the Father of lights.”* Within the context of this paragraph, he is referring to God, and then he adds *“with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”* If you read through the introduction to this epistle, you read how James was influenced by wisdom literature and wrote this epistle in the manner of the wisdom texts. He may have been thinking of Proverbs 4:18, *“But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until day.”* Since God does provide a “path” through the trials of life by assuring us that there is a reason and result for those trials, James may have had this proverb in mind. I also believe James was influenced by the teachings of Jesus and may have had in mind what Jesus stated about Himself as recorded in John 8:12, *“I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness but will have the Light of life.”* And if we want to remain in the immediate context, James did just state that *“every perfect gift is from above.”* By referring to God as “the Father of lights” he may have been using this terminology in reference to God as Creator of the heavens and earth, from whom these perfect gifts come from. Frankly, I am not sure why James uses this phrase, and it may not be important, but I wanted to offer some thoughts.

By adding the phrase *“with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow”* James is telling someone amid trials that God is not duplicitous or ambiguous. God can be completely trusted when the most difficult times enter our lives. By telling those struggling with trials, who are having their faith audited, and being challenged to persist and endure, that “there is no variation or shifting shadow,” that God is not duplicitous or ambiguous, he is offering clarity as to the purpose of these trials so that the sufferer will not get distracted and pulled off course. Stay the course. Persist and endure. Accept responsibility for where you are, as difficult as that may be to do, and allow the auditing to complete its process so that you will be approved, and be untouchable, perfect and complete, lacking nothing, and obtaining the crown of life.

James then adds one more bit of encouragement and reminder of God’s purposes. *“In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among his creatures.”* (v. 18) James states that God *“brought us forth”* using the Greek construction *apekyesen*. This is a combination of *apo*, meaning from, and the Greek verb *kuo*, which means to be or to become pregnant. The verb *apokueo* describes an emptying out to produce something that has been growing invisibly. The word *apekyesen* is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular verb in aorist tense (indicating the mere fact of the action but silence on when or how long it takes place) and active voice (indicating the subject performs the action) and indicative mood (describing a situation that actually is as opposed to one that might be). The Greek *hemas* is the plural pronoun “us.” This Greek phrase is literally translated *“God gives birth to us.”* And the Greek word *bouletheis* provides the motivation for this action. Simply, God had a mind to, or desired to. James had just explained in verse 15 that when lust conceives, it gives birth to sin, and sin brings forth death. That is what happens when you get distracted in your walk with Christ and begin focusing on lies – lust, sin, death. Now he is explaining the juxtaposition. *“God wanted to give birth to us by the word of truth.”* Sin brings forth death while God brings forth life. That is the encouragement we can all take from this.

However, the direct reference *“so that we would be a kind of first fruits”* is specifically for the early believers that James is addressing in his epistle. He is addressing Jews who converted from Judaism to following Christ and had scattered to other area due to persecution in Jerusalem. They would have been familiar with the Feast of Firstfruits in Leviticus 23:9-14. The Greek preposition *eis* describes a motion into a place or thing (as opposed to *ek* which describes motion out of). God gave



birth by the word of truth so that they, the early believers, would be the first fruits of the harvest. When the harvest came in the Israelites took a burnt offering, a meal offering, and a drink offering as an offering of gratitude to God. I believe that is what James is telling those early Christians who were dealing with trials and testing of their faith, that God had brought them forth, given birth to them, to make of them the “first fruits” of a much larger harvest. Followers of Christ today can take encouragement from this because we are part of that larger harvest. And God’s purposes apply just as much to us today because we are part of His purposes for the Church.

There will be a part two to complete the other texts on endurance.