

Epistle of James II Endure and Receive Your Crown

Fred R. Coulter

One summer my project was to translate the seven general epistles: James, 1st & 2nd Peter, 1st 2nd & 3rd-John and Jude.

And going through the Gospel of John, when I finished it I felt like I was ready to start. So this time in doing the translation of it and then coming back and checking everything out and organizing it, so I can bring it in a Bible study or Sabbath setting.

We're going to see that the whole the Epistle of James is really tremendous and it ties right in with everything that all the other apostles preached. There are some people who say that James—because it was written to the Jewish Christians—does not contain the things that the Apostle Paul has. We'll see that it does. And we will see that there is a lot of depth to what he wrote.

James 1:6, concerning faith: “But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all...” The way that you can really ask in faith, not doubting, is to really understand God even more. That way you can have more faith in God. Another thing, I just want to mention here concerning doubt.

- What do you do when you have a doubt?
- How should a doubt be handled? *Through prayer; that's true; that's a first step!*
- Should you just try and put it out of your mind?
- Does it get rid of the doubt to just put it out of your mind? *It comes back in, yes!*
- How do you get it out of your mind then? *Search the Scriptures!*

Many times that is true, especially as you're growing in grace and knowledge and you're walking by faith, but sometimes that faith doesn't give you very much vision down the road, so you're going to be doubting. What do you do?

- you pray about it
- you search the Scriptures
- you get that doubt and you put it right in the light of Bible Truth

That's how you get rid of doubt. You prove it one way or the other.

I remember when I was at Ambassador College and we were doing some studying on evolution, trying to prove that evolution is not true. And they have many more good books on it, by the way. That's why you have to study to show yourself

approved, rightly dividing the Word of God. Take every doubt, just like we did with evolution.

So, I was reading this thing on evolution and I was reading along where it says, then the chimpanzees, when there was a drought and there was no more food in the trees, got down on the ground and then they started walking upright. And then they started using tools, and all of this by human logic sounds very rational. At that point, I was beginning to say—because I was just new in the Church, and just new in studying and all this—and I thought, you know, that sounds kind of logical. Remember, ***all logic sounds good, but all logic is not truth!*** So, I said, ‘Well, what I'm going to have to do then, to say well, boy: What if there was some evolution? Now what are you going to do?’

I kept studying! I didn't try and cast it out. I didn't try just to forget it. I didn't try to just put it in the back of my mind. I started reading everything I could about chimpanzees. I got a National Geographic that was there. You know, all libraries have National Geographics. I was reading about chimpanzees and guess what it said about a drought in Africa? *When the drought came and there was no fruit and the chimpanzees had to go on the ground, they almost died out because they couldn't function on the ground without the fruit in the trees!* Guess what? The supposition that they stood upright and made tools falls flat on its face; you don't have to worry about that any longer.

It's the same way with anything that you doubt. You get that doubt and get a good hold on it and put it right smack in the middle of the table and pour the light of Truth on it and you'll get rid of it. Therefore, it won't bother you and plague you again. But if you try and say, ‘Oh, I shouldn't doubt. I got to get that out of mind. Oh, I shouldn't doubt, got to get that out of my mind.’ And you just sort of run this as a broken record through your head. It will always be there, and guess what? Somewhere down the road, it's going to come back and plague you!

That's why a person who is doubting ends up being, v 8: “...a double-minded man [person]...” Why? How are we to be to God? A lot of people would accuse us of being narrow-minded, as Christians. But how are we to be to God? Not to be narrow-minded—***single-minded! With Christ we are to be single-minded!*** When we do, then:

- we will grow in faith
- we will grow in love

- we will grow in hope

Verse 9: “But let the brother who is in humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation, and *let* the one who is rich *rejoice* in his humble condition because, as *the* flower of *the* field, he himself will pass away; for the sun rises with *its* burning heat and dries up the grass, and its flower falls off, and its beautiful appearance perishes. **In the same way also shall the rich man wither in his pursuits.** Blessed *is the* man who endures trials because, after he has been proved, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (vs 9-12).

An awful lot in that, and you’ll see it’s a little different than the *King James Version*, because what I’ve done is taken the tenses of the participles and the verbs that are present tense and made them present tense.

Verse 9: “But let the brother who is in [depressed] humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation.” This word depressed/humble can mean of *low degree economically, mentally, spiritually, burdened of mind as well as poor!* So depressed condition covers it all.

