



The Book of James 4th Q 2014

Lesson 1: James, the Lord's Brother

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

Sep 27: Class Potluck Picnic 1:00 P.M. – At the Pavilion at Student Park in Collegedale. Plates, eating utensils, napkins and drinks will be provided, please bring food, friends, and lawn chair. Many of our class have responsibilities at local churches and don't often make it to class, but don't let that keep you away from the potluck – We want to see you!

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Sunday Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon. (Dr. Jennings will be teaching his class Saturday November 15)

Nov 22, 2014: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Placerville, SDA church in Placerville, CA.

The Weekend of **Jan 10, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

AMAZON Smile: Amazon now has a program that a percent of all your purchases will be donated to support a charity. Come and Reason Ministries is a registered Charity. So, you can select us, and whenever you shop in their smile.amazon.com site a portion of your purchase will benefit this ministry.

NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

I received this email this week:

Your ministry has been a wonderful blessing to me. It has been like finding the missing pieces of a beautiful puzzle. You have confirmed for me many things I already believed and have enlarged and enhanced my understanding of many others. I am anxious to share the materials. I have been pointing people to your website, but am not getting the response I expected.



I would like to try passing out DVDs of the "God Shaped Brain" seminar. Perhaps after my fellow church members are introduced to you, they will be more interested in more of your materials. Please send 20 of them.

I would also like 20 of the truth love and freedom Bible study guides about the trustworthiness of God. And 20 copies of the Fundamental Focus booklets. FL

INTRODUCTION

The introduction to the lesson points out in the third paragraph, that Martin Luther considered the book of James to be an "epistle of straw." Luther relegated James, Jude, Revelation and Hebrews to the back of the Bible and stated he couldn't find Christ in these books and didn't consider them part of Scripture.

The lesson rightly points out in the fourth paragraph of the introduction, "Luther's emphasis on Paul's epistles, especially Romans and Galatians, and his rejection of James for anything more than devotional value, has influenced a large segment of Christian thinking through the centuries."

First I want to point out Luther was a hero of the reformation, a man of God used by God, but not a perfect person, a human being with limited understanding who didn't come to resolve all the distortions that had infected Christianity over the centuries.

How has Christianity been influenced by the rejection of James and the three other books by Luther?

- The loss of the larger view of a controversy involving the entire universe over God's trustworthiness
- The focus on a self-centered read of Scripture, it is all about me and my salvation
- In reaction to the infection of imposed law with all its arbitrariness, a legal religious emphasis, frequently referred to as penal substitution which focuses on legal pardon, legal solutions, legal adjustments and devalues or ignores actual transformation and regeneration of people
- Division and factions as Christians focus on the right legal and proper interpretation of a verse, doctrine, prophecy, rather than identifying God's design protocols and principles for living

Any other examples or thoughts?

SABBATH

Read memory text, "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you." Jn 15:14

Do you find that interesting way of making friends? Go up to a group and say, you are my friends if you do whatever I command you?



How is this true when Jesus says it and how can this be misunderstood?

If viewed through a dictator lens, a lens of authority being based on position or rank, then the king has the right to command and we show our friendship by obeying his commands without question. To question is seen as rebellious and unfriendly.

In the Designer view, we understand that authority rests on truth, and God is the source of all truth, and also has a character of love, with the best interest of all His creatures at heart. Thus, if we are His friends, we know Him, we know His character of love, we know that His methods work and are best, thus with intelligent understanding, appreciation for who He is, we do what He commands, even if we don't understand the purpose of the specific command, we do understand the one who gave the command and know it is for good, thus we do what He says and are thankful He cares enough to give us His directions.

- Which way have you viewed His commands throughout your life?
- Has your view of His commands changed over the years?
- What has impacted you to change your view, and how has your changed view impacted your desire to carry out His commands?

