



The Epistle of James has been called several things, *“the Christian at work”* and *“the book of practical Christianity”*

, just to name a few. No true Christian should discredit or disobey one word in this God breathed epistle;

BUT the very first verse is a caution from the Holy Spirit to the Gentile believer to study this epistle IN THE LIGHT OF OTHER SCRIPTURES.

“Comparing spiritual things with spiritual” and ***“rightly dividing the word of truth”*** are two Divine principles which must be diligently observed in the study of any portion of the Bible.

When Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, stood before Agrippa he made reference to his past history, when as Saul of Tarsus he was a Pharisee, as belonging to ***“the sect of our religion”*** Acts 26:5.

“Religion”

or in the Greek,

“threskeia”

, meaning, observances, rites or ceremonies which were practiced by the Jews in their worship of God. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians that

he had “profited in Judaism” BEFORE he was converted to Jesus.

Galatians 1:14.

Then again he speaks of his past religious experience as ***“in the flesh”***; ***“Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church, etc.”*** ***“But what things were gain to me, those I COUNTED LOSS for Christ.”***

Philippians 3:4-7.

The Apostle Paul NEVER encouraged a Gentile saint to be religious. He never used the word "Threskeia" in ANY of his epistles to Gentile believers. The Jews had religion. Christians have eternal life. They have Christ. The Old Testament saints lived in the *shadow days*, when **carnal ordinances were imposed upon them.**

Now pay attention here: the Apostle James was a very, VERY religious Jew. He was also an Apostle of Christ. HOWEVER, James was never called to the ministry to which Paul was called. **James refers to religion, "threskeia," James 1:27, because he wrote to Jews, religious Jews. "To the twelve tribes."** He wrote in terms that were familiar to them. They, like him, continued to observe much that belonged to Old Testament Judaism, **even after they had been turned to Christ**

His message to these converted Jews sounds very much like the righteous demands in the Sermon on the Mount preached by Jesus of Nazareth in the land of the Jews, where the children of Abraham were more particular about outward religious observances than they were about practical righteousness.

James says: **"If there come unto your synagogue "** James 2:2. The Greek word for assembly is the same as the word elsewhere translated "synagogue."

The epistle is written to Christian religious Jews.

There is much in it for the Gentile Christian of today. If every professing Christian today were measuring up to the standard of James' practical righteousness, many more in the world would behold their good works and glorify God.

There is no book in the entire Bible in the study of which it is less difficult to apply the Divine principles of Bible study. It is a very simple matter to get the mind and ministry of James by studying just three chapters in the New Testament Scriptures; Galatians 2, Acts 15, and Acts 21. Surely the reading of these three chapters will enable any child of God to better understand this epistle of the Apostle James, which is being quoted quite frequently today to support some unsound doctrines and fanatical religious practices carried on in the name of Christianity.

It was James who was the spokesman at the council at Jerusalem in the year 52 A.D., when it was agreed between the eleven apostles, who were located in Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas, who made their headquarters at Antioch, that **the religious observances of Judaism which were STILL being practiced by the Christian Jews and the Law of Moses**

should NOT be imposed upon the Gentile Christians.

In that Jerusalem council James said:

“Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God” Acts 15:19. Trouble not Gentile believers with things Jewish. Today, Gentiles which are turned to God through the LORD Jesus Christ are certainly being troubled by teachers and preachers who are giving to them things Jewish; some things from the Epistle of James.

Remember his sentence. Again, how simple are these words of James which should be self-explanatory, **“As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing.”**

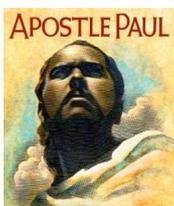
60 A.D. some time
his epistle.

Acts 21:25. This he declared in the year
after he had written

When Christians today UNWISELY preach to Christian Gentiles what God by the pen of James intended for Jews, we may be assured that it is being done in spite of James' clear instructions not to do it. “That they observe no such thing.”

Jewish vows, religious purifications, baptism, circumcision, Sabbaths, feast days, and laying on of hands do not belong to the Body of Christ. Notice the first verse of this epistle, **“James, a servant of God and of the LORD Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.”**

James 1:1.



The Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, referred to the writer of this epistle as James, the LORD's brother. Shortly after he was converted the Apostle Paul visited the Apostle Peter in Jerusalem, and while there he also saw this other apostle of the LORD Jesus Christ: James.

Galatians 1:19.

In Luke 6:16, James is mentioned as the son of Alphaeus and the brother of Judas. These two brothers were numbered with the twelve apostles. Of course James, the writer of this epistle, was not the James who was beheaded by Herod. That James whose death is recorded in Acts 12 was the brother of John. They were the sons of Zebedee.

In the gospel according to Mark, James, the writer of this epistle, is referred to as James the "Less", the son of Mary. Mark 15:40. Again, he is mentioned in connection with his brethren and his sisters in Matthew 13:55-56. Jude, in the opening verse of his epistle, is spoken of as the brother of James.

After the resurrected Christ was seen by more than five hundred brethren, he was seen of James. 1 Corinthians 15:7. The mothers of both James' were eye-witness of the crucifixion of Jesus. Matthew 27:56.

This James was also one of the Apostles in the upper room after the ascension of Christ. He was with the apostles when they were all with one accord in one place on the day of Pentecost. Acts 1:13.