Take the book of James and study through what we have here, just as a personal Bible study, and list all the Scriptures that tie in with Matthew 5, 6 & 7 especially; which is called the Sermon on the Mount. We can add that to this study.

In James it talks about this person who is in a depressed condition. It can be economically, it can be spiritually, it can be by circumstances, and all of those things. And there’s a reason that James writes it this way.

Matthew 5:3^[transcriber’s correction]: “Blessed *are* the **poor in spirit**... [they are not self-exalting; they are not uplifted] ...for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed *are* those who **mourn**...” (vs 3-4)—because you are going through a trial and you are in a low, depressed condition. I don’t know of any trial yet, that doesn’t leave you, while you’re going through it, depressed. Afterwards ‘it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness.’

“...for they shall be comforted” (v 4). By whom? *By God!* Maybe by someone else that God has sent, but its still by God!

Verse 5: “Blessed are the **meek**, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* those **who hunger and thirst after righteousness**, for they shall be filled” (vs 5-6). This ties right in with the Sermon on the Mount.

James 1:9: “But let the brother who is in... [a depressed condition] ...humble circumstances

rejoice in his elevation.” Christ has elevated him by the calling, and you’re boasting in Christ. You’re not boasting in what you have done, because it talks about that a little bit later.

- Christ has called
- Christ has lifted the person up
- Christ has brought them to the congregation
- Christ is going to lead them and guide them

Now, let’s go to the other end of the scale, v 10: “And *let* the one who is rich...” I don’t think any of us are rich. In today’s world it’s hard to even say you’re well off, because that could be cut off in a minute. At least we are not in the humble circumstances that the (former) Soviet Union is in. I don’t think any of us could say that we’re rich, physically. ***Hopefully we are rich in Christ, and those riches in Christ are the true riches!*** Then we don’t count on the physical things that are here.

Verse 10: “And *let* the one who is rich *rejoice* in his humble condition...” Yes, that he is brought into the congregation, *the same one that the brother in a lowly condition has been called and they fellowship side-by-side!* Now, you could even translate this word humble condition as *humiliation*. I call to your attention the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, just to get an extreme difference. Here’s why:

“...because, as *the* flower of *the* field...” Whenever you look at a field there’s going to be some kind of grass out there, some kind of green, there are going to be flowers.

Matthew 6:28: “...Observe the lilies of the field... [it’s a little more poetic] ...how they grow: they do not labor, nor do they spin; but I say to you, **not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these**” (vs 28-29).

That’s really a lesson—isn’t it? That is a fantastic lesson! Whenever you get all exalted and all uplifted, go out and look at a flower. Look at its beauty, look at its intricacy, look at how fantastic it is.

I was in downtown Hollister doing something—I think it was day of Christmas Eve—and here was this man, he was out trying to make a little extra money for his Christmas thing. He was selling roses, \$4.00 a dozen, which is a pretty good price. He had two-dozen yellow roses, so I got those for Delores, because she loves yellow roses. But as we were putting them into the vase, we discovered they had all of these prickles and barbs on them, more than regular. And yellow roses smell the best of any of them, but they also give up the ghost

sooner than any of the roses. That's why you don't see very many commercial yellow roses. That's why they're mostly red roses, because they last longer commercially.

But you look at that rose and you look at the beauty of it and you smell the scent of it and here's this thing that is going to die, that God made so beautiful. Yet, it's got some thorns, a little prickly problem. I was doing this part of it when I bought the roses and I thought, 'Ah, that is so true!' We look good, we smell good, but when you get close to us, BAM! there's a little prickly barb that's going to get you. And I pricked my thumb, too on it.

Let's cover a little bit about what happens when the sun comes up and its burning heat happens and you don't have very much root in you as a Christian.

Matthew 13:18: "Therefore, hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and does not understand *it*, the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart..." (vs 18-19)—before it took root!

Some people are like that. They're not willing to settle down long enough to let a root of God grow from its seed. Some people are that way. They hear the Word:

- oh, its good
- oh, I need faith
- oh, I need love
- oh, I need God
- oh, there's a basketball game tonight.'
- I got to go do this and I got to go do that and I got to...

—chasing from one thing to another. If you put a seed in the ground you can't constantly stir up the dirt. It's got to stay there and grow.

