

## **S6 DIV 2**

### **THE LETTER ACCORDING TO JAMES**

James who wrote this letter is believed to have been a brother to Jesus Christ. He wrote this letter to the scattered Christians all over the world.

### **REASONS FOR WRITING THIS LETTER TO JAMES**

James wrote this letter to address the evils that existed in the society as seen below

- 1) There were class distinctions among the Christians. Christians could be classified according to the outside appearance; therefore, the rich were favored more than the poor 2:1ff
- 2) Christians were slow to listen but quick to act on wicked things and to become angry 1:19
- 3) The rich Christians put trust in their wealth instead of depending on God 1:9-11
- 4) There was lack of patience, or endurance when a Christian was faced with suffering
- 5) There was boasting among Christians, they never considered God in their business and when making plans about tomorrow 4:13ff
- 6) Christians were running after bodily/earthly desires which could result into fights, quarrels and conflicts 4:1ff
- 7) Christians were trusting in earthly wisdom yet it is characterized of selfishness, jealousy etc. and ignored the heavenly wisdom which is pure 3:13ff
- 8) Christians were judging one another hence ignoring God's judgement 4:11
- 9) Christians claimed to have faith yet could not accompany it with action 2:14ff
- 10) Christians failed to control their tongues, they could use their tongues for cursing and blessing others
- 11) Christians were praying with doubts. They could not believe that God answer their prayers 1:6ff
- 12) There was lack of patience in prayer, Christians wanted God to answer their prayers immediately 5:7ff
- 13) There was a false teaching among Christians that God tempts man yet God doesn't tempt anybody but man is tempted by his evil desires 1:1

### **HOW APPLICABLE IS JAMES' LETTER TO CHRISTIANS TODAY?**

This letter is applicable in the following ways:

- 1) Christians should control their tongues because it can cause confusion in the community.
- 2) There should be equal treatment among Christians. Treatment should not be based on outside appearance.
- 3) Christians should be quick to listen but slow to act on wicked things and to become angry e.g. in case of any rumor
- 4) The rich Christians should put their trust in God instead of putting trust in their wealth since it is temporally.

- 5) Christians should endure temptations/ trials because it is a test of faith and one is rewarded after passing through it.
- 6) Christians should live a humble life and consider God in their business and plans instead of boasting about their wealth.
- 7) Christians should live as friends of God but not friends of the world since earthly friendship causes quarrels, fights etc.
- 8) Christians should put trust in Devine wisdom/heavenly wisdom instead of depending on the earthly wisdom.
- 9) Christians should leave God to judge others instead of themselves judging one another.
- 10) Christians should always show faith with actions. Therefore, Christians should be accompanied with faith which is full of actions.
- 11) Christians should control their tongues therefore they should not use their tongues for double standards that is praising God and then cursing others.
- 12) Christians are to pray with faith, God can answer their prayers if they pray with faith.
- 13) Christians should know that God doesn't test or tempt anybody but we are always tempted by our own evil desires.

**However, this letter may not be applicable to a small extent as seen below:**

- 14) Class distinctions may be difficult to avoid in our societies because we have important people who need security e.g. the President, the ministers. Therefore, they have to be given special seats for security purposes.
- 15) The Christians to control their tongues may be hard because Christians need to use a strong language when condemning evil in the society e.g. condemning incest in our community.
- 16) To leave God to judge others may be hard because we have the constitutional court to judge the wrong doers.
- 17) Faith to be accompanied with actions may not be easy because of the economic hardship today. Today money is needed for everything yet some Christians are poor.
- 18) Showing faith with actions may also be bad because it encourages laziness among the Christians since they expect to be provided, they don't work harder.
- 19) Helping those in need may be difficult e.g. the sick may not be helped because they may have contagious diseases e.g. Ebola.
- 20) The Christians to be slow to act and to become angry may be difficult to some Christians because of the different personalities we have e.g. some Christians are short tempered.