What is the consequence for viewing his commands like a dictator? That it increases fear and rebellion, that we might do the behavior but we are not being transformed to godliness. People who obey because the rule says so, because God must punish if we don't, and who refuse to grow beyond this point even when opportunity to grow presents itself, generally don't become trustworthy people because they require oversight and supervision or else they will rebel.

This is why many young people leave the church. They are raised in homes with dictator god concepts, given a list of rules, many of which don't make sense. They try to grow to a better understanding, but when they ask why, are told things like:

- The Bible says so
- God says so
- The pastor says so
- EGW says so
- Because "I" said so
- Because if you don't you will be lost
- Because if you don't it will be sin and you will have to face that sin in the judgment
- Because if you do go there your angel won't go with you

And when no better reason is given they end up leaving the church as soon as they are out from under the ruling authority.



Imagine something as simple as brushing teeth – the very young child is given the rule, and told to do so, and perhaps a punishment is threatened if they don't. But what happens if when they start thinking, they ask questions, “Mommy why do I have to brush my teeth?” And the answer is:

- The Bible says so
- God says so
- The pastor says so
- EGW says so
- Because “I” said so
- Because if you don't you will be lost
- Because if you don't it will be sin and you will have to face that sin in the judgment

If the child never had any reason other than these, what would the child likely do when they left home? And we wonder why so many of our children leave the church? We must bring them back to the truth of God's law of love, the design upon which life is built, and show them that life is built to operate upon this design, and to deviate from it decays more than teeth, it decays the mind, the heart, the soul, relationships and true happiness, peace and joy.

SUNDAY/MONDAY

The lesson points out that James started out doubting Jesus' mission and fitness, but later became a convert and devoted follower of Jesus. James became so devout that he was eventually called James the Just and was the first leader of the church in Jerusalem.

The lesson states, “Thus, despite starting out in great doubt about Jesus, James ended up being a spiritual giant in the early church.”

What does this tell us about us determining who is fit for God's work? How often do we limit people from working in the church because of some problem we have identified in their history?

Consider the list of people who have been God's agents recorded in Scripture, what do we learn about God from these people:

- Noah
 - The world is dying, bent on self-destruction, what do we learn about God through Noah?
 - Did God want the world to die? Or did He warn and try to save?
 - And after the flood Noah ends up drunk – should we throw Noah out of the church?
- Abraham
 - What about Abraham's idols? How did God treat Abraham?
 - What about Abraham's lies? How did God treat him?



- What about when Abraham argued over Sodom? Shouldn't Abraham have just gone along? Was Abraham referred to as a friend of God? Yet he didn't blindly obey, he objected, what does this mean?
 - What about when Abraham took other wives?
 - What does Abraham's life witness about God?
- Lot (and his daughters) – what do we learn about God?
- Jacob/Israel
 - What do we learn about God?
 - Jacob was a conniver and deceiver and polygamist
 - How did God treat him?
- Moses
 - Moses was a murderer – How did God treat Moses?
 - Would we allow Moses to be leader in the church?
 - When God called Moses, how did Moses respond?
 - When God said He was going to wipe out Israel what did Moses say?
 - What is Moses' witness about God?
- Samson
 - What does Samson's life witness about God?
 - God gives gifts but doesn't control
 - Patiently waits for us to be willing to be healed
 - Was Samson gifted by God?
 - Would we allow Samson to lead in our church?
- David
 - Murderer, adulterer, violent man – How does God treat David?
 - And what do we see in David's life?
 - Does it witness something about God?
- Solomon
 - What witness does he give about God?
 - God married 700 wives, and had 300 mistresses
 - He killed his own son to false gods
 - Who wrote Ecclesiastes?
 - What do we learn about God in His treatment of Solomon?
- Manasseh
 - Manasseh brought prostitutes into the temple
 - Sacrificed his own son to Moloch
 - Was taken captive, but repented and God had him restored to his throne
 - What witness does Manasseh give about God?
- Your life and mine – what do we learn about God from your life and mine?
 - If we have messed up, done awful things, can we still be witnesses for God if we surrender to Him and allow Him to work in our lives?
 - What do we witness about God?