Jesus says: "...This is the one who was sown by the way. Now, the one who was sown upon the rocky places is the one who hears the Word and immediately... [or shortly afterwards] ... receives it with joy; but *because* he has no root in himself, *he* does not endure; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, he is quickly offended" (vs 19-21).

That's the one who has the short root and the sun came up and the heat came and it withered away. Well, that's what it's talking about here with us.

How deep are your roots in Christ? So, when the sun comes up and the heat comes on, which it's going to: **Are you going to have enough root?** This is why faith becomes a very important thing. ***Faith is that substance that comes from God!***

That *spiritual substance* that comes from God, from His Spirit that is likened unto water, so that we can be, instead of the sun coming up with its burning heat and killing the flower and falling off and we're dying.

We're like Psalm 1:1: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the Law of the LORD..." (vs 1-2).

We can go one step further. We'll see that a little bit later, about *the law of liberty* and the *Law of Christ*. Our delight is in Christ and we will see that there is the thing called the *law of faith*. And there's also the thing that is called the *law of the Spirit*.

"...and in His Law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not wither... [in spite of the heat] ...and all that he does shall prosper. The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff, which the wind drives away" (vs 1-4).

Just like this windstorm we had down here last month on Hwy 5 It all dried out. There was no water there. The desert was coming back again. The wind came—whoosh! No one could see anything, but they were still driving 80mph. So, there were a hundred cars and 17 dead! It's because of that; same thing here.

Verse 5: "Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish" (vs 5-6). What I want you to do is use this—not as a finite study, complete—as a building block to go ahead and study other things yourself.

James 1:12: "Blessed *is the* man who endures trials, **because after he has been proved** he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Do not let anyone who is tempted say, 'I am being tempted by God,' because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil*. But each one... [no corporate salvation] ...is tempted when he is **drawn away** and is enticed by his own lust... [present tense participle, *is being drawn away*] ...And after lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is completely finished, brings forth death. Do not deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren" (vs 12-16).

Not every trial is lust; no, no! We'll get into that; we'll explain it. *God sets before us choices; He doesn't tempt us with evil!* He sets before us choices.

Verse 12: "Blessed *is the* man who endures

trials...” Again, I call your attention to Matt. 5, the beatitudes—blessed, blessed, blessed is the one.

And this ties in with v 2: “Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance” (vs 2-3)—*enduring trials*. Not all trials are caused by lust. No, they are not! Some trials are caused just because of mistakes. Some trials are caused just because it’s whatever it happens to be. Maybe it’s just the circumstances involved. But then you have a choice. Are you going to follow God’s way or not? That’s why it says:

Verse 12: “...because **after he has been proved...**” That’s what it means when God tempted Abraham, *He proved Abraham! He tested Abraham!* He didn’t tempt him with evil. He proved him, whether he would choose to do what God said or not.

“...he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (v 12).

Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” The loving is continuous.

Jesus said, John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely My commandments.” We are to keep the commandments of God because we love Him, not because He is compelling us. There’s a vast difference. When we’re children and growing up, you must be compelled, because you know no other thing, but we do it because we love God.

Now let’s go to 1-Peter 5 and let’s see what happens after we’ve endured a trial or testing. You can go back and read the account in Gen. 22, about Abraham when he was tested about offering up Isaac. And you can read in Heb. 11, the reason that he did it was because he knew that if he sacrificed Isaac—whom he received from the dead, his dead body in a figure—that God was able to raise him from the dead! Did he have any doubt in his mind about God and God’s goodness? Not one! What did God say after Abraham was proved? *God said, ‘I swear by Myself...’*—and He doesn’t have to swear—‘...that in blessing, I will bless and in multiplying I will multiply, **because you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me.**’ Great lesson in that, so be sure and please study that. Some of the trials come because the devil comes. He’s the one who tempts you with evil.

1-Peter 5:8: “Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the devil* is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking **anyone** he may devour. Whom resist,

steadfast in the faith, knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world. Now, may the God of all grace... [after you make the right choice] ...Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, **after you have suffered a little while, Himself perfect you, establish, strengthen, and settle you**” (vs 8-10).

That’s the whole process of trials. God will do that. God can do that, but you have to have no doubt that God is able to do that. That’s why we are to grow in grace and favor. I can tell you one thing, after something like this you know there are going to be a lot of people out there accepting false doctrine.

