

## THE MONA-DOVER MANUSCRIPT

### THE EPISTLE OF

# JAMES

## CHAPTER ONE

1. I, James, who serve as a slave of God and Jesus Christ our Lord, write this epistle to you the twelve tribes who have been driven *from Jerusalem* across the earth, greetings. [**Note on Christian Persecution:** *As seen here, from the time of the early church, Christians have been persecuted for their faith. Jesus predicted as much (See Matt. 5:10-12, 24:9). 2 Tim. 3:12 says this is the fate of all who seek to live godly in Christ Jesus. Persecution may be LIGHT (mockery, harassment, scolding) OPPRESSIVE (firing, whippings, imprisonment, taxation) or SEVERE (church burning, bible banning, kidnapping, rape, execution) however, God may use persecution to spread the gospel. End of Note.*]
2. Brethren, even when you fall into the troubles of life, there is reason to rejoice *in the Lord*;
3. For you have this assurance, that the testing of your *Christian faith* develops in you that gift to patiently endure hardships. [**Note on Christian Persecution:** *What should be our attitude to persecution? When we are targeted and tested because of our faith, we can... 1. Face it by Faith. 2. Flee for our Lives. or 3. Fight for our Lives. In order to preserve our testimony and be more like Christ it is perhaps better to Face it or Flee and only Fight through our nation's laws and armies. End of Note.*]
4. But brethren, be patient in permitting patience to run its full course, so that you may be entirely perfect, and needing nothing more.
5. Brethren, if any among you is not wise, he should ask God to impart His wisdom to him; *for God so loves us*, that He will give and not scold us for lacking or asking; no, it shall be given in abundance unto him.
6. But the one in need must ask in faith, his belief not swaying. For he whose faith sways is like a wave of the sea that is pushed and tossed by the wind.
7. Such a one should not expect to receive anything from the Lord; *not even the wisdom he asks.*
8. For a man of two minds is unstable in all areas of life. [**Note on Double-mindedness:** *James is very concerned about the double-minded Believer (James 4:8). Scripture holds many warnings: Lot's wife looked back, desiring the worldly things left behind. Judas walked with Christ and served Him, yet his desire for money corrupted Him to the point of betrayal. James says, one who cannot choose between Christ and the world will be unreliable in all other areas of life. Also see: Josh. 24:14-15; Isa. 29:13; Prov. 3:3-8; Matt. 6:24; Col. 2:8; Ps. 119:113; 1 Jn. 2:15 End of Note.*]
9. Therefore, let the common brother rejoice in that he is exalted *in Christ*:
10. But the rich, in that he is made to be as a commoner: because like the wildflower in the great grass fields, he too shall pass away. [**Note on Trusting in Riches:** *Money answers all earthly needs (Eccl. 10:19) and therefore there is the temptation to trust in its power; to make an idol of the thing. Jesus warns us that it is fleeting, it "has wings" (Prov. 23:5). He also says that we have no guarantee that we will continue to prosper (Luke 12:16-21). As good as it is to have the comfort and security of riches, the corruptive power of money is so strong that Jesus said it is nigh impossible for a rich man to enter the gates of heaven. In his parable of the Rich Man He shows that death comes to us all, but what matters is our relationship with God. End of Note.*]
11. For when the sun is barely risen *with its far flame*, it yet withers the grass, and the wildflower fades to death, and the beauty of the thing perishes: in the same manner

the rich man fades and his earthly work is left undone.

12. Blessed be the one who endures temptation: for when he has been tried and yet triumphs, he shall receive the crown of life, which all who love the Lord have been promised.
13. When temptation comes to someone, he should never say, "I am being tempted by God." No. God does not tempt anyone; nor is *our holy* God ever tempted by evil.
14. But here is how temptation works in the lives and hearts of men: a man is tempted, when his own lust draws him away, and he is enticed to sin.
15. So then, when the lust in his heart has conceived, it *surely* births sin: and then *this newborn* sin, when it has *lived in him long enough* and runs its full course, brings forth death.
16. Believers, be not deceived.
17. Every abundantly charitable work and every perfect gift is sent down from the Father of Lights *in heaven*; Him with whom there is no contradiction, nor even a shadow of variation.
18. He has of His own will, begotten us by the word of truth; that we should be a sort of firstfruits of His creation.
19. And so beloved brethren, we must all be eager to listen, but slow to speak, and slow to be enraged:
20. For the rage of man does not bring forth the righteousness of God.
21. Therefore cast aside all spiritual defilement and abundance of malice and with a heart of lowliness receive the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.
22. But be believers who actually practise the word, and not the kind who are only hearers of the word. For then you deceive yourselves. [**Note on Superficial Faith:** *There is a difference between Simple Faith and Saving Faith. Not all belief saves. Scripture says even the*

*demons believe that God is one (James 2:19). In Hebrews 4:2 it warns that some of those in the OT wilderness-journey heard the gospel but it produced nothing since it was not "mixed with faith". Large multitudes heard Jesus but many of them rejected Him. End of Note.]*

23. For the one who hears the word and will not do according to the word, is like a man who looks and beholds his face in a mirror:
24. And after beholding his face in the mirror, he walks away and immediately forgets the image of himself.
25. But the one who beholds the perfect law of liberty, and perseveres therein, he proving himself as a hearer who remembers, and a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed *by God* in his work.
26. If anyone considers himself to be religious yet he does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his own heart, then his religion is of no use.
27. Religion (practised before God and the Father) at its purest and most undefiled looks like this: visitation to orphans and widows in their suffering; and ensuring that your *righteousness* is not spotted by the *filth* of the world.

