

# James 1

Last time we saw James begin addressing a topic that he is going to be addressing in much of the rest of the book. And that is their speech, what they say.

Specifically, he was telling them not to say when they were tempted that they were tempted of God. Not to say that it is God that is causing them to experience temptations, that he is sending evil on them.

He said that's an error. Rather, every good and perfect gift is from above. From their Father, with whom is no variableness. Who has begotten them of his own will with the word of truth, that they should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

So God has begotten them of his own will that they should be holy unto the Lord, to be brought into the house of God with rejoicing. Not so that they would be tempted.

He's begotten them with the word of truth, so that they will be preserved by faith in that word, not so that they would sin and fall away.

And so James tells them to behave as children of the Father of lights, begotten with his word, as those that are ordained to be holy first fruits. To not be filled with wrath, at their persecutors, at the wicked. Because that would lead to all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness. So he tells them to lay that aside, and instead be holy. To be slow to speak and slow to wrath. But instead to be swift to hear. To with meekness receive the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls.

And you know, what did Paul emphasize again and again in Hebrews? He told them to exhort one another daily. To be hearing the word, to be hearing exhortation, constantly. Lest any of them be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. He told them to not forsake the assembling of themselves together, but to exhort one another. And so they were to be hearing the word. Swift to hear, hearing it incessantly.

And so here James is giving them the same admonition that Paul was giving them in their temptations.

And there is a reason why this is particularly needful for James to address to Israel. To tell them to not be angry, but instead to be meek.

Having been under the law, they are used to carrying out God's justice for him, they are used to having a responsibility to fulfill God's words in the law, by punishing the wicked. And now they no longer are being called upon to do that, they are now to wait upon the King to do that, to wait upon Christ. Not to take it upon themselves.

And so James is telling them that, that they need to shift their thinking to be in line with the NT. To be in line with God's will that it would be Christ who would deliver them and bring them justice, not that they would deliver themselves.

*We've been looking at how the exhortation that James is giving them here will also be good for the twelve tribes scattered abroad during the tribulation.*

*James has talked about how they need to be rejoicing in the hope of Christ's return, when he will bless those that endure by the word, but the rich will wither like grass.*

*A good and perfect gift is going to come down to them from above, from the Father of lights.*

*Christ is going to return as the sun, and all the saints with him shining as the stars of heaven.*

*And he will save them from their persecutors.*

*Those that are filthy and unbelieving will receive no inheritance. Many will be damned. But those who are meek, who lay aside all superfluity of naughtiness, and receive the engrafted word, those in whose mouth is no guile, they will reign for ever and ever.*

## Verse 21

**James 1:21** Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

### MEEKNESS

So instead of being loud and raging, they should be meek. Instead of spouting their own words of filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, they should be receiving *with meekness* the engrafted word, the word of God. which is able to save their souls.  
So they should be hearing God's word with meekness.

Now, what is meekness?

Paul describes what meekness looks like in several of his epistles, so we don't have to guess.

**Ephesians 4:2** With all *lowliness* and **meekness**, with *longsuffering*, *forbearing* one another in love;

So to be meek is to be lowly, and longsuffering, and to forbear something. To keep your mouth shut, and just grin and bear it, that's what forbearance is. That's what long-suffering is, to be patient and suffer something a long time, without anger or complaint. To just be lowly, and count yourself as if you don't really deserve to ask for any better than this, that you don't really deserve to protest, you're just of low degree, just lowly, and to bear it with meekness.

**Colossians 3:12** Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of *mercies*, *kindness*, *humbleness* of mind, **meekness**, *longsuffering*;

13 *Forbearing* one another, and *forgiving* one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

So again he speaks of meekness with long-suffering and forbearance, with lowliness or humbleness of mind. And also mercy, kindness, and forgiveness. So somebody who is meek doesn't give as good as they get, they don't strike back, they don't call people out and shame them, they show mercy, and forgive, and are kind.

Now, the modern church is infatuated with meekness. And they'd probably agree with everything that I've just told you about it. They're probably cheering me on right now, saying "That's right, you give it to 'em, people need to be more meek."

But the modern church actually has a twisted view of meekness, a perverted view of it, that is contrary to scripture. In fact, their view of meekness is not what James is talking about here at all. It is actually exactly the opposite.

So, in order to give you a full understanding of what true meekness looks like, we need to take a look at the example of Christ.

Christ is described as meek twice in the book of Matthew:

**Matthew 21:5** Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, **meek**, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

So Jesus was meek and lowly, as he rode in his triumphal parade into Jerusalem, while the people shouted praise to God.  
And then he went into the temple and threw all of the crooks out.  
So he came with meekness.

**Matthew 11:29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am **meek** and *lowly* in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

So Jesus said that he was meek, and so those that learned of him would find rest.  
And here's what he had just said immediately before that:

**Matthew 11:20** Then began he to *upbraid* the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am **meek** and *lowly* in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

So Jesus was meek and lowly in heart.