What is the whole lesson of the Days of Unleavened Bread? *We need to get rid of sin!* What is the theme of it? **A little leaven, leavens the whole lump!** In relationship to the Passover—as we see in *The Christian Passover* book—I can almost write the script for the heresy: ‘It really doesn’t make any difference when the Passover was in the Old Testament, 14th or 15th, because we’re going to do it on the 14th.’

But what if your conclusion of the Old Testament is wrong or partially true? What does that do? *You can say, ‘Well, it doesn’t do anything to my faith.’ Yes, it does! It gives you a mind set to accept something that isn’t true!* And ‘a little leaven, leavens the whole lump’ and what happens later? We have seen with people in churches and organizations, what happens when they let that leaven into their minds? *They get more leaven, because it leavens the whole lump and they get more and more false doctrine!* So that’s why, when we are tested; He doesn’t test us with evil, **He tests us with a choice!**

Let’s see the ‘crown of life’; it’s fantastic, brethren, when you understand it! What crown was put on Christ during His trial that He wore on His crucifixion day? *Thorns!* Those long, three-inch barbs! What did He give up? *His crown as God to wear the crown of thorns and shame!* We could have a whole sermon on it.

James 1:12: “...he shall receive a crown of life...” That’s what God is going to give to you, a crown of life. The Bible talks about:

- a crown of life
- a crown of righteousness
- a crown of glory

Corinthians 9:24: “Don’t you know that those who run a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? That is the way you *are to* run... [we’re to run the race that’s before us] ...in order that you may obtain *the prize...*” However, everyone of us is going to receive a crown, because *we’re all going to*

win!

Verse 25: “For everyone who is striving for mastery... [in athletics] ...controls himself in all things...” He has to be or he is kicked out. The one who is truly going to be an athlete, truly going to strive for the masteries of it, he’s got to be temperate, he has to watch his diet, has to watch his weight, has to watch his sleep, has to watch whatever he does; then there’s the rest of us.

“...Of course, they *do this* so that they may receive a corruptible crown... [super bowl ring; NBA Championship; Davis Cup, whatever] ...but **we**... [we’re in this calling for]: ...**are striving for an incorruptible crown**.... [**the crown of life**] ...I, therefore, **so run**, not as one who is uncertain; so also **I fight**, not as beating the air. But **I discipline my body and bring it into subjection** ... [his body and his mind and everything.] ...lest, after preaching to others, I myself might be rejected” (vs 25-27).

Now that’s a good thought for every minister, for those who may be listening to this, because we’ll see when we get to the latter part of James 1 that he’s talking about braggadocio ministers and all this sort of thing, and the world is filled with them; we don’t need them; God doesn’t need them.

Paul is going to say, ‘I could be a castaway’ and he wrote all of these fantastic things for us. Hey, we better as ministers ‘take heed, lest we fall.’ If we think we stand, we better take heed, lest we fall, and there are going to be a good many of them fall. I can guarantee you there will, because I’m holding in my hands heresy. It’s going to happen!

The Apostle Paul is talking to elders; He’s talking to ministers, 1-Peter 5:2: “Feed the flock of God *that is* among you, exercising oversight not by compulsion... [being forced to] ...but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over your possessions; but *by* being examples to the flock of God.... [that’s what it needs to be] ...And **when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, eternal crown of glory**” (vs 2-4).

2-Timothy 4:5: “But *as for* you, be vigilant in all things, endure hardships, do the work of an evangelist; fully carry out your ministry.” In other words, have a ministry that is *fully tested and proved*. That’s what it should be.

- not because of name
- not because of personality
- not because of boasting
- not because of bragging
- not because of numbers
- not because of any of that

—but *because of the Word of God!*

Verse 6: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished the course; **I have kept the faith**” (vs 6-7). That’s what we need to really keep in mind, brethren, ***keeping the faith!***

Verse 8: “From this time forward, **a crown of righteousness** is laid up for me...” So it’s a:

- crown of life
- crown of glory
- crown of righteousness

Rev. 2:10—here are the ones who have been tried: the Church at Smyrna. They’ve really been:

- tried
- chased down
- run down
- thrown into prison
- persecuted
- blasphemed against by the synagogue of Satan

Revelation 2:10: “Do not fear any of the things that you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tried... [tested, proved] ...and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and **I will give you a crown of life.**”

It talks about a coming trial with the synagogue of Satan, which is coming. ***It is coming! Coming! Coming!*** You can just see it marching down the road; that *mark of the beast* is going to be here one of these days, not too far away.

