

Matthew and James I

James 1 with Comparisons in Matthew

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Today we're going to do something unusual. In doing the commentary When was the New Testament Written? (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*) we can tell by some of the things that Matthew did, especially from the Sermon on the Mount, that he took notes very early on beginning in Jesus' ministry in 26_{A.D.} The reason is because Matthew as a Levite and tax collector.

The fact that Matthew was the first book in the New Testament and the first Gospel shows that it was written first. In the first part of When was the New Testament Written, I wrote that the apostles within the first year, began to assemble and document the teachings of Jesus.

They had to do this because on the Day of Pentecost 3,000 were converted. A few days later another 5,000 were converted. Then in Acts 6 there were multitudes joining.

Now, to do a little background coming up to Matthew, we read this mostly to show the selection of deacons elders. But there is something else in here that tells us something very important as to what the apostles were doing.

Acts 6:1: "Now, in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a complaint by the Greeks against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. And after calling the multitude of disciples to *them*, the twelve said, '**It is not proper for us to leave the Word of God in order to wait on tables.** Therefore, brethren, search out from among yourselves seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and **the ministry of the Word**'" (vs 1-4).

We will see that the "...ministry of the Word" is the beginning of the compiling of the teachings of Jesus. This is what probably became the Gospel of Matthew.

Luke 1:1: "Since many have taken in hand to compile **a written narration** of the matters, which have been fully believed among us, as they delivered *them* to us, those who from *the* beginning... [tie in Acts 1. the 120] ...had been eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word" (vs 1-2).

So, when the apostles said that they would give themselves to the ministry of the Word, they were probably writing down the sayings of Jesus, and they had the 120 there to help authenticate and

verify it.

As I wrote in the commentary concerning the Gospels and Acts, that God did not use three witnesses, He used 120 witnesses who could verify that everything written was true.

What we need to do is establish the veracity of the Word of God, which is under such a great assault in the world today, so we can know and understand the things that Jesus wants us to know and we can believe it. Our lives are based upon that—and the Spirit of God and the Love of God—and our lives are guided by the Word of God.

It's very important that we understand and know, and believe and proved to the depths of our being the truth and veracity of the Word of God. Satan is doing everything he can to undermine it. So, we must do everything we can to strengthen it.

Verse 3: "It seemed good to me also, having accurately understood everything from the very first, to write *these things* in an orderly sequence to you, most excellent Theophilus."

They say Theophilus was the name of a priest, but Theophilus is also a very interesting word, because it means ***one who loves God!*** So, in a sense this is written as a personal gospel to the ones who love God. Another thing that is very, very unique with the New Testament.... I have a wonderful quote:

Of all the religious books in the world, including the Old Testament...

Then he name off the Koran, the Buddhist scriptures and all of those that other religions have!

...the only one that is written in the form of epistles is in the New Testament.

An epistle is a unique way of writing, because ***it is God's personal message to the ones whom He has called***, written in the form of letters ***so that you may know His love and you may understand His instructions!*** This verifies completely that God desires to have a direct relationship between you and Him:

- no priest
- no minister
- no one in between

But there's a unique thing about this. When you have this, and have the Holy Spirit of God and

develop and maintain this relationship of love with God:

- love
- obedience
- service

Then the New Testament becomes *a textbook for eternal life!* You can study into the Bible and New Testament your entire life and never ever run out of learning new things. That's fantastic how the Bible has been written and inspired.

Also, please understand that the Greek Scripture called *The Byzantine Text* and also known as *The Received Text* is the text that has the majority of manuscripts from which the King James was translated, the Geneva was translated, William Tyndale translated, and from which we translated the New Testament. That is the inspired unerrored Word of God. That is perfect. Those are called 'autographs'

What we have are copies of the 'autographs,' and God has preserved the Greek text. Any translation from the Greek text will have varying degrees of accuracy, but no translation is perfect, not even the one that we produced.

We hope we have eliminated as many errors as possible, and I think we have done a fairly good job with that, but no one can stand up and say that any translation is absolutely perfect, because what God inspired the apostles to write was perfect. What we translate from that, then we are under obligation with the Holy Spirit to render it as close to the original as possible in an understandable translation for those who read it in the age in which they are living.

