

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

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The Book of James

Introduction:

Martin Luther (1483 to 1546) was a German monk and religious reformer. Luther was known for challenging the authority of the Roman Catholic Church by holding that the Bible alone stood as man's source of guidance in spiritual matters. Luther believed that all baptized believers were recognized as priests rather than a select few in the Catholic Church. Luther believed that salvation was a free gift of God that would be realized only when the believer repented of sins and exercised faith in Jesus. Luther looked to Romans 3:28 as his proof text which states, "*We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.*" The problem with Luther's conclusion was that it conflicted with the writings of James. James said, "*Even so, faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself*" (James 2:17). Luther concluded thereby that the book of James was a "straw epistle" that really did not belong in the canon of God's word. Unfortunately, Luther's ideas and teachings have been accepted by many the world over. A thorough study of James will yield the fruits of understanding and wisdom in relationship to man's responsibility to be obedient to all God's commands. James brings the Christian to a divine approach to life that will help one through the most difficult and trying of times.

Author of Book of James

The author of James is obviously "James" (see James 1:1); however, we have the duty of identifying who James is. There were many James in the Bible. We read of James the son of Zebedee as being one of the earliest apostles chosen by Jesus (see Mk. 1:19) and the brother of John (Matt. 4:21). It was this James whose mother had asked Jesus if her two sons may occupy a prominent place in the kingdom of God (Matt. 20:20). This James was beheaded by Herod around the year 42-44 AD (see Acts 12:1-5) (i.e., likely well before the writing of a letter to those of the dispersion).

We also read about James the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:2-4) and James the brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:54-58; Gal. 1:18-19). James the Lord's brother appears to be one of the elders in the church in Jerusalem and a pillar in the church (see Acts 15:13ff; Gal. 2:9). Most seem to agree that it must have been this James; i.e., the brother of Jesus, elder and pillar in the church of Jerusalem that wrote this epistle.

Date

Dating James is very difficult. We know that the dispersion of Christians throughout the world occurred approximately 44 AD (see Acts 8:1ff). Clearly the destruction of Jerusalem had not yet occurred (i.e., 70 AD). A broad range of the writing would thereby be 44 to 70 AD.

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Elizabeth Cribbs' will be having another back surgery procedure this month. Continue to pray that all will go well with her.

Quincy Adams is scheduled to have eye surgery in Dallas on July 3, 2008.

We rejoice with the **Chancellor family** over the marriage of Clint and Marisol. May the Lord bless them with a long life together.

Tolene Witherspoon received a favorable test results last week. Let us continue to pray that she will be ok.

Thomas Gresham and Jim Summers' contact info is posted in the foyer. Please keep them in your daily prayers.

Adult Bible Studies:

Sunday mornings we are studying the book of James and this Wednesday Joe Cronin will begin a new class over Worldliness.

Singing Class:

There is a weekly singing class being conducted on Sundays at 5:00 PM.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

Bessie Murphy
4600 Taft Blvd, Apt. 538

To whom was this epistle written?

James 1:1 addresses the “*twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion.*” The apostle Peter also addressed his first epistle to specific brethren of the “*dispersion*” (see I Pet. 1:1). The word “*dispersion*” (*diaspora*) = “a scattering, as of seed; dispersion; in NT the dispersed portion of the Jews, specially termed the dispersion (cf. Jn. 7:35; James 1:1; I Pet. 1:1)” (Moulton 95). Peter is clearly speaking of Christians in general (i.e., the elect of God / see I Pet. 1:1). The Greek *diaspora* is also found at John 7:35 in relation to Jesus leaving the Jews and going to the Gentiles to preach. James’ use of the Greek *diaspora* seems to refer to Christians in general who have been figuratively scattered as seed throughout the world.

Why is James written?

Christians were being dispersed throughout the world (away from their homelands). They were being exposed to intense trials (James 1:1ff; I Pet. 1:6), they were falling in sin through weakness of the flesh (James 1:13-15, 21), and they were guilty of preferential treatment toward the wealthy in their assembly (James 2:6-7, 9). Furthermore there were brethren that were teaching a faith only doctrine (James 2:14 – 3:12). James tells us that some Christians were fighting with each other (4:1ff), filled with pride (4:6), gossips (4:11-12), and some had left God completely out of their life plans (James 4:13-17). James reveals the fact that many Christians had put their faith in the things of this world (James 5:1ff). This epistle is a wake up call to the faithful of God. They needed to change their sinful ways.