### **JAMES' TEACHING ON POVERTY AND RICHES**

James teaches the following:

- 1) That riches are temporary; they are like flowers which can fade at any time after being scotched by the sunshine 1:10
- 2) That wealth creates distinctions among people i.e. between the rich and the poor 2:2
- 3) That wealth makes the rich to disregard the poor, the poor are not considered to be important in the society.

- 4) Wealth makes the rich to oppress the poor. They are oppressed by giving them too much work but with little pay 2:6
- 5) Wealth encourages the rich to drag the poor in courts. The rich do drag the innocent poor to courts because they can pay bribes and win the case 2:6
- 6) That wealth makes the rich to have false evidence in themselves. They feel that their wealth can solve all their problems.
- 7) The rich do ignore God's providence hoping that their wealth can solve all their problems.
- 8) That people fight one another because they want to acquire wealth. That there are fights and quarrels in your society because of wealth.
- 9) That when people fail to get wealth they kill one another in order to get it. Some people kill others in order to achieve wealth 4:2
- 10) That wealth makes one to become a friend of the world instead of being a friend of God.
- 11) That wealth makes one to be proud. People with riches are proud they don't consider God in their plans 4:13
- 12) That the rich don't want to pay wages to their workers on time 5:4
- 13) That the poor are rich in faith and the kingdom of God belongs to them
- 14) That the rich do live in luxuries and pleasure and they forget God 5:4-5
- 15) That the rich Christians should be happy when God brings them down and the poor Christians should also be happy when God lifts them up 1:9

Discriminating one another basing on the outside appearance it is a sin before God

## **QUESTION**

Show James' teaching on the dangers/ snares of wealth

- It makes people ignore God's providence
- Creates distinctions among people
- Wealth makes people proud
- It leads to oppression of the poor by the rich
- Wealth makes people to quarrel and fight
- Wealth makes people to kill one another in order to get it
- It creates false confidence
- It makes people become friends of the world
- Wealth is temporally
- Wealth leads to sin
- Wealth makes the rich drag the poor in courts of law
- Wealth makes the rich to disregard the poor

## **RELEVANCE OF THIS TEACHING TO CHRISTIANS TODAY**

It can be seen today:

Christians should treat one another equally instead of discriminating them basing on the outside appearance.

1. Christians should treat one another equally, instead of discriminating them basing on outside appearance.
2. The rich Christians should pay their workers on time
3. The rich Christians should put their trust in God instead of putting their trust in wealth.
4. The rich Christians should be humble instead of boasting over others
5. The rich Christians should be merciful to the poor by not dragging the poor into the courts of law
6. A rich Christian should be happy when he becomes poor, and a poor Christian should be happy when God lifts him up
7. The rich Christians should be friends of God instead of being friends of the world.
8. There should be love for one another among Christians instead of fighting and quarrelling for wealth.
9. The rich should be considerate with their workers by not exploiting them with too much work.
10. The Christians should assist those in need e.g. the widows, orphans should be provided for.
11. The Christians should respect human life by not killing other people in order to acquire riches

## **JAMES' TEACHING ON TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS**

James' teaches the following: 1:12, 5:7-13, 1:2-8

- 1) That Christians should remain happy when faced with trials or suffering 1:12
- 2) That Christians should endure difficulties since it's a feature of Christian life
- 3) That difficulties are a test of Christian faith. Therefore, they prove the strength of one's faith
- 4) That Christians should be happy when faced with trials because they will be rewarded in heaven 1:12
- 5) Christians should not lose heart in the face of suffering but remain hopeful in the Lord Jesus Christ
- 6) That Christians should persevere in their trials and gain salvation
- 7) That Christian faithfulness, under trials and make a Christian perfect and complete under trial.
- 8) That a person who lacks faith during trials he cuts off himself from God
- 9) That the poor should rejoice because they will be raised through their faith.
- 10) He encourages those suffering to bear their pains with patience that Christians should be patient in the face of suffering
- 11) Therefore, Christians should accept to suffer.
- 12) That Christians should face trials and difficulties with a prayer.