How many men did God use to write the New Testament?

1. Matthew
2. Mark
3. Luke
4. John
5. Paul
6. James
7. Jude
8. Peter

Do you suppose that God has the power to inspire eight men to write the Truth? *Of course!*

Let's take this another step further: When you consider that Paul wrote 14 epistles including Hebrews. The story on why he had to write Hebrews in kind of an unknown way, I've got in the commentary. There was a definite reason for it.

- Who was Paul's scribe and assistant? *Luke!*

- What did Luke write? *The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts!* So, the Apostle Paul, one man, is personally responsible for over 50% of the New Testament. Isn't that amazing?
 - John—the Gospel and the three Epistles and Revelation
 - Peter—two Epistles and responsible for the Gospel of Mark
 - Matthew, Jude and James, who each wrote one book

Jude was the shortest book.

This is so profound and important for people to understand, because most scholars today are atheists. What they try to do, in their arrogance, is lower the standard of the Bible to their level of disbelief. That's why so many people are turned off on religions today.

Also, because of the inner squabbles with self-appointed teachers within the Churches of God—with various sundry doctrines here and there—it is even most difficult for those in the Church of God to sort out who's really telling the truth. The reason being is that you can take Scriptures and you can read them in a certain way and suppose that it means a certain thing when it really doesn't mean that.

Therefore, it's important to really base what we're doing it upon the original Greek for the New Testament and Hebrew for the Old Testament. To understand the Word of God, and to have it in a way that preserves the uniqueness of the New Testament as personal letters to each one whom God calls. That's why you can read in the N.T. about the love of God and be so inspired, especially if you have the Holy Spirit with you, leading you to understand the Truth God, or the Holy Spirit *in* you and when you read and study those words, then God's Spirit is inner-acting in your mind and, in a sense, ***God is talking to you through the words recorded in the N.T.***

It's a profound relationship that God desires us to have with His Word. He had done some very important things, and that is to show the Truth and veracity of His Word.

We're going to look at some very interesting things of what God has done between Matthew and James. In writing about when the Gospel of Matthew was written, I started with the Epistle of James.

Let's note that in 42_{A.D.} the apostles left Jerusalem and went out to the 12 tribes of Israel. That is only 12 years after the crucifixion. When we read the Epistle of James, there are some very important things that are noted from the Gospel of

Matthew, which tells us that if James was written before 42_{A.D.} that means Matthew was pretty well completed by that time.

In one commentary that I've read, he has 15 references to Matthew in the Epistle of James. I went through and studied it and there are 55. So, you can see the unity of the New Testament.

I might mention that over a period of the last ten years, but also in writing the commentaries and things, I have learned so much about the Word of God! We can be thankful that there were the faithful scholars, the faithful ones down through history who preserved all these things that now we can enter into their labor.

As Jesus said, 'You're going to enter in labor that other people have done.' They prepared the way for you. So, what we're doing, we're entering into the labor that others have done and we add our labor to it to bring it up to date for the people today.

Let's begin with James, and we'll be going back and forth between James and the Gospel of Matthew. Some of these will be nearly direct quotes. Some of them will be based upon things written in the book of Mathew, and we will see where it shows that the Gospel of Matthew was written, studied and used so that it became a part of what James wrote.

Just a little bit about James: He and his brothers did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah during Jesus' ministry. We find that in John 7 that His brother said, 'No one does anything in secret, You go on up and show Yourself in public.'

Jesus said, 'You go on up to this Feast, for it is your time, and my time is not yet come. It wasn't until after the resurrection of Jesus Christ—when He came and personally appeared to James—that James believed.'

When we come to Acts 1 we find that Mary and Jesus' brothers were there as part of the 120. So, James did believe! It was common knowledge that Jesus appeared to James in a special way because Paul writes of it in 1-Cor. 15.

James 1:1: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, **to the twelve tribes**, which are in the dispersion: Greetings!" **Why would James write to the 12 tribes?**

If you write a letter and address it to someone, you know where they are. You do not write a letter and say, 'I'm sending this letter to so and so; I don't know where he is, but dear postman, please get it to there.' It will come back today stamped 'undeliverable.'