James sets out to Reorient the Christians to their Hope and Objective

Christians need to be reminded about Bible truths that they had previously learned. The apostle Peter said, “*Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth, which is with you*” (II Pet. 1:12). James’ audience needed to be refocused on the subjects of humility and patience. James’ sharp exposure of the people’s sins was intended to move them to shame that they may humble themselves before the eyes of God (James 4:6-10). The apparent intense persecutions that the disciples were undergoing were contributing to the brethren giving up their faith for sinful practices. James reminds the Christians that they are to patiently await the coming of Jesus (see James 5:7-8). Humility in the face of exposed sin and patience in the face of intense persecution was the only way one would see the end of their faith; i.e., a crown of life (James 1:12). The beauty of the book of James is that the author gives his readers a game plan to follow that they may overcome the trials of persecution, hardships, and sin. The Christian’s approach to life was to be with wisdom (James 3:13), humility (James 4:6), and patience (James 1:3; 5:7-11). Said approach is deemed the “*perfect*” approach to life (see James 1:4; 4:15-17 – see also Phil. 3:15). If any lacked this wisdom and approach to life James instructs them to pray for it (James 1:5). Secondly, when Christians found themselves unable to endure their pain any longer they were encouraged to look to the examples of the prophets and Job (James 5:10-11). The “crown of life” (James 1:12), “salvation” (James 1:21), “justification” (James 2:25), God’s “grace” (James 4:6), “exaltation” (James 4:10), the Lord’s “mercy and pity” (James 5:11), and spiritual “death” (James 5:20) are all at stake. Now is the time to pray, confess, and be forgiven of sins committed (James 5:15-20).

John C. Robertson

Modesty

Introduction:

Hot weather means less clothes in our society. As we go to the mall, grocery stores, ball games, and any place where the public assembles we will find immodestly dressed people. Let the Christian remain sanctified from the world even through these 100 plus degree days.

I. Identifying our terms:

- A. **Modesty** (I Tim. 2:8-10) = “Quiet and humble in appearance; unpretentious” (AHD 806). “Well ordered, regular, moderate... of persons, orderly, well-behaved, regular, discreet, quiet: decorum, decency, order” (LS 446).
- B. Adorn = “Order, arrange, to deck, adorn, equip, furnish, dress” (LS 446).
- C. Immodest = “lacking modesty” (AHD 644).
- D. Naked (Jn. 21:7-8) = “naked, stripped, bare... without an outer garment, without which a decent person did not appear in public... uncovered, bare” (AG 167-68). “In common language it meant lightly clad, i.e., in the tunic only, without the mantle... exposed” (LS 170). “Naked, without clothing, without the upper garment, and clad only with an inner garment or tunic... poorly or meanly clad, destitute of proper and sufficient clothing... not covered, uncovered” (Moulton 83). The tunic “was the simplest of all the garments worn, corresponding to an ordinary shirt or nightgown... It afforded so slight a covering that persons who had on nothing else were called naked” (Unger’s Bible Dictionary 319).
- E. Nakedness defined by the Word of God (Ex. 28:42).

II. Nakedness associated with Shame and Sin:

- A. Adam and Eve were Naked yet not ashamed (Gen. 2:23-25). After sin entered into the world the two were ashamed of their nakedness (Gen. 3:6-7). There are clearly areas of the body that God intends for man to have concealed (see Gen. 3:21; Ex. 20:26).
- B. Consider these Bible passages on the shame of nakedness (Ezek. 16:35ff; 22:6-12; Lam. 1:4-9; Jer. 1:4-9; Rev. 16:15).
- C. A lack of shame, in relation to one’s violation of God’s will, indicates spiritual deficiencies in one’s thinking (Isa. 3:9; Jer. 6:15-19). This is why the attire of the harlot seduces those “*void of understanding*” (Prov. 7:7-27).

III. Attempts to justify one’s Nakedness:

- A. “I don’t see anything wrong with taking my shirt off... everyone else is doing it...”
- B. This is the same line of reasoning that the homosexual, thief, once saved always saved idea, etc.

IV. What will your Decision Be?

- A. Will you hear this sermon but do nothing (Deut. 31:27; James 1:22).
- B. Does this sermon harden your heart against God (Ex. 4:21)?
- C. Do you even care (Rev. 3:16)?
- D. Do you consider your influence on others (Phil. 4:9)?

Conclusion:

The Christian must realize that we live in a world that, for the most part, does not measure their actions by the standard of truth. When we emulate their estimation of what is right and wrong then we have turned our backs on God. No matter what the subject let us all proclaim, “Not my will but thy will be done!