Revelation 3:9: “Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who proclaim themselves to be Jews and are not, but do lie. Behold, I will cause them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.”

(go to the next track)

Verse 10: “Because you have kept the Word of My patience...” That is the same word for endurance—isn’t that something? ***Kept the word of My endurance, a lot of enduring to do!***

“...I also will keep you from the time of temptation, which *is* about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly; **hold fast that which you have so that no one may take away your crown**” (vs 10-11).

- ***the crown of life***
- ***the crown of righteousness***

Let’s see the crown that Jesus is going to have, after *He wore the crown of thorns*. Lest anyone think they’re having troubles, lest anyone

think that their trials are worse than anything else, think of what Christ has gone through, and that will help you.

Revelation 19:11: “And I saw heaven open; and behold, a white horse; and He Who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does **judge and make war**.... [that’s the wrath and the anger of God] ... And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* **many crowns**; and He had a name written that no one knows except Him.... [He’s going to have many crowns] ... And *He was* clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is The Word of God” (vs 11-13).

Then He has on His vesture, v 16: “And on *His* garment and on His thigh He has a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Revelation 20:6: “Blessed and Holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power. But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” So, we’re going to be kings and priests. We’re going to have crowns: *crowns of life, crowns of righteousness*. We may have to go through some trials here, but keep you eyes on the things that are ahead. All this is tied up within for those who are loving Him.

James 1:13: “Do not let anyone who is tempted say, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil*.” It’s impossible for God to sin. God does not tempt with evil, does not happen. He sets before us choices.

Deuteronomy 30:15: “Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.”

Verse 19: “...Therefore, **choose life, so that both you and your seed may live**, that you may love the LORD your God” (vs 19-20). The Scriptures in the Old Testament really are not much different than the New Testament. Same thing! ***He sets before us choices!***

James 1:13: “...He Himself tempts no one *with evil*.” He doesn’t come along and tempt you to break the laws of God. He doesn’t come along like Satan the devil did to Jesus and say, ‘If You be the Son of God change these rocks into bread. If You be the Son of God cast Yourself down off this pinnacle. If You want to rule the world now, because I will give it to You, fall down and worship me.’

Those are temptations to do evil, which do not come from God. God does not send that kind of temptation to us. Ours is whether we’re going to choose to do God’s way or not. But here’s what happens:

Verse 14: “But each one...”—present tense participle, each individual. That’s why I stressed on the thing concerning individual salvation.

“...is tempted when he is drawn away and is **enticed by his own lust**” (v 14). That’s the process that happens when you sin. God sets before you the choices. *You* ought to make up in your mind what it is that *you* ought to do. And what is it that the human mind always does? *Justifies what it does!* ‘Every way of a man is clean in his own eyes.’ I look back at the things that I have done and I see where they are wrong. I’ve justified them in my mind, because you have to have it just in your mind before you do it. That’s not God! That’s *your own* lust. Enticed means *deceived, tricked*, many times willingly, *wrong thinking*, “...enticed by his own lust.”

Verse 15: “And after lust has conceived... [compares it to conception] ...it gives birth to sin...” There’s the process. But from conception to birth there are a lot of things that have to take place. Just like from conception until birth there’s got to be a lot of growing of this.

I just draw your attention to the whole sin of David and Bathsheba. You could write that whole lesson. Take these Scriptures and study the whole sin of David and Bathsheba. Each one is being tempted. He was and she was. She said, ‘I’m going to put my bath on the roof so the king can see me.’ The king said, ‘Well, this looks pretty good. I’m going to look down from the roof and see her. Why, this is great! I’m going to send...’—you know the whole thing. He sent a servant over there and he said, ‘Well, bring her over here.’ And he said, ‘Voila, boy this is great! I’m the king. I can do anything I want.’ Guess you know the whole account.

- Did it grow? *Yes, it grew and grew and grew!*
 - *Did it bring forth death? Yes!*
 - ✓Uriah the Hittite, Bathsheba’s husband was killed
 - ✓the baby of the adulterous affair died
 - Did David repent? *Yes!*
- There’s a perfect example of that.
- Did God send the woman? *No!*
 - Did God cause it to be? *No!*

God had the choice there, David, ‘*Choose My way or not.*’ There’s the difference.