So, James knew where the 12 tribes were.

Where were they? *Go back and look at the history in the Old Testament, and you will see in 2-Kings 17 that the Assyrians carried them off into captivity to Assyria, Persia and Media in the 700_{S.B.C.}!* Later the migrated west and by the time of the New Testament time they were in the area of the Ukraine and were known as Scythians.

Let's see how Peter addresses those gathered at the temple on the Day of Pentecost. I think this gets real exciting.

Acts 2:7: "And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying to one another, 'Behold, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that we hear each one in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites...'" (vs 7-9). *That's where the ten tribes were taken!*

Verse 22: "Men, **Israelites**, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarean..."

Verse 14: "Then Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke out to them: **'Men, Jews, and all those of you who inhabit Jerusalem...'**"

You've got the Israelites over here in v 22, so Peter makes a distinction between the Jews of the Judea and the Jews in the Diaspora who were there from the Israelites.

Verse 36: "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know with full assurance..." *So, he's telling the whole house of Israel, all 12 tribes!*

They knew where the 12 tribes were at that time. *Josephus* also tells us that they knew where they were. When James writes his epistle, he says:

James 1:1: "...to the twelve tribes, which are in the dispersion..."

In 32_{A.D.} when the apostles went out to the 12 tribes, because that's what they were told to do. Matt. 10 ties in with James 1.

Matthew 10:1: "And when He had called His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every kind of sickness. Now, the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the former tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus; and Lebbeus, who was surnamed Thaddeus; Simon, the Cananean; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. These twelve Jesus sent out after commanding them, saying, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter into a city of the Samaritans; but go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (vs

1-6).

Jesus sent them on their first ‘training tour’ and they stayed in the area of Judea, Galilee and so forth. They didn’t go to the 12 tribes, but that was their commission. However, when we come to v 23 we have something that shows that not only was this a commission, but this was also a commission to go down in time and it was to be with all the Churches of God down through history.

Jesus says, v 22: “And you shall be hated by all for My name’s sake; but the one who endures to *the end*, that one shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, escape into another; for truly I say to you, in no way shall you have completed *witnessing* to the cities of Israel until the Son of man has come” (vs 22-23).

Has the Son of man come? *No!* When you understand that Matthew wrote His Gospel first, this was probably in there, and what James was doing with his epistle was writing to wherever the cities of the children of Israel—the ten northern tribes—were at that particular time.

Not only did it go to all the Jewish synagogues and so forth in the area of Jerusalem and Judea, but it also went to wherever the Israelites were.

We will see that James was written at a time when the Church was still in the synagogue.

James 2:1: “My brethren, do not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. Now then, if a man comes into your synagogue...” (vs 1-2)—Greek: ‘sunagoge.’ *It’s not ‘ekklesia’: assembly!*

“...wearing gold rings *and dressed* in splendid apparel... [the contrast]: ...and *there* comes in also a poor man in lowly apparel” (v 2).

We will see that, lo and behold, the Church was part of the synagogue. In other words, the synagogue was divided down into two parts:

- those who believed
- those who didn’t yet believe

James 5:14: “Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church...”—*it doesn’t say synagogue!*

So, the Church at that time was a part of the synagogue, and the only meeting places that the ten tribes in the Diaspora had were what would be called synagogues. It’s a very interesting thing.

We know that when James was writing this, he was obviously fulfilling what was given here in Matt. 10, and they knew where they were, they knew

what they were doing, and they knew who they had to preach to.

Who did God use to preach to the Gentiles? *Paul!* There’s a lot we could say about Paul so we won’t get sidetracked on that. Today we’re being Bereans, we are comparing Scripture with Scripture and seeing if these things are so or not.

James 1:2: “**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). *We will see that this is based upon Jesus’ teaching!*

Matthew 5:10: “Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake. **Rejoice and be filled with joy...** [that’s what James says] ...for great *is* your reward in heaven; for in this same manner they persecuted the prophets who *were* before you” (vs 10-12).