- 13) A Christian should suffer for what is right but not suffer for what is wrong.  
14) That temptation came from our evil desires but not from God.

## **QUESTION**

How relevant is this teaching to Christians in Uganda?

To a big extent it has been relevant.

Those Christians who have lost their dear ones have remained firm in the lord.

- Some Christians have been hit badly by AIDS but they have remained strong in the lord.
- Some Christians do not take James' teaching seriously they take it to be comforting words for the depressed soul.
- The church itself has passed through difficult times e.g. the church of Uganda during Amin's time when he persecuted many religious leaders but Christians remained strong in faith.
- The experience of war in war home areas has not taken people away from Christ.
- Some Christians see suffering and trials as a will of God.
- Through teaching about Job some have endured and known that Gods people pass through such problems.
- Considering a teaching about prophets who suffered like Jeremiah, Amos etc. he encourages religious leaders to know that even their predecessors passed through that.
- Christ to Ugandans has been relevant as regards trials and suffering, they endure to come down and be patient like Jesus Christ.
- Some Christians have been at trials and difficulties are for a short time so they endure.
- Most Ugandans however grumble, they know the teaching but they grumble to God because of difficulties and trials.

## **JAMES' TEACHING ON FAITH AND ACTION (2:14-18)**

James teaches the following about faith and actions.

1. James says that the people who embrace faith and not put it in practice their faith is dead. Therefore, faith should be accompanied with actions.
2. He condemns that the faith has no effect on another people's lives e.g. to wish a poor brother to stay well and keep warm instead of providing for him what to put on.
3. To James good deeds/ works are proof of the true faith therefore faith should be accompanied with actions.
4. He says show me faith and I show you my faith with good deeds therefore faith is proved with good actions.
5. James says that a mere belief in the existence of God is not enough but should be accompanied with good deeds.
6. He says that a pure religious person involves taking care of the needy e.g. widows, the orphans and others.

7. That the man with faith should not be contaminated by worldly desires or worldly impurities and bad habits therefore a Christian should be ready to seek for the kingdom of God.
8. That one with faith should show it by being quick to speak and become angry. Therefore, this shows that faith can't be separated from good actions.
9. That faith makes a Christian to put Gods words into action or practice so that should not be forgotten.
10. James gives an example of Abraham whose faith was accompanied with good deeds or work.
11. Abrahams faith in God helped him to accompany it with actions of being ready to offer his son Isaac on the altar as a sacrifice.
12. That Rahabs faith was shown by welcoming and saving Gods messengers.
13. That these two Abraham and Rahab put their faith into actions unlike Sapphire and Ananias who gave empty promise. (acts 5:1-11)
14. providing clothes, food etc. to the poor.

How can Christians today put their faith into actions.

1. Christians can put faith into action by visiting the sick in hospitals.
2. By helping the poor people e.g. giving clothes to the orphans, food to the street children.
3. Christians can put their faith into action by reciting the rosary.
4. Christians can do this by giving a tithe in church.
5. Christians can go to church for Sunday service for prayers.
6. By contributing money to construct the church.
7. By going for missionary journeys.
8. By tuning gospel music at home.
9. By fasting during the lent period.
10. By preaching Gods word i.e. sharing Gods word with others.
11. By practicing monogamy.