“...when it is completely finished... [after it is done] ...brings forth death. Do not deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren. Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning” (vs 15-17). ***Tremendous verse!***

- Why do people do the things that they do, which are wrong and sinful and follow evil?
- Have you ever thought about it?
- *Because of their carnal mind, that is true!*
- But what are they thinking they are going to get from it? *They are going to succeed; they are going to get every good and perfect thing by sinning!*
- What do you think organized crime is based upon? *They take, they loot, they steal and they prosper for a while!*

So he's saying 'don't deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren; you're not going to get those things by taking, by sinning.' All we have to do is just look at the whole episode of Adam and Eve in Gen. 3—right?

- she looked
- she saw
- she tasted
- she ate
- she gave
- they ate
- they sinned

Death was given to them! Exactly the same thing. What did they want? *They wanted to be like God!* What did Satan say? 'You can be like God, my way—not God's way—my way is better. You can take it and have it now.' So, there's the same thing.

Verse 17: "Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is variation nor shadow of turning."

What is one of the most famous verses that Protestantism likes to use? John 3:16: For God so loved the world that **He gave** His only begotten Son..."

- Isn't that the greatest gift?
- Isn't that the most perfect gift?
- *Yes!*
- What is the Holy Spirit called? *The gift of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit!*

When you stop and think about it:

- What one thing in life, of anything, does anyone of us have that wasn't given to us, one way or the other?

God gave us:

- life
- health
- whatever we have
- hands

With those hands, we can do wonderful things or we can do awful evil things.

- eyes

With these eyes we can do wonderful things or do evil things.

I could give three sermons on this. Please get your concordance and study: give, giving, giveth, gave, gavest—we'll cover just a couple.

What is one of the most famous verses that Protestantism likes to use? John 3:16: For God so loved the world that **He gave** His only begotten Son..."

- Isn't that the greatest gift?
- Isn't that the most perfect gift?
- *Yes!*
- What is the Holy Spirit called? *The gift of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit!*

When you stop and think about it,

- What one thing in life, of anything, does anyone of us have that wasn't given to us, one way or the other?

God gave us:

- life
- health
- whatever we have
- hands

With those hands, we can do wonderful things or we can do awful evil things.

- eyes
with these eyes we can do wonderful things or do evil things.
- the mind

With this mind that God has given us to make choices, the only thing of His whole creation that He has given a mind to make choices.

We can do wonderful things, creative things or we can do evil things. That's why we are not to say to God, that we are tempted with evil; that we're going to get good by doing evil. What was the Apostle Paul accused of? He was accused of saying, 'Let us do evil that good may abound' (Rom. 3). So whenever, these things come in mind, they are called the imagination.

Here's what it is, here's what we need to do when those things come along. Here is how to handle it. This is the most important thing of all.

2-Corinthians 10:4 "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the overthrowing of strongholds." Where there is:

- the lust
- the envy
- the jealousy
- the greed

What did Jesus say of the heart of man? 'For out of the heart of man, proceed all of these evil things':

- murders

- adulteries
- thefts
- lusts
- covetousness
- fornication
- evil sayings
- foolish thoughts

—all come out of the heart.

And today, I think we have a more peculiar problem with this than any other generation, because we are bombarded by TV. You can be watching TV and all of a sudden something is going to be thrown on there which is just absolutely miserable. I don't care how quickly you hit the mute or you hit the change station, its going to affect your mind, because everything you see, hear, do or say is recorded somewhere in your mind.

You've got to cast it down and believe me, there are times when it plants thoughts in your mind that you don't even know are there. If you don't think that is true, try getting some stupid commercial jingle out of your head after you've listened to it too much. I imagine, I could say some little jingle here, and you could give me the answer just like that, because you've heard the commercial. I won't try that.

Verse 5: "Casting down *vain* imaginations..." That's where it is, right here. That's where we need to control the sin, control the mind.

"...and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ" (v 5). That's how you overcome sin and temptation and lust and greed and all these things that are in there. That's why the longer that you're converted, the more that you understand God's Word, the more miserable you understand how your own human nature is. I do! You do! You might say, 'Boy, that's not too much self-esteem.' Well, it's not, because we're to not have self-esteem. ***We're to boast in God!*** That's *our* esteem!