James 1:4: “But let endurance...”—*which is more long lasting than patience!*

It’s kind of like the man who prayed for patience and said, ‘Lord, I prayed for patience, how come I lost my temper?’ *It was a trial to see if you were ready to practice it!*

“...have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything” (v 4). That’s not material goods, that’s *spiritually speaking!*

What we find when we’re reading James and comparing it with Matthew is that James knew it so thoroughly, and it was such a part of him that he could write referring to it without necessarily making a direct quote. But we will see all these parallels as we go through.

Matthew 5:48: “Therefore, you shall be perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect.” ***That’s the goal!*** That’s what Jesus said!

- How can you be as perfect as your Father in heaven?
- Is it going to be through your efforts? *No! It’s going to be:*
 - through the power of the Holy Spirit
 - through the grace of God!
 - over time
 - ✓ that you grow
 - ✓ that you learn
 - ✓ that you make mistakes

God understands that!

*That's why He's given the grace of God, so that you know that as long as you love God and you are serving Him and have His Holy Spirit **you have access to be perfected by God the Father Himself!** To have all of these things taken out of your character and replace it with the character of God the Father.*

This is a process over a period of time. **Verse 48 is a lifetime goal!** That's why the New Testament is **a textbook for eternal life!** Christ wouldn't tell us to do something that's impossible, so therefore, He supplies what is necessary to do that. As you're growing, overcoming and with God's Spirit and you go through different trials and things that we just don't understand while we're going through it.

Sometimes you may really be upset. Sometimes it may be such a tragic thing that you really kind of, in your own mind, accuse God of doing something that He shouldn't have done. Or allowing something that He shouldn't have allowed. But then we come to understand and realize that it is true that **everything works for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose! Everything!** Even those things that are difficult, they all work together for good.

God uses that, and then with His Spirit and Word—through prayer and study—we can grow to that perfection. The perfection will not happen until the resurrection. I tell you what, until after the resurrection, will we not be perfected even more? I tell you, it's going to be something. Here we have, again, seeing how the Epistle of James and the Gospel of Matthew work together. What this will do is help you understand the unity of the New Testament. This will help you understand that it was God's Spirit that inspired all of it.

James 1:5: "However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*" (vs 5-6).

Matthew 7:7: "Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened to you."

God expects us to take the initiative! If we do it in humility and faith, seeing the will of God, it will happen.

Verse 8: "For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it shall be opened." *That's a promise!*

What do you do if you're lacking in faith? *You admit it to God! Say:*

God, I'm lacking in faith, help me in faith. Grant me understanding; grant me the belief that comes from You, the assurance from Your Holy Spirit.

Then Jesus gives a comparison, and this is very important for us to realize so that we understand God's love to us; that we understand that God is there to provide everything so we can accomplish what He's called us to do.

Verse 9: "Or what man is there of you who, if his son shall ask *for* bread, will give him a stone? And if he shall ask *for* a fish, will give him a serpent? Therefore, if you, being evil, know *how* to give good gifts to your children, **how much more shall your Father Who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?**" (vs 9-11).

If you're doubting, just get on your knees and open your Bible right to this place and read these words and ask God to help you understand them. Ask God to help you do your part, and you know that He will do His part. That's how you grow in faith.

James 1:6: "But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*."

Matthew 21:18: "Now, early in the morning, *as He was* coming back into the city, He hungered; and seeing a fig tree by the road, He came *up* to it, but found nothing on it except leaves only. And He said to it, 'Let there never again be fruit from you forever.' And immediately the fig tree dried up. And after seeing *it*, the disciples were amazed, saying, 'How quickly the fig tree has dried up!' Then Jesus answered *and* said to them, 'Truly I say to you, **if you have faith and do not doubt**... [that's exactly what James wrote!] ...not only shall you do the *miracle* of the fig tree, but even if you shall say to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," it shall come to pass. **And everything that you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive**" (vs 18-22).

There we have the parallel out of Matthew for what James wrote in James 1:6. Let's understand something about 'moving mountains': ***When it is necessary, it will be done!*** But what is harder to move than mountains? *The human mind!* The very fact of conversion and the very fact of growing in grace and knowledge is a greater miracle for you to understand in your own life personally than removing a mountain.