Do his words and actions seem to contradict that, to you? If they do, then you don't understand scriptural meekness.

Scriptural meekness is not being a pushover. It's not going through life without ever speaking a harsh word, or ever saying something offensive. I mean, the only way to do that would be to never ever speak the truth.

Jesus spoke the truth. He spoke it forcefully. He even acted on it, and took it upon himself to literally whip a bunch of wicked crooks and con-men right out of the temple.

But he was kind, and gentle, and meek, and lowly in heart.

He was slow to speak, and slow to wrath. But swift to hear what his Father had to say. And he ensured that he faithfully delivered that message.

You see, Jesus didn't go into the temple and beat those people up just because it aggravated him. Just because it offended him. Just because he was indignant. He did it because he knew it was what his Father wanted him to do. Because he knew it would please God. Because he knew that God was indignant. Because God had said "the zeal of *thine* house hath eaten me up."

Jesus didn't rant against Bethsaida and Capernaum just because they didn't want to listen to what he had to say. Just because they had rejected him. Just cause he had a feud with them. Jesus was just repeating what his Father was saying. All things were delivered him of his Father. It was his Father that told him to say that. So he was swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

**John 8:26** I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

So he told them that he had a lot of things that he'd of like to say to them, a lot of judgements he'd like to pass on them, a lot of railing he'd like to do against them. How wicked they were. How unbelieving.

But he was slow to speak, and slow to wrath. He was meek. He didn't speak his own word. He heard the word of God, and declared it. Because God had appointed him to declare it. And so he spoke to the world those things which he had heard of him. In meekness. In lowliness. Hearing and speaking God's word, and not his own.

And that is exactly what James is talking about here. He's telling them to receive with meekness the engrafted word.

And later he is going to tell them to be careful how they repeat it, but he's not telling them here not to speak God's word, not to speak the truth. But he's telling them not to speak their own words, but to hear the word of God. Not to pour out their own wrath, in word or deed, but to wait upon the wrath of God.

Because he will save the meek. They need to receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls.

In our first two lessons we saw parallels with Psalm 37, where it talked about them fretting themselves, and wouldn't you know that it also speaks of meekness:

**Psalms 37:10** For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

11 But the **meek** shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

And so those that were meek, that bore the persecution of the wicked, will inherit the earth. Those whose riches were stolen from them, and who did not rant and rave, but instead committed themselves unto him that judges righteously. In the end, they'll inherit the earth. And they'll have an abundance of peace. Because everyone will be meek. Kind, forgiving, forbearing souls, recipients of the word of God. And so there will be peace, an abundance of peace. All of the wicked troublemakers will be destroyed.

**Psalms 147:6** The LORD lifteth up the **meek**: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

So as James said that those of low degree were exalted, the LORD lifts up the meek. Those that keep their own mouth shut, and hear the word. Those that stay fast in the faith, instead of turning aside to filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.

**Psalms 25:9** The **meek** will he guide in judgment: and the **meek** will he teach his way.

Now, the modern church has this thing about judging. Don't judge anybody, you shouldn't judge. But God doesn't seek for the meek not to judge. But he wants to guide them in judgement. Those that are meek, that will hear him, instead of just speaking out of their own heart, he will teach his way. He'll guide them in his judgment.

And so again, being meek is simply being humble enough to conform to God's will, to his word, to his judgement, instead of your own. It's when God says, "That makes me angry," and you tell them, "That makes God angry." It is when God says, "Destroy those wicked men," and you destroy those wicked men. And when God says, "I'll destroy those wicked men," and you just patiently wait for his salvation. That's meekness.

You see, a lot of people think that as long as you keep quiet and don't get angry, you're meek. No. That's not the way that God looks at it. If you keep quiet and don't get angry, and you still have your own opinion, you still want to do it your way, or the world's way, or any other way but God's way, then that isn't meekness. You're not meek if you just follow the crowd, you're not meek if you don't follow God's will. You have to be humble enough to speak God's word, seek his will, and do his work, to be meek. Otherwise, you're proud and haughty, and you're deceiving yourself. As James is going to point out in a moment.

I'm sorry for being so meek today. It's not my fault. Blame God for it. It's not my opinion, I'm just telling you what the Bible says. You don't like it, take it up with Him.

**Zephaniah 2:3** Seek ye the LORD, all ye **meek** of the earth, which have *wrought his judgment*; seek righteousness, seek **meekness**: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

So he said that the meek of the earth are those that have wrought God's judgment. Not just who approve of God's judgement, but who have carried it out. Who when the Law said that such should be put to death, they put them to death. When the Law said that such should be stoned, they stoned them. Who when a man was just, justified him, and condemned the wicked. Who did not respect persons, but were righteous, followed God's judgment, his justice.