## **JAMES' TEACHING ON THE TONGUE.**

James teaches the following about the tongue;

1. That a true religion includes the control of the tongue. Therefore, Christians should control their tongues.
2. He advises Christians to control their tongues by being quick to listen but slow to speak and slow to become angry.
3. That all religious teachers are advised to watch their speeches since they are responsible to many people.
4. That a person who doesn't make mistakes in what he says then he is perfect.
5. He says that the tongue is one of the most difficult thing to control
6. He compares the tongue to a tiny metal bit which can control a horse, or a small rudder which can control a big ship, then the tongue controls the whole body of the human being

7. He says that the tongue is the most dangerous part of the body because it is full of deadly poison
8. That the tongue as a small fire can set the entire forest on fire burning so the tongue can set the confusion in the society
9. That all the birds, animals, reptiles fish etc. have been tamed by man but man has failed to tame the tongue
10. That the tongue can lead one into double standards therefore it should be controlled. It shouldn't be used to curse others and at the same time to bless them.
11. That using tongue double standards should be avoided because no bring water brings out both sweet and bitter water from the same opening
12. That believers should always evaluate whatever they say because all come from man's inner spirit
13. That the tongue can cause quarrels and enmity among the friends if it's not controlled
14. That the tongue is full of deadly poison therefore Christians should control it

### **THE WAYS CHRISTIANS CAN MISSUSE THEIR TONGUES**

- Abusing
- Cursing others
- Using vulgar language
- Telling lies
- Gossiping
- Through blasphemy
- Criticizing others
- Rumormongering
- Quarreling
- Boasting through using arrogant language

### **QUESTION**

Discuss James' teaching on the tongue and its relationship to the cause of war.

Approach

James' teaching on the tongue. (discuss this) such as a man controlled wild animals.

It's misuse. (abusing others, gossiping)

Tongue one of the most different things to control it.

However, if the tongue is not controlled it can cause war/ abusing others.

When one is abused can start a fight hence leading to war.

By back biting etc.

Importance of James' teaching on the control of the tongue to Christians today.

- in today's world with modern of communicating and writing, Christians should be careful with what they say because a small rumor can spread quickly.
- If peace and harmony is not existing in the community, the people should evaluate their speeches.
- Christians should avoid using the tongue with double standards, that's praising the God and also to speak obscenity.
- Religious leaders or teachers should evaluate their speeches since they are responsible to many.
- Today, many professions emphasize secrecy as a part of their ethics or code of conduct e.g. mass communication, medicine e.tc.
- Politicians and religious leaders should avoid careless words because the can destroy character and reputation.
- Rumormongering in today's society can destroy friendship among people. Therefore, Christians should control their tongues.
- A true religious person and a leader is always respected due to the words they speak hence Christians should learn to speak carefully.
- In this hurting and lonely world, people wish to find someone to speak to hence Christians should be fast to listen but slow to become angry and act.
- Careless marks have led to wars and quarrels among the youth therefore Christians should control their tongues.

James' teaching on patience and prayer.

### **Patience**

He teaches the following;

- 1) That Christians should be patient and joyful during trials. Therefore, Christians when they are in difficulties they should be patient and put their trust in the lord
- 2) They should be patient and joyful when in trials therefore when a Christian is under trial should always feel happy and be patient.
- 3) That Christians should be patient as they wait for the Parousia of Jesus Christ.
- 4) That trials are a test of Christians' faith therefore they should be patient when they are under trials.
- 5) That trials will lead to perfection of Christians' faith i.e. that a Christian who is under trial his faith can be perfected after passing through it.
- 6) That those who are patient to the end will be rewarded by God
- 7) As part of patience Christians should be slow to speak but fast to listen
- 8) As part of patience, a Christian should not be fast to grumble, complain, or judge others

- 9) To emphasize patience, he gives the example of job who suffered but he was patient with the lord and at the end he was rewarded
- 10) He also uses the example of a farmer who can patiently wait for his crops to grow until he harvests.
- 11) That Christians should be patient because God is compassionate and merciful.