James was mentioned by the Apostle Paul as one of the pillars of the church at Jerusalem. Galatians 2:9. **By common consent and according to the will of God, the ministry of James was Jewish,** *"To the circumcision."*

The Epistle of James is just as much inspired as any other portion of the Holy Scriptures. But when God has plainly told us that James was a minister to the circumcision, we must surely bear this in mind when we are studying his epistle. Galatians 2:7-9.

Nowhere in the New Testament Scriptures do we have any record or even the slightest suggestion that the Apostle James ever preached one message to even one Gentile. On the contrary, we certainly have scriptural evidence that he was never completely delivered from his Jewish prejudice and from the religious observances of Judaism. **James was clinging to these**

with other Jews who were zealous of the Law in the year 60 A.D.

When the disciples were scattered abroad, at the time of the persecution which arose at the death of Stephen, the Apostles remained at Jerusalem. Acts 8:1. We find James at Jerusalem in Acts 1, and eighteen years later in Acts 15, and twenty-six years later in Acts 21. **The last we hear of the Apostle James in the Bible, he is still at Jerusalem, one of the rulers of the Jewish disciples, apparently the chief ruler.**

James did sanction the declaration of Peter regarding the purpose of God in this age, to first visit the Gentiles and take out from among them a people for His name before Jesus shall return to occupy the throne of David in Jerusalem. Acts 15:14-16.

But it would be well for us to read Acts 15 in its entirety and thereby learn that James believed in ONE order for “the Jews which believed” and ANOTHER order for “the Gentiles which believed.”

This is again very definitely and clearly set forth some years later when the Apostle Paul made his last visit to the city of Jerusalem before he was delivered to the Roman government as a prisoner. This visit is recorded in Acts 21:17-18, “And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.” This gives us some idea of the prominence of James among the rulers in the church at Jerusalem in the year 60 A.D.

In order that he might please James and “the Jews which believed” in Jerusalem, **Paul made the sorry mistake of becoming a Jew for seven days, as we learn from Acts 21:26-27.** But we find very clear instructions in Acts 21:25, that **the Gentiles which believe were not to observe any of the ceremonies which belonged to the Jews.**

Did not James sanction two different orders, one for believing Jews; quite a different one, for believing Gentiles?

Surely this experience of Paul with James the LORD's brother in the year 60 A.D. at Jerusalem will throw much light on the epistle of James which we are studying.

The exact date of the epistle of James is not known; but it is quite certain that it was written at a

much earlier date than the time of Paul's visit, perhaps from eight to eighteen years before that time. **Some authorities believe it to be the first New Testament epistle written.** So, as we study this epistle we shall bear in mind that some years after it was written, James insisted that the Apostle Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles become a Jew for seven days to please the Jews at Jerusalem.

At that time, even the Christian Jews were still practicing circumcision, **which truly has no place in the Body of Christ**

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and surely no Christian should become a Jew to gain the Jews today.

1 Corinthians 9:20. We shall likewise receive much help in the study of this epistle of James by reading carefully all of the second chapter of Galatians, especially Galatians 2:12 which we quote,

“For before that certain (Peter) came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.”

Peter feared them which were of the circumcision, James is mentioned here by name. “Came from James”, Then Peter was afraid to eat with Gentile Christians years after Pentecost because of James.

During the time covered by the Book of Acts, **James and the other apostles who remained at Jerusalem did not preach outside of the land of the Jews, the land of Palestine.**

They were ministers to the Jews in the land of the Jews. God said to the Apostle Paul when he visited Jerusalem,

“They will not receive your testimony here so I will send you far hence to the Gentiles”
Acts 22:18-21.

Paul, therefore, was not numbered with the twelve apostles. He was the chosen vessel of God to the Gentiles. He labored very little with any of the twelve.

Let me right now point something out, that isn't always OBVIOUS: The Jews were turned to Christ FROM Judaism. The Gentiles were turned to Christ FROM paganism.

And as the Gentiles did not have the experience of the Jews who were converted from Moses to Christ, some of the believing Jews who were zealous of the Law tried to give ***“the Gentiles which believed”***

Moses and the law, after they were turned to God from their idols.

But this was displeasing to the Holy Spirit. God forbade it. AND IT IS STILL HAPPENING TODAY!!!

In Galatians 5:9, the Apostle Paul referred to the legalism which the Jews were mixing with the Gospel of Grace as, *“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”* The “modernism,” “ritualism” and “fanaticism” in the Body of Christ today is very largely due to that leaven. So, where is the denomination wholly delivered from legalism? It’s not! EVERY denomination exists as a result of mixing some iota of religion with Grace. The Christian is dead to the law. Galatians 2:19.

The Apostle Paul said, ***“I would that they were cut off which trouble you”*** Galatians 5:12. The Gentile Christians were continually troubled by the Jews who were determined to force Old Testament religious ceremonies upon them; thereby subverting their souls with the perverted gospel which they preached. Circumcision, days and seasons, laying on of hands, washings, anointing with oil, baptism, Sabbaths, etc., belong to Jews. Remember what James said, ***“My sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.”***

Are YOU troubling Gentile believers with Jewish observances today?

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” Acts 16:31, while there is still time!

So There You Have it!

Spread this message to everyone you know, far and wide. **The time is short**

Grace be to you and peace, from God: our Father, and The LORD Jesus Christ.

In The LORD Jesus Christ,
[The Lion and Lamb Ministry](#)

Pastor David Picos, D.D.
Minister and Ambassador for Christ in the Ministry of Reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20)

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