- Do we witness about Him by what we tell others, how we describe Him? What about how we treat others?
- But what if we, in our human weakness, have moments in which we don't act graciously – what then?
- How will God treat us?
- Will He cast us off?
- How should we respond after a mistake?
- Can we still be used of God if we have made mistakes?
- How should we treat someone who has made mistakes?
- How would God treat them?
- Can we love people who make mistakes, someone who has a drug or alcohol problem, what about someone with a porn addiction, what about someone who has committed adultery, what about someone who embezzled, or lied, or murdered, or some other act of selfishness which hurt another?
- How should we treat people? How does God treat them? Does God see vengeance upon them? Or does God seek to heal them, to remove selfishness and fear, to remove guilt and shame, to restore them to love and trust? Should we do any less?
- How do we help people trapped in fear, guilt and shame? By loving them, in the same way a doctor or parent loves a child sick with fever, vomiting, diarrhea, cough, sores, rash, scars – as you look at your sick child do you ever want to punish them for being sick? What do you want to do? Heal them – this is how, we must come back to seeing sin for what it is – deviation from the way life is designed to operate, a sickness, which needs healing. We must stop presenting sin as breaking rules and God as a judge waiting to punish.

God takes the worst cases and heals, restores, cleanses, recreates. The weak things of the world to confound the wise!

TUESDAY

The lesson rightly points out in the first paragraph, “ ‘the Reformation did not...end with Luther. It is to be continued to the close of this world's history,’ because ‘grave errors’ were perpetrated by the Reformers and many ‘important truths’ were still to be revealed.”

What important truths were still to be revealed?

- The truth about God's character of love
- The truth about God's law of love being the design protocols upon which life is created
- The truth about God's plan to heal and restore, not merely pardon
- The truth about the false legal view that infected the church
- The truth about the nature of man, being mortal, awaiting the gift of immortality
- The truth about the final end of sin and sinners



- The truth about the purpose of the Sabbath and how it is a sign of the Designer who presents truth in love and leaves free, contrasted with any day of arbitrarily imposed worship enforced with coercive power.
- The truth about the purpose of Christ's mission to earth – which includes:
 - Revealing the truth about God and Himself
 - Exposing Satan as liar and fraud
 - Securing the universe unfallen in its innocence
 - Procuring the Remedy to our sinful condition
 - Revealing why death occurs and the Father's role in it
 - Destroying death
 - Destroying Satan and Satan's power
 - Developing a perfect human character
- others?

The lesson points out that the SDA church was raised up to proclaim the “third angel's message.”

Can someone tell me what that is?

It is the message of:

- the truth about God and His character of love (everlasting good news)
- being restored in character to be like Christ through trust in God, which results from coming back to the truth of God as Christ revealed (giving God glory)
- the time in earth's history for God to be seen for who He really is so people can make a right judgment about Him and accept His healing Remedy (the hour of his judgment has come)
- It is a message which exposes the legal system coming from the Dark Ages as an infection which misrepresents God as a dictator like Rome and keeps people in fear and thus separated from Him, a system of confusion based on arbitrary law and thus thousands of interpretations of Scripture. (Babylon is confused and fallen)
- It is a message calling people from that system and warning of the dire results of refusing to be restored in character to live in harmony with God's design for life. (all who receive the mark of loyalty to a beastly system of coercive power which enforces arbitrary rules, worshipping a god who must punish, will suffer terrible torment when the truth is revealed and they will be destroyed for all eternity)

What role does the law play in the third angel's message? Here are some thoughts of how are church used to teach it:

- **But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1} Why? Because this is how life is designed to operate. It is the same reason the laws of health require one to breathe.**