### **Prayer**

- That Christians should pray for anything from God since he is the provider of everything
- That if a Christian lacks wisdom, should pray for it.
- That Christians should have a single mind, they should not pray with doubts but with faith and trust in the lord, their prayer can be answered.
- That every good thing comes from the lord therefore if you desire anything pray for it.
- That God may not answer those Christians who pray with wrong motives.
- That Christians may not get whatever they pray for because they pray with doubts
- That anyone suffering should pray. Therefore, the sick should pray to the lord.
- That anyone who is happy should also pray to the lord
- That for the sick, they should call Christian elders to pray for them and anoint them with olive oils
- That a prayer of a faithful person will rise him and his sins can be forgiven
- To emphasize the importance of a prayer he gives the example of Elijah who prayed for drought and it came and lasted for three and a half years and finally prayed for the rain and it poured.

### **THE RELEVANCE OF THIS TEACHING TO THE CHRISTIANS TODAY CAN BE SEEN BELOW.**

- 1) Christians should pray without doubt instead pray with a single mind and trust in God
- 2) Trials in the world are many, therefore Christians are encouraged to be patient and cheerful
- 3) Christians should seek for divine wisdom which is pure. It involves patience, love, mercy sincerity etc.
- 4) Christians should leave judgment to God but not man to judge one another therefore they should be patient to wait for God's judgment.
- 5) Christians should always pray for the sick since a prayer heals
- 6) Suffering Christians should always endure because they will be rewarded for their perseverance
- 7) Christians should always pray with good motives this will make God to answer their prayers
- 8) Christians should accept God's providence, those who need more should pray and they will be given
- 9) A true Christian should always be patient by being fast to listen but slow to act and become angry.

## **JAME'S TEACHING ABOUT PREGUDISE**

He teaches the following;

- 1) He advised Christians to treating people differently depending on outside appearance
- 2) He gives an example of a rich man smartly dressed and wearing a gold ring following a poor man in rugged clothes who go to the same church.
- 3) He shows how the ushers can give more respect to the rich man by giving a special seat while the poor man is ordered to sit on the floor or to stand near the rich man's feet.
- 4) James criticizes such behavior as prejudice because it is based on outside appearance or wealth
- 5) He calls it a false respect for worldly wealth was temporarily.
- 6) He says that such behavior makes Christians to be guilty of creating distinctions and making judgment based on evil motives.
- 7) He says that God chose the poor of their world to be rich in faith.
- 8) That God choose the poor to posses his kingdom.
- 9) He encourages Christians to get rid of partiality or prejudice as they exercise their faith in the lord.
- 10) He reminds Christians that the rich whom they give respect are the very ones who drag the poor into courts of law.
- 11) He told them that it's the rich who speak evil word towards God.
- 12) He advised them to love one another as they love themselves
- 13) He says that if you love the spoor, you are obeying the law of the kingdom.
- 14) James says that treating people according to their outside appearance is a sin and can lead to Gods judgement
- 15) That whatever breaks one commandment is guilty of breaking them all because all these commandments were given by the same lord
- 16) He reminds the rich to speak and act as people who will be judged by the law that sets us free.
- 17) He emphasizes that all people are equal before God so there's no need to discriminate one another.
- 18) He says that God will have no mercy when he judges a person who has not been merciful to others so mercy must triumph over judgement

## **HOW JAMES' LETTER IS A SUMMON INFORM OF A LETTER**

To a big extent James is more of a summon than letter as seen below:

- Its greeting is to believe in fact it would be better to say that there is no greeting in the letter
- He doesn't address it to any particular community but it is addressed to all Christians all over the world this qualifies it to be a summon

- There is no consistence in the things he discusses but issues are mixed up in the whole book
- It's a collection of practical instructions e.g. putting faith into action, control of the tongue, being fast to listen but slow to become angry etc.
- There are no particular problems to be solved but just discusses the issues prevailing in a society
- It has a short introduction and the writer doesn't refer to himself and doesn't discuss in details his background
- He refers to Jews only twice meaning it's a summon, teaching people proper conduct in the society
- There is no final conclusion yet a letter is supposed to have a final conclusion
- He uses few old testament quotations unlike a letter which is supposed to have so many quotations
- He uses appealing language to attract the attention of his audience e.g. he uses words like my brother and sisters
- He uses a strong language full of threats and warnings which is common in summons e.g. warning against the rich
- Its full of challenges which determines for a change e.g. Christians put their faith into actions, controlling their tongues, being fast to listen but slow to get angry which are normally common in summons
- He deals with many aspects of Christians conduct in such a short letter hence a summon.

