

# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## *“Who Perseveres Under Trial”*

Scripture Reading: JAMES 1:9-12

- ) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
- ) **SLIDES 7-8**. Read today’s Scripture text.
- ) **SLIDE 9**. We continue today in our expository study in the Book of JAMES. This is week #4. I have titled today’s message *“Who Perseveres Under Trial”* (1:12).
- ) The first three rules of proper Scripture interpretation are this: context, context, context. We must look at the context of the passage to determine the proper interpretation of the passage. Context simply means we look at the text before the passage in question and look at the text after the passage in question.
- ) There is always the chance that the passage in question begins a new thought context or it may end an existing thought context.
- ) Today’s text (v9-12) ends a thought context. A new thought context begins with v13. And it surprises me that many Bible translations place v12 in that same paragraph as v13-18, as if it is part of that context. I don’t believe it is.
- ) I will be including v12 with the context of what we are being taught in v2-11. And the context of v2-11 is about trials and wisdom—two topics we have already covered. So, let’s see how v9-12 help us understand trials and wisdom.
- ) In today’s 21<sup>st</sup> century American society, we have what is called middle-class citizens. People who are not extremely rich, but they are not extremely poor either. Most if not all of us here this morning would be considered middle class Americans.

- ) Middle class was virtually unheard of in first century Palestine. You were either poor (which was the case for most people) or you were rich (which was only a few).
- ) **SLIDE 10.** And James knew that Christians could be either. JAMES 1:9-10. And James will be using these two extremes to ask this question: “*How do our possessions (social status) influence our response to trials?*” And perhaps we will find ourselves in there somewhere. Let’s start with v12.
- ) **SLIDE 11.** JAMES 1:12. I said from the start of this study that this Book of JAMES will be a test of our Christianity. What he is telling us in the context of this passage is that trials will test our faith. Do we truly possess what we verbally profess?
- ) And what he concludes is that those people, either rich or poor, who persevere through their trials, who consider it all joy through their trials, will receive the crown of life or in other words, eternal life. There will be no difference between the rich and the poor. They both receive the same reward.
- ) But what should our attitude be when going through trials? Well, we answered that several weeks ago. We know we should be joyful because our faith is being tested. Right?
- ) But in v9-10 James looks at the two classes of people that were so apparent in those times, the rich and the poor, and how as believers they should respond to trials. And since we are middle-class people, maybe we should respond with a little of both. First the poor.
- ) **SLIDE 12.** JAMES 1:9. From a worldly position, what does a poor believer possess? Not much of anything. Many poor people are concerned where their next meal is coming from.
- ) Let’s be real. The poor can face many trials that the rich will never face. And they could get really discouraged because of their poverty. And they could very easily dwell on their social status and not what they truly possess.

- ) But, from a Spiritual position, what does the poor believer possess? They possess eternal life. They possess the one thing that is most important.
- ) **SLIDE 13.** The poor believer responds to trials by taking **PRIDE** (glory) in their standing (high position) with Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 14.** ROMANS 8:16-18. When a person feels like they possess next to nothing, they look at what they do possess. A believer who is poor socially looks at their possessions and realizes they possess the greatest gift of all. They are a child of God and a fellow heir with Christ. And that is why they are to glory in their high position.
- ) **SLIDE 15.** When the **POOR** have trials and realize what they do possess (their high position in Christ), they pass the test. Life situations are testing our faith.
- ) **SLIDE 16.** JAMES 1:12. And that is what James is saying in v12. That is how the poor persevere through trials. *"I possess nothing in this world, but I do possess all the riches of being in Christ Jesus."* Life situations are testing our faith.
- ) **SLIDE 17.** Now let's look at the rich. JAMES 1:10. From a worldly position, what does a rich believer have? Sometimes any worldly possession they want. They want for nothing.
- ) Let's be real. In many cases, the rich believe they will not face trials because of their wealth. And they could easily become discouraged when they do. And they could very easily dwell on their worldly possessions and ask why all their wealth could not prevent these trials. Why me?
- ) From a Spiritual position, what does a rich believer possess? They possess the same as the poor believer. They possess eternal life which means they also have everything.
- ) **SLIDE 18.** The rich believer responds to trials by having **HUMILITY** (glory) in midst of their worldly pursuits.

- ) **SLIDE 19.** PSALM 20:7-8. When a person feels like they possess everything, they often like to admire what they do possess (horses and chariots and cars and houses, etc.)
- ) A believer who is rich looks at their possessions and realizes all their possessions are meaningless. What is truly important is that they are a child of God and a fellow heir with Christ. And that is why they are to glory in their humility.
- ) **SLIDE 20.** When the **RICH** have trials and realize the deceitfulness of the pursuit of wealth, they pass the test. Life situations are testing our faith.
- ) **SLIDE 21.** JAMES 1:12. And that is what James is saying in v12. That is how the rich persevere through trials. *“I possess much in this world but it all means nothing compared to the riches I have in Christ Jesus.”* Life situations test our faith.
- ) Trials. The believer will have trials in his/her life. And trials are a test of our professed faith. Will our possessions, either the lack of or abundance of them, make a difference in how we respond to our trials? Again, how we view our possessions (social status) in the midst of our trials will be a test of our faith.
- ) **SLIDE 22.** And that is the context of what James is teaching us today. V12 begins with *“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trials.”* And the believer in the social extremes, the poor and the rich, respond accordingly.
- ) There is nothing wrong with having or not having possessions. Both the poor and the rich can be saved. And as middle-class American citizens, we should be able to find ourselves in there somewhere when trials occur in our lives.
- ) And regardless of where we do stand, we can now see we must have wisdom in our response to trials. That is the context of this passage. We are to pursue the crown of life. Let’s not allow our possessions (social status) get in the way. Let’s make sure we truly possess what we verbally profess.

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