- **The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves.** {A New Life NL 32.1} *why?*
- **His law requires your heart's supreme affection for your Maker. It requires you to do unto others as you would have them do to you.** {BEcho, February 15, 1889 par. 8}
- This is the voice of God to you, my brethren and sisters who profess to keep the law of God. **That law requires that you love your neighbor as yourself.** Are you doing it? {RH, March 11, 1884 par. 10}
- The Lord will give ample light to all who will be true and loyal to him, but he will show no more favor to Phariseeism and self-righteousness today than when he walked in his humanity in our world. [*what is Phariseeism? a legal religion, a religion focused on rule keeping with a god who must punish, a religion which requires payments be made to pay for our sins. In other words, penal substitution theology*] The soul that encourages an atmosphere of doubt, God cannot favor with constantly increasing grace. [*what encourages doubt? presenting a god who will be angry and inflict punishment upon you if you sin, thus we cannot grow in grace because w don't trust Him enough to open up to Him. We instead try to make ourselves better.*] His mercy and the gracious influences of his Spirit remain the same for all who will receive them. His offer of salvation does not change. **It is man who changes his relationship to God.** Many place themselves where they cannot recognize his grace and his salvation. ***They are under a delusion as to what constitutes Christianity.*** **And while man refuses to become pure, holy, and undefiled, as God's law requires him to do, he is walking away from Christ.** {RH, February 15, 1898 par. 10} [*Why would someone refuse to be healed, to be cleansed, pure, holy and undefiled? Because they have accepted a false version of reality which tells them they are legally guilty and they don't need healing, they need legal pardon.*]
- **...his law requires us to love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves.** {ST, November 23, 1891 par. 5}
- **God's law requires that justice and right be exercised between man and his fellow man; it requires that we shall not injure our neighbor in his property, his feelings, his health, or his good name. It requires compassion for the afflicted, even if he be our enemy, that in all our associations with our fellow beings we shall show the same love and care that we would wish to have exercised toward ourselves.** {ST, January 7, 1897 par. 3}

So if the law requires us to love our enemies, wouldn't that be true of God? Then do you see the fallacy of teaching that God hates, or inflicts torture upon His enemies!

- **Christ came to this world to live the law and represent the character of God, that the delusions which Satan had brought upon the world might be dispelled.** [*What is a delusion? – a fixed false belief and the world is fixed in a false belief about God*] In the sermon



on the mount, He who gave the law became an expositor of the law. That sermon, so full of what it means to love and obey God, is the unfolding of His character. **The law is shown to be a representation of God's character**, that man may see that he must render obedience to the law if he would become a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. **This law requires nothing short of perfect spiritual obedience.** {ST, February 24, 1898 par. 5}

How can experience what the law does require?

- While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.** {MB 54.2}

thoughts? Does this sound like legal pardon? Getting signs paid, a declaration of us being righteous, covering us with some magic robe so the Father can't see us? No, it is the reality of what God wants and is doing, the actual, real, literal transformation of our hearts and minds to be back in harmony with Him and His design for life – the law of love written again on our hearts!

WEDNESDAY

The lesson suggests that when James is referring to the Twelve tribes scattered abroad he is referring to those who have accepted Christ and thus became part of those who benefit from the promise made to Abraham.

What was the promise made to Abraham?

That God would send a Savior, who would overcome the sin problem and provide a Remedy to heal and restore all who are restored to trust in God, as Abraham was.

Thus, those who are heirs to the promise to Abraham are those who trust God as Abraham did, therefore James is referring to all humans who trust God like Abraham.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal 3:28,29

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ



is all, and is in all. ¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col 3:9-12

Did you notice how we are to clothe ourselves with the character traits of Christ and it is by partaking of Christ this happens. This is what it means to be clothed in the robe of His righteousness.

Read the bottom pink section, "A church scattered..." What is it that is to unite God's people on earth for translation?

They overcame him by the **blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.** Rev 12:11

What does this mean?

The blood of the lamb?

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and **drink his blood**, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats my flesh and **drinks my blood has eternal life**, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and **my blood is real drink.** ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and **drinks my blood remains in me**, and I in him. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. JN 6:53-57

What is the blood of the lamb?