**However, it qualifies to be a letter because of the following reasons**

- 1) He talks about trials and temptations, that Christians should feel happy when they are in trials
- 2) He talks about putting faith into action that Christians should accompany their faith with actions
- 3) He talks about the control of the tongues that Christians should control their tongues because they are full of deadly poison
- 4) He talks about judging one another that Christians should leave God to judge instead of Christians judging one another
- 5) He talks about putting trust in God, that Christians should put trust in God instead of their wealth since wealth is temporally
- 6) He talks about being fast to listen but slow to become angry
- 7) He talks about being patient in a prayer that christiana should be patient when they are praying in fact patient like a farmer
- 8) He talks about wisdom from above that Christians should depend on divine wisdom instead of human wisdom which is full of jealousy and impurities
- 9) He talks about the rich paying their workers on time
- 10) He talks about being friends of the world, that Christians should be friends of God instead of being friends of the world

**However, like any other letters it has some features of letter**

- 1) There's is some kind of introduction and greetings
- 2) There is some traces of audience e.g. the scattered Christians all over the world
- 3) It's a letter because the writer refers to himself as James the servant of God
- 4) As a letter it's made of communication and was able to communicate to Christians.
- 5) He encourages Christians which is a typical of a letter.

## QUESTION

Examine the view that James is concerned with False confidence?

- People trust in human wisdom- rich during the poor to courts
- People do not put faith in action- people pray with doubt

Whole letter full of false confidence

He is concerned with false confidence because of the following reasons

- False confidence leads to discrimination by other people. Some people feel that they are superior than others hence discriminating others
- It leads to pray with doubts Christians who have false confidence pray while doubting whether God can answer their prayers
- False confidence leads a Christian to put trust in wealth instead of putting trust in God. The rich Christians feel that money can solve their problems instead of God
- It can make a Christian not to consider God in their plans yet our lives are like a puff of smoke in air
- False confidence makes a rich Christian to drag the poor into courts of law. They feel that they have the money to bribe the court officials and win the case
- False confidence leads a rich Christian not to pay their workers on time because they have false confidence that they are a source of money.
- It leads Christians to misuse their tongues. They don't bather about others therefore they can misuse their tongues through backbiting, abusing etc.
- False confidence can lead a Christian to criticize others. A Christian can feel that he is above others therefore ends up judging and criticizing others
- It can make a Christian always to react fast and to become angry instead of being fast to listen and slow to become angry
- It can make a Christian to be a friend of the world instead of being a friend to God Christian will be forced to associate with the things of the world because he thinks he can solve his or her problems instead of God
- It can make a Christian not to put their faith into actions. a Christian with fare confidence feels that can't help.
- It makes one not to accept trials yet trials are a test of faith.
- it can make a Christian to be impatient during the time of a prayer. He will want his prayer to be answered immediately.

b) show the relevance of these teachings to Christians today.

- Christians should put their faith into actions. they should accompany their faith with good deeds.
- Christians should pray with faith instead of doubting and God will be able to answer their prayers.
- Christians should be friends of God instead of friends of the world.
- Christians should depend on heavenly wisdom instead of depending on human wisdom which is impure and full and full of selfishness the rich Christians should show mercy to the poor by not dragging them into courts of law.
- Christians should be happy when God lifts them up into riches and the rich Christians should be happy when God Drops them from riches to poverty.
- Christians should pay their workers on time because they work in their fields.
- Christians should always consider God in their plans because our lives are like a puff of smoke in air that can disappear at any time therefore they should always say “if God is willing I will do this and that”.
- Christians should control their tongues because our tongues are full of deadly poison
- Christians should put their trust in God since they are temporary.