Now we could go on, there're many, many other things here. Let me just give you some Scriptures that you can write down, that you can study:

- Eph. 5:2: 'He gave His Son...'
- 1-John 3:24: 'He has given us His Spirit...'

It's amazing, brethren, how much you can get out of everyone of these Scriptures; a little bit different viewpoint every time you go through it. We are not reading a Scripture that we have not covered many times in the past.

Revelation 2:7: "The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches. To the one who overcomes... [the one who is the winner,

the victorious one] ...I will give... [God is the One Who is giving] ...*the right* to eat of the tree of life that is in *the* midst of the paradise of God."

v 10: "...and ***I will give*** you a crown of life."

v 17: "The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes... [or the victorious one] ...***I will give*** *the right* to eat of the hidden manna; and ***I will give*** him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows except the one who receives it."

All the way through—***I will give! I will give! I will give!*** God is the great Giver! Let's understand even in this physical world, the physical things are there for the just and the unjust. Now granted, there's going to be the penalty for sin, but God still sends the rain. He still gives the food. He still gives food and clothing and raiment and all of this sort of stuff, because God is the great Giver! So, let's really understand that and grasp that. I know in studying this, it was just thrilling to really grasp that *God is constantly giving!*

We're going to see that the finality of God's plan—it is something! I mean, just let this sink into your cranium for a while. You know, lot's of times it's good just to take something and say 'Ok, I'm going to meditate on this and think on this.' Turn some music on in your car if you're driving, just think on that. Not a radio station or you're going to get interrupted with some stupid commercial.

Revelation 21:22: "And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city has no need of the sun, or of the moon, that they should shine in it; because the glory of God enlightens it, and the light of it *is* the Lamb" (vs 22-23).

God is so perfect that in His very being, as He moves there is not one shadow. Can you think on that for a minute? God is so perfect, so righteous, so fantastic and so much light in His being that there is not even the hint of a shadow! That's something— isn't it? That's something to think on! That also ties in with other Scriptures: 'Jesus Christ: the same yesterday, today and forever.' God is the One Who is giving.

James 1:18: "According to His own will... [the Greek there is He having willed it] ...He begat us by *the* Word of Truth..." You can take the Word of Truth: 'In the beginning was Word, the Word was God, was with God, the Word was God,' etc. Jesus Christ is the Word of God. Tie that all together.

"...that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings" (v 18)—of all His creation.

And that is something, brethren. I mean to really think on that, to really let these things go deep into your heart, mind, soul and being, that God has done that.

Now, in the light of that, let me read to you here concerning choices, very important thing: *The Book of James, Faith, Love & Hope: An Exposition of the Epistle of James* by Spiros Zodhiates. He's one of the men that I have the Greek tapes on and so forth. He's says this of choice, which is really true:

But remember that with God eternal providence and purpose there coexists man's moral freedom. And in this moral freedom must lay the responsibility of man. (Shall We Blame God? Exegetically Speaking; March 2000, by Spiros Zodhiates (pulpithelps.com/www/docs/970-4597)

God has given choice, and if you have free moral agency and free choice you cannot restrict it. God has restricted it by death. If you go too far, you die. Short of blowing up the whole physical earth, God will allow anything that people choose to do. ***We are responsible for our choices!*** There is free moral agency. God created you and me, free beings capable of choice. No other beings have been created that way in the physical realm.

I mean, you look at the cattle—all these animal worshipers—they all eat grass. They have no choice whether to eat grass or not. That's the way God made them.

- they have no choice when it comes time to breed; they come in heat and they breed
- they have no choice for love; they have no concept of it
- they have no choice to create
- they have no choice to make
- they have no reason to think through, to do

But we are different.

We are free to choose and that is what makes us superior to all the other creations of God. We are free to choose, yes, but we are not free to choose the consequences of our choice...

That's a profound statement!

...for those are determined by the eternal purposes and laws of God. Without this ability to choose there could be no perfection and no satisfaction resulting from the right choice.

That's why when we go to God every good and perfect gift comes from God.

Verse 19. "For this reason, my beloved

brethren, let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, because man's wrath... [vengeance as it were] ...does not work out God's righteousness (vs 19-20).

You think about that! How many times has just the anger of a man been vented to try and accomplish the righteousness of God? I ask myself: How many times has my anger been vented? There is a time for 'righteous indignation.' There is a time to be angry and as it says 'and sin not' and 'don't let the sun set on your anger' (Eph. 4).