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CHAPTER TWO

1. My brethren, the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Lord of glory), should never be practised with any type of bias.
2. For if a *wealthy dignitary* enters the church assembly wearing a gold ring and fine apparel; and a poor commoner also enters, but wearing dirty clothing, [**Note on the Poor:** *Our Christ-likeness is evident in how we treat individuals at-risk of exploitation and oppression. Poor people (along with Widows,*

*Orphans and Immigrants) are a group given special attention in scripture as God gives particular instruction on how we should treat them, including: 1. Forgiving their debt (Ex. 22:25; Deut. 15:1-2) 2. Not taking them to the authorities for stealing food 3. Not withholding their wages 4. Not denying them justice and 5. here in James ch. 2, not debasing them in the church of God. **End of Note.**]*

3. And you welcome and attend to the guest who is well-clothed and say unto him sit thou in this esteemed seat; but to the poor commoner you say, “stand over there” or “sit on the floor beside my feet”:
4. Have you not shown yourselves to practise favouritism, and operate as judges with ungodly mindsets? [*Prov. 31:9; Jn. 7:24; Lev. 19:15; Rom. 14:10*]
5. My beloved brethren, consider this, has God not chosen the impoverished commoners of this world, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to all who love him? [**Note on Faith:** *In all the world, the impoverished tend to accept the Christian gospel of Christ more than the wealthy-elite of society. This may be driven by hopelessness, desperation or having tried all manner of things to be free of the oppression of this world and yet remain in bondage. The Rich meanwhile, find much comfort and assurance in what his money can buy him. God has chosen/ elected those who love Him (vs. 5) and have put their faith in His Son. **End of Note.**]*]
6. But you have loathed the impoverished commoner. Why? Is it not the *wealthy dignitary* who oppresses you? Is it not the earthly wealthy who haul you before the judges in court?
7. Are these not the same ones who blaspheme that honourable, perfect, holy name that you are called by?
8. For it is a marvellous thing when a believer obeys the royal law which says; **“You shall love your neighbour in the same manner that you love yourself.”**:
9. But if you practise favouritism in your judgements, you sin; and like the sinners

you shall be guilty of transgressing God’s law.

10. For the one who keeps the law-entire, and yet breaks it in one area, he is yet guilty of breaking the law-entire.
11. For *the same* God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not kill”. And so (be not puffed up in your holiness for) if you commit no adultery, yet you kill, you have become a breaker of the law-entire.
12. As you say, so do; as people that shall be judged by a law of freedom.
13. For the one who shows no mercy *unto his fellow man* shall receive no mercy from God; and we indeed rejoice in mercy over judgement. [*cf. Matt. 5:7, 6:14-15; Gal. 6:7*]
14. It is a worthless thing, if a man says he has faith and has no works. Can faith save him? [**Note on Faith:** *The answer to the question, “Can faith save him?” is two-fold. If it is saving faith, meaning he sincerely and truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be saved...that is basic Christianity. However, if someone says they have faith in Jesus but has not proof of works, having done nothing for the kingdom, they are likely unconverted and that kind of superficial, insincere and unproven faith cannot save anyone. **End of Note.**]*]
15. If hardship comes upon a brother or sister, and they be without clothing and have no food to eat,
16. And one of you in the church says unto them, “Brother, Sister I have heard your plight, now go in peace, may you be warmed and be filled”; but you do not give them the very things which they need for the protection and nourishment of the body; of what use are your words?
17. And so we know that faith, if it is not accompanied by works, is dead, because it is alone.
18. And yes, some person may say, “You have faith, and I have works: now show me your faith without works, and I will show

you my faith by demonstrating my works.”

19. If you believe that there is only one God; you have done well: but know this, the demons also believe, and they tremble with dread. [***Note on the Godhead:** God is one. God is one glorious, holy divine government. One being consisting of three persons. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. **End of Note.***]
20. But do you want to know for certain O foolish man, that faith without works is worthless?
21. *Consider this*, when he had offered up his son Isaac as a sacrifice upon the altar, was not father Abraham justified by his works?
22. I hope you see how Abraham’s faith and his works operated in unison and his faith was made perfect by his works.
23. And therecy the scripture was fulfilled which stated, “**Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him as righteousness**”: and so was he called God's beloved friend.
24. I pray you now see that it is by works that a man is justified brethren; *by faith accompanied by works*, and not by faith alone.
25. Similarly, Rahab the harlot was justified by her works, when she had received the travellers into her home, and saved them by sending them out another, safer way.
26. For just as the body cannot live without the spirit, similarly if we have faith but no works, that faith is dead. [***Note on Faith:** The phrase “if we have faith but no works, that faith is dead” does not mean that we are saved by our works. Indeed, when it says your faith is dead, it means it is useless/fruitless/worthless/lifeless. It does not mean that it is nonexistent. **End of Note.***]