Besides, if you're in a traffic jam you might be inclined to be a little carnal and ask the mountain

to be dropped on the car behind you, or something. But what Jesus is saying here is that ***there is nothing impossible for God to do!*** It has to be within the realm of the will of God.

Is it the will of God that we grow old and die? *Yes, even the apostles did!*

(go to the next track)

There's an allusion here in James 1 to Peter walking on the water in relationship to faith.

James 1:6: "But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*."

In reading Matt. 14 I've often wondered:

- how you relate your personal experiences of things that you have gone through
- how Peter himself used this as an example of his own experience
- how he explained to the brethren what it was like when he was walking on the water and what it was like when he began sinking

Remember, Peter was an experienced fisherman!

Matthew 14:24: "But the ship was now in *the middle of the sea*, being tossed by the waves, because the wind was contrary. Now in *the fourth watch of the night*, Jesus went to them walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled and said 'It is an apparition!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Be of good courage; *it is I*. Do not be afraid'" (vs 24-27).

Verse 28: "Then Peter answered Him *and* said, 'Lord, if it is You, bid me to come to You upon the waters.' And He said, 'Come.' And after climbing down from the ship, Peter walked upon the waters to go to Jesus. But when he saw *how strong* the wind *was*, he became afraid; and *as he* was beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!' And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, **'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'**" (vs 28-31).

Verse 32: "Now, when they went into the ship, the wind ceased. And those in the ship came and worshiped Him, saying, 'You are truly the Son of God'" (vs 32-33). *That must have been an experience for all of them!*

Also, what I want you to do when you're studying the New Testament and the Gospels, I want you to think about all the experiences that they went through—that Christ put them through—so that they would be insured to write the Truth and tell the truth

and be inspired to write the things that Christ wanted them to write.

This is one here. So, here we have James 1:6 and Matt. 14:23-33, the allusion to the tossing to and from of the waves.

James 1:8: "*He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

There's a lot you can say about this. This is why God wants us to be single-purposed, single minded. That doesn't mean that we become dunces and not able to think, it's just that we become single-minded for the Kingdom of God. A lot of difficulties come when people are doubled-minded, and they kind of have one foot in the world and one foot in the Church, and they're kind of negotiating their lives this way. Sooner or later something is going to happen—a trial or test is going to come—and they will understand that they are unstable in their ways.

That's why people that you think—plug in Matt. 13 about the parable of the sower and so forth—if you look back and you realize that when they came into the Church and you think that these people were zealous and strong, and then all of a sudden one day they just give it all up and walk away. Why? ***Because only God can judge the heart and only God knows whether they were single-minded or double-minded.*** Apparently they had a lot of double-mindedness and it finally caught up with them.

Know for sure that if you have double-mindedness there is going to be a trial to come to test you to help you overcome it, or to see whether you're going to go with it.

Matthew 6:22: "The light of the body is the eye. Therefore, if your eye be sound, your whole body shall be *full of light*"—*physically and spiritually!*

There are a lot of sicknesses and diseases that doctors are able to pick up by just looking in the eyes, looking at the skin, looking at the fingernails, looking at the hair, and so forth.

But spiritually, **"...if your eye be sound, your whole body shall be full of light"** (v 22).

Verse 23: "But if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be *full of darkness*. Therefore, if the light that *is* in you be darkness, how great *is* that darkness! No one is able to serve two masters... [that's what a double-minded man is trying to do] ...for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to *the* one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (vs 23-24). *Then you're double-minded!*

This is true in virtually anything. You

cannot work in a bank and be a thief. You can, and you might enjoy it for a while. But sooner or later... You cannot be married and have another partner on the side? *That's double-minded, double affection!* Sooner or later you will love the one and hate the other.

Likewise in serving God; you cannot serve God and mammon, which can mean riches or wealth, or anything else that's between you and God.

That doesn't mean that living in the world that we don't use wisdom, discretion and understanding so that we're not caught in the traps of the world. That doesn't mean that at all. We're to use wisdom and discretion and have understanding.