- blood is symbolic of both the perfect character/life of Christ and the truth, the words of truth spoken by Christ
 - "In the **study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood** of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life." Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1
 - "The leaven of **truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By **it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.**" Christ's Object Lessons 102
- We partake of the truth, which destroys lies and wins to trust and then open the heart and partake in a living relationship with Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit the character of Christ reproduced within as we choose to love and align ourselves with Him

Thus, by coming back to the truth about God, and partaking of the character of Christ we are changed and our selfishness is replaced with love and we are willing to give our lives rather than work to save self.



So what unites us? The truth about God and having the law of God written in the heart so that we have a character like Christ's, thus we live in harmony with His principles of truth (having a love for truth and a willingness to be open, learn and follow the truth), love for God and others, and freedom.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "James had the..."

Why do you think he chose to use the word servant or bondservant? Perhaps to emphasize that the kingdom of God is not of this world, and there are no genetic benefits to salvation or being part of God's kingdom. One cannot by biological relationship be part of the kingdom of God, but must have the character of God reproduced within.

This, would significantly alter the way many people consider the Jews – many consider genetic relationship with Abraham to be of some value – but it adds nothing to salvation – what matters is restored unity with God through Christ.

Read last paragraph, "As we study..." What is weak faith? Superstition –

- Belief without evidence
- Belief in position
- Belief in symbols
- Belief in rituals

Examples:

- The Bible said it I believe it that settles it
- EGW said it, who are we to question?
- Believing without thinking, thus believing lies

When we speak of unbelief, we do not mean that a person believes nothing. The mind must rest upon something; and **when it does not grasp truth, it lays hold of error. All men in one sense believe, and the effect produced upon the heart and character is according to the things believed.** Eve believed the words of Satan, and **the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors,** and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God. **Paul had faith before his conversion; but it was not a correct faith. His self-righteousness strengthened his faith** that he was doing God's service in rejecting Christ, and he enjoyed a restful satisfaction. **False faith as well as true faith will give peacefulness for a time.** Paul verily thought that he was doing God service when he was persecuting the followers of Christ and putting them to death. **He was sincere in his belief; but sincerity will not make error truth, nor truth error.** "When the commandment came," says Paul, "sin revived, and I died." He then received the truth as it is in Jesus, and experienced



its transforming power upon his soul. The truth was so firmly planted in his heart that he could say, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

We have power over what we believe, but what we believe holds power over us!

While people are free to believe or have faith in anything, not all beliefs are equally healthy.

What is mature faith? – Evidence based understanding and confidence in reality and the God of reality.

The faith that works by love and purifies the soul is the only true faith. The faith that does not produce fruit, that does not reveal the Christlikeness, is a false faith. {ST, February 1, 1899 par. 8}

In regard to religious faith being sacred to one's self and not to be interfered with, I cannot harmonize this with the life mission and work of Christ upon the earth. Idolaters have a religion; they may make this same plea: My religion is sacred to myself. Hands off; do not interfere with my honest belief and worship. It is the work of God's servants to feel a deep solicitude for the souls for whom Christ died. **And if they see them in error or in danger, through a false faith, it is their duty to do all in their power to convert them to the truth and not leave them in darkness and deception.** {4MR 229.2}

What does this mean? How are we to do this? What lines do we not cross?

FRIDAY

Read question 1 – “The letter of James...” Is it actually about the day, or the God of the day and His methods and principles, of which each day is symbolic?

So who is the one that is part of God's kingdom:

- a person who honors Sunday, but does so with a mind filled with God's character of love, and promotes the principles of truth, love and freedom and would give their lives for another, or,
- A person who honors the Bible Sabbath as a test of obedience, and teaches that God as Creator has the right to test us and if we fail to pass the test, and don't keep the Bible Sabbath God will torture and kill us?

Why do you give your answer? What evidence to support it?