So, there's a right kind of anger, but you're not going to accomplish God's way by just being angry. It isn't going to do it. And in this case, it's wrathful. You taking into your hands the consequences that God is going to bring and *you're* determining those consequences. That's what it means. It won't be!

Verse 21: "Therefore, having rid yourselves of all filthiness and all *the* abounding of wickedness around you, then in meekness accept for yourselves the implanted Word, which *is* able to save your lives." In other words, turn yourself completely to God and this is ridding yourselves—there's the work you have to do as we covered: 'casting down imaginations.'

Verse 22: "Then be doers of *the* Word..." — *yourselfes*. Too many people all look out and they say, 'He's not doing that, she's not doing that, therefore, I don't have to.' Don't we do that lot's of times? Especially our kids? He did/she did; no/yes — right! And you try and sort this little argument out

Verse 22: "Then be doers of *the* Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves..." There are a lot of people who like to hear. There are a lot of people who love to hear and even attentively, but they don't go out and do.

"...because if anyone is a hearer of *the* Word and not a doer, this one is like a man considering his natural face in a mirror. Who, after looking at himself, went away and immediately forgot what he was like. But the one who has looked into *the* perfect law of [liberty] freedom..." (vs 22-25).

Now, I'll have to elaborate on that a little more next time. It is the law of liberty. Why are the laws of God called the 'law of liberty'? *Because in keeping them we are free from sin!*

Romans 7:12: "Therefore, the Law *is* indeed Holy..." When does the law come against you? *When you sin!*

Protestants think that we are saved; they quote the verse that 'Jesus has redeemed us from the

curse of the Law' by meaning that Jesus has redeemed us so we don't have to keep any law, because the Law is a curse. **No!** The Law is not a curse. The Law *defines* right and wrong. The Law *defines* what is right. The breaking of the law is what brings the curse, but the Law of itself is Holy.]

"...and the commandment Holy and righteous and good" (v 12).

Brethren, if we do like Jesus said, 'If you are loving Me, keep My commandments.' So if we are loving God and keeping His commandments it is the *law of liberty*. Just like today, the laws of the land:

- Do you know all the laws of the land? *No, you don't know all the laws of the land!*
- Do you keep all the laws of the land? *You keep all the laws of the land, because you're not trying to break any!*

So, therefore until you break one, it has no power on you. **Your choice is to obey!** When you break the law and the power of the law—through the law, the court, the policeman, a fine, a late payment or whatever—comes upon you, then you have to pay. That's why it's called the *law of liberty*:

- it is good
- it is Holy
- it is spiritual
- it is fine

James 1:25: "...and has continued in *it*... [it shows a continuation always] ...this one himself has not become a forgetful hearer, but is a doer of *the* work.... [not only the Word, but the work] ...This one shall be blessed in his actions.... [deeds in the *King James*; whatever you do] ... If anyone among you considers himself to be religious, and does not control his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this ones religion *is* vain.... [of no account] ... Pure and undefiled religion before God and *the* Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (vs 25-27).

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 1:6, 8-12, 9
- 2) Matthew 5:3-6
- 3) James 1:9-10
- 4) Matthew 6:28-29
- 5) Matthew 13:18-21
- 6) Psalm 1:1-6
- 7) James 1:12-16, 12, 2-3, 12
- 8) Romans 8:28

- 9) John 14:15
- 10) 1 Peter 5:8-10
- 11) James 1:12
- 12) 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
- 13) 1 Peter 5:2-4
- 14) 2 Timothy 4:5-8
- 15) Revelation 2:10
- 16) Revelation 3:9-11
- 17) Revelation 19:11-13, 16
- 18) Revelation 20:6
- 19) James 1:13
- 20) Deuteronomy 30:15, 19-20
- 21) James 1:13-17
- 22) John 3:16
- 23) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5
- 24) Revelation 2:7, 10, 17
- 25) Revelation 21:22-23
- 26) James 1:18-25
- 27) Romans 7:12
- 28) James 1:25-27

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 7
- Genesis 22
- Hebrews 11
- Genesis 3
- Romans 3
- Ephesians 5:2
- 1 John 3:24
- Ephesians 4

Also referenced: Books

- *The Christian Passover* by Fred Coulter
- *The Book of James, Faith, Love & Hope: An Exposition of the Epistle of James (Exegetical Commentary Series)* by Spiros Zodhiates

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