If you try and serve two, sooner or later it's not going to work. It's like straddling a crack in the earth. If the crack is only an inch wide, you could to this pretty good, there's no difficulty at all. But when it starts widening out and widening out, and it gets down where you can't keep your feet each on one side of the crack and then you have to jump to one side and then pretty soon the crack is a canyon. You try to jump and you miss and you go to the bottom.

Then you've lost out entirely, because ***you don't almost make it*** into the Kingdom of God. That can be like jumping over from one cliff to another. You've got to make it 100%! If you go 97% and you grab the edge and miss and slide to the bottom, you've lost it. That's the ultimate thing that comes from being double-minded.

James 1:9: "But let the brother who is in humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation.

Here is a spiritual elevation. When James says humble, it's an exaltation. We find that here:

Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." *Quite the opposite of the world!*

James 1:10: "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" (vs 10-11).

I remember a man, on his first visit to church—and he was all excited about going to church—and this church was kind of a country church, and he was pretty well-to-do and it was really a difficult pill for him to swallow 'associating himself with farmers.'

So, we have both things, the brother who is

poor, and poor of spirit and circumstances, is exalted because Christ has called him. The one who is rich needs to boast in his humility, that God was kind enough to put him in association with folks that he would rather not be with.

Matthew 6:27: But who among you, by taking careful thought, is able to add one cubit to his stature?" *All vitamin supplements notwithstanding, you can't do it!*

Verse 28: "And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe the lilies of the field, 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. Now, if God so arrays the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, *shall* He not much rather clothe you, O *you* of little faith? Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "With what shall we be clothed?" For the nations seek after all these things. And your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things" (vs 28-32).

God knows! He knows all the circumstances! Therefore, when we pray and commit ourselves to God and put ourselves in His hands, He knows exactly everything! God is not necessarily going to give us everything that we desire. Some of the things that He wants to give us, He will give us a trial before we receive it.

Sometimes the trials are the best thing for us. You know that love is the greatest thing, and you ask God for more love and you pray about it, you cry about it, you're inspired after praying and you get up and go your way. Lo and behold, that night you have an argument with your wife. You say, 'God, why didn't I have love? I prayed for it!' *God's answer was:*

In order for you to learn love, I'm going to send you a little trial. You sort of failed this time, and you were rather stupid in what you said. If you really want to have love, then you have to love in all circumstances. Therefore, if a trial comes up, learn how to handle it with love. Then you will be able to develop the character.

So, God knows that we need of everything! Today, as far as physical things go, we have whatever. You open up your closet and you don't know what to wear.

What He wants us to do when we have these things, here is the thing that is so important:

Verse 33: "But *as for* you, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Maybe not all in this life, but what we look for in the Kingdom of God is what God is going to give us when we are spirit beings, the sons of God in the Kingdom of God. Then it will be fantastic.

- How many here are in starving circumstances? *I can tell by looking at all of us we're not!*
- How many here have us are in penurious circumstances that we have very little to wear? *Obviously, none of us!*
- How many here have difficult circumstances to where the place that you live you can't keep comfortable? *Not one of us!*

So, you look at all of the things that we have, all the conveniences. You have electricity, you have stoves you can cook on, television you watch, cassette players, CD players, movies, cars, planes, trains, *all of these things!*

With all of them, what does God expect us to do? When those things come, there is also a responsibility that since they are here, and we can use them, God expects us to make the most of the circumstances to grow in grace and knowledge *spiritually!* We have with the Word of God a time in history that is going to be kind of a flash in a moment of time in the history of eternity when we have all the Word of God, when we have the peace, security and means to do it.

Therefore, we need to be doing Matt. 6:33 in everything that we do. I tell you that when you do it I'll guarantee you this on the Word of God—not that I guarantee it, **Christ does**—that:

- your life will change
 - your faith will increase
- you will become*
- more converted
 - more loving
 - more understanding of God's Word

than at any time in your life on a progressive path! You really won't understand the profound opportunity that you have until one day down the road that may be taken away. The problem for us is that it's difficult for us to fully appreciate and understand what God has done in preparing the spiritual meals in His Word for us.

James 1:22: "Then be doers of *the* Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves, 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 (vs 22-24).

Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until the heaven and the earth shall pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass from the Law until everything has been fulfilled. Therefore, whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever shall practice and teach *them*, this one shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven" (vs 17-19). *That's why James wrote 'don't be hears, but be doers.'*

Verse 20: "For I say to you, unless your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way *that* you shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." *So, we have to be doers spiritually speaking!*

What was it that the scribes and Pharisees did? *They created all kinds of laws!* If you haven't read *Code of Jewish Law* you don't understand what Judaism is about. They have a law for everything.

Someone sent me an e-mail of why the Muslims can't get along in the modern world. It's almost like Judaism, do this, that and the other thing:

- pray to Mecca five times
- sleep only on your right side; can't sleep on your left side
- can't put your right foot going into a door of a heathen; your left foot in, but you come out with your right foot

All of these things are just like Judaism. The way your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees is that you:

- understand the commandments of God
- keep the commandments of God from the heart
- are being spiritually motivated by the love of God

That righteousness comes from within in serving and loving, and it's inspired by the Spirit of God and the imputed righteousness of Christ. Therefore, you don't need an exterior law saying not to put your foot in the door first. But you love each other and you love God, and everything you do is based upon that. What is so great about this is that it does exactly what Christ wants done in your life.

With the Spirit of God, the commandments of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit you live your life before God without having someone to come and have command and control over you to say, 'go here, go there, do this, do that, etc.

For those of you who have been in a command and control church, you know what I'm

talking about. Whatever is right, loving and proper in any circumstances—whether it be with your family, children, wife, husband, or with people where you work, people in the world—it is all going to be motivated with the love of God so that you will conduct yourself as a representative of the Kingdom of God. That will glorify God because of your behavior, because you love God and choose to do so. It's a part of you and it's not a pretense. It's not cloaks or hats or shawls that you put on. It's not beads that you pray with.

It is from your heart because you love God and are devoted to Him and His way, and to Jesus Christ! That is the simplicity of Christ!

James 1:25: “But the one who has looked **into the perfect law of freedom**, and has continued in it...”

What is it called *the law of freedom*? It is not the law of liberty to do as you please. It's the law of freedom, because if you continue in it, ***you are free from***

- sin
- a guilty conscience
- a double standard

You add to that the faith that comes from God, and then you are developing the mind of Christ. It's a tremendous thing! Really a tremendous thing!

“...this one himself has not become a forgetful hearer, but is **a doer of the work**...” (v 25).

It's like the Jew on the Day of Atonement, he takes a shower and leans back and gets a little drink and says, ‘Whoops, God, I got a little water in my mouth...’—*or you're looking for a way to get as close to sin as you can without sinning!* None of that enters in, because you're not “...forgetful hearer...”

Wherever you go, whatever you do, you're loving God and keeping His commandments in all circumstances, everywhere that you are. That's a wonderful thing! If you could do that perfectly every day that would be marvelous! None of us do, but that is the goal.

“...This one shall be blessed in his actions” (v 25).

I did a series *Why God Hates Religion* and I still get people writing me saying that they hear about James 1:26-27. Let's understand that here religion has to do with the exterior things that people do. That's what it means. In this series I ask: Which religion will God keep in the Millennium? Protestants? *No!* Catholics? *No!* Muslims? *No!* Buddhists? *No!*

God doesn't want us to have a religion where this is how we act when we're sanctimonious and then over here this is how we act when we're not religious and sanctimonious. You've seen that in people, and that's why God hates religion, because it's a pretense.

There was a lot of hypocritical pretense among the Jews with their behavior, and among the Israelites and their behavior. Their way of doing things was corrupted. So, James is trying to set the record straight here:

Verse 26: “If anyone among you considers himself to be religious, and does not control his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* vain. Pure and undefiled religion before God... [notice that it is the physical actions; it doesn't say to pray and study] ...and *the* Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (vs 26-27).

That's not the totality of conversion! These are some of the exterior things that they were doing.

Matt. 5—here we will see that Jesus is going beyond what James is saying in James 1:26-27.

Matthew 5:33: “Again, you have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not forswear yourself, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; nor by Jerusalem, because it is *the* city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, because you do not have the power to make one hair white or black. But let your word be *good*, your ‘Yes’ *be* yes and your ‘No’ *be* no; for anything that *is* added to these is from the evil one” (vs 33-37).

This is, in particular, what you might say a court case. Here is a difference in what Christ was saying and what James was trying to bring the people out of. You have to bring them out step by step.

Verse 38: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’; but I say to you, do not resist evil; rather, *if* anyone shall strike you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (vs 38-39).

I talked to a teenaged girl who was confronted by a girls' gang. They came up to her and they were going to do something to her, be violent, and she got hit on one of her cheeks. She turned and bared the other to them because she believed what it said her in the Scriptures and the gang walked away. *Amazing!*

Did God honor what she did? *Yes!* It's not

like some have said that you turn the one cheek and then the other cheek, and when they're done with that, then give them all you've got! Remember, God is able to handle them; He can take care of them. Besides, you don't know how many angels are around you anyway. So, you have to keep that in mind.

Matt. 7 talks about keeping yourself unspotted from the world and doing things that are right and obeying God. This is kind of an illusion, not a direct quotation.

Matthew 7:22: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.'" (vs 22-23).

This ties in with these verses in the last part of the book of James, because they're not doing and practicing what Christ said.

Verse 24: "Therefore, **everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them**, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock" (vs 24-25).

Christ is the Rock, you're the Temple of God, you're building on Christ, and regardless of what happens, you will not fall. You're going to have trials and difficulties, because the rains come and the flood come and the wind blow. It's going to beat upon the house, but you're not going to fall, because it's founded on Christ!

We can also tie v 26 in with the unstable man. The double-minded person, too; v 26: "And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (vs 26-27).

We can see the comparison here, that those who do not keep their tongues and practice the Word of God are much likened to what we have here in Matt. 7. Matt. 15 also ties in with double-minded, hypocrisy and so forth:

Matthew 15:7: "Hypocrites! Isaiah has prophesied well concerning you, saying, 'These people have drawn near to Me with their mouths, and with their lips they honor Me; but their hearts are far away from Me. For they worship Me in vain, teaching *for* doctrine *the* commandments of men'"

(vs 7-9). *So, you have vain religion, which comes from vain traditions!*

Verse 10: "And after calling the multitude to *Him*, He said to them, 'Hear, and understand. That which goes into the mouth does not defile the man; but that which comes out of his mouth, this defiles the man.' Then His disciples came to Him and said, 'Do You realize that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?' But He answered *and* said, 'Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. Leave them alone. They are blind leaders of *the* blind. And if *the* blind lead *the* blind, both shall fall into the pit.' Then Peter answered *and* said to Him, 'Explain this parable to us.'" (vs 10-15).

Verse 19: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessing *and* blasphemies. These are the things that defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man" (vs 19-20).

So, we have a parallel here tying in with James and vain religion and doing the things that are of vain religious practices.

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 6:1-4
- 2) Luke 1:1-2
- 3) James 1
- 4) Acts 2 2:7-9, 22, 14, 36
- 5) Matthew 10:1-6, 22-23
- 6) James 2:1-2
- 7) James 5:14
- 8) James 1:2-3
- 9) Matthew 5: 10-12\
- 10) James 1:4
- 11) Matthew 5:48
- 12) James 1:5-6
- 13) Matthew 7:7-11
- 14) James 1:6
- 15) Matthew 21:18-22
- 16) James 1:6
- 17) Matthew 14:24-33
- 18) James 1:8
- 19) Matthew 6:22-24
- 20) James 1:9
- 21) Matthew 5:3
- 22) James 1:10-11
- 23) Matthew 6:27-33
- 24) James 1:22-24
- 25) Matthew 5:17-20
- 26) James 1:25-27
- 27) Matthew 5:33-37
- 28) Matthew 7:22-27
- 29) Matthew 15:7-15, 19-20

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 1
- John 7
- 1 Corinthians 15
- 2 Kings 17
- Matthew 13

Also referenced:

Commentary When was the New Testament Written? (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*)

Books:

- *Josephus*
- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried and Goldin

Sermon Series: *Why God Hates Religion*

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