He said that they need to seek meekness and righteousness, seek the LORD, and they'll be hid in the day of God's anger. The just shall live by his faith.

And so as James tells them here, they need to receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls.

And he's going to tell them in the next verses that they shouldn't just be hearing it, they should also be doing it. Just as those meek had wrought God's judgement.

*So James told them here to receive the engrafted word with meekness. And in various passages it talks about how Christ will come to deliver the meek. In various passages it says that the meek will inherit the earth.*

*And so when Christ came offering Israel the kingdom, he came preaching that. In Matthew 5 Jesus begins his sermon on the mount:*

**Matthew 5:3** Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.  
5 Blessed are the **meek**: for they shall inherit the earth.  
6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.  
7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.  
8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.  
9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.  
10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.  
12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

*And so Jesus said that the meek would be blessed, and those that are persecuted should rejoice. Just as James has admonished them to rejoice in their temptations. Because they will be exalted, they'll receive a great reward when the kingdom comes, they'll partake in the inheritance.*

*The entire sermon on the mount actually parallels what James is saying here in this epistle. Because in the sermon on the mount Jesus was declaring the kingdom of heaven, and admonishing Israel how to receive it, how to be able to take part in it. And that is what James is doing here.*

*And so if you read through that you'll see a lot of similarities. We've already quoted a few things from those chapters, and we'll probably do so more as we go along here.*

*So when the kingdom of heaven comes, the meek will be blessed. They'll be delivered from their persecutors.*

*And that is something that is prophesied in many OT passages.*

*For example, Psalm 45 is another Psalm that is about Solomon. Remember we looked at one last time? And it was prophetic of Christ. And this one is also prophetic of Christ.*

**Psalms 45:3** Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.  
4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and **meekness** and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.  
5 Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

*So it is speaking of how Christ will go out to battle, and destroy his enemies, because of meekness. Because of truth and meekness and righteousness.*

*So it is because of the truth, because of those that believe. Because of righteousness, because they are righteous. And because of meekness, because they are meek. Because of meekness because they aren't seeking to deliver themselves, they are waiting upon God's truth and righteousness and deliverance.*

*And so he must gird on his sword, and ride into battle, and deliver them, because they are waiting upon him. They are meek, and will not deliver themselves. He must save them, if they are to be saved.*

6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.  
7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

And so then he will set up his eternal kingdom. And those righteous will enter in, but he hates wickedness, and so the wicked will not be able to.

And in Isaiah 11 it also speaks of that kingdom, and of the meek who will receive it:

**Isaiah 11:1** And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the **meek** of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

So he's going to judge the poor, and save the meek.

And it's OK to be meek, you don't have to make a lot of noise about he wicked, you don't have to spout all kinds of superfluity of naughtiness. Because he isn't going to reprove based on the hearing of his ears. He doesn't need you to give a railing accusation. You can be meek, and slow to speak, and he will still do justice for you. Because he doesn't judge after the seeing of his eyes, he doesn't look on the outward appearance, but he tries the hearts.

And so all the poor and the meek will receive justice.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

And so the curse will be rolled back.

10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

And it talks about this root of Jesse here.

You see, it is as if the tree has been cut down, but the stump of the roots will still be there with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field. And when Christ returns that root will again grow upward.

11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from

*Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.*

*12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.*

*And so at that time God will gather all of the dispersed of Israel, of the twelve tribes scattered abroad during the tribulation, and will bring them unto his holy mountain.*

*13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.*

*14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.*

*And they will rule over their enemies. They'll destroy the remnant of the wicked, as we talked about in Hebrews, they'd wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens. And remember how we said there would be a handful of corn in the top of the mountains, and the fruit thereof would shake like Lebanon. They'd be great rulers in the earth. It was with the tender grass of the earth that God left the iron and brass, the power and judgement of the kingdom. And so Israel will possess it, and will rule the earth.*

***Isaiah 29:17*** *Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?*

*So Lebanon is going to be turned into a fruitful field.*

*Now, remember, Lebanon is the land of the great cedars. Of the tall and mighty trees. Not of a field.*

*But when Christ returns, what is he going to do? He's going to cut down the rich and mighty, who followed the antichrist, and oppressed his people.*

*Christ said that it was very hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. In another place it says that there will be so few trees left there that a little child shall write them.*

*And so all the great trees of Lebanon will be cut down. Their stumps burnt with fire, and Lebanon turned into a fruitful field.*

*And that handful of corn from the top of the mountains will be sown in it. The children of Israel will return to their land. And the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon. They will overnight become the great ones in the earth. And so the fruitful field will be counted as a forest.*

*18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.*

*And so healing will come, the curse will be rolled back.*

*19 The **meek** also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.*

*And so again, the meek and the poor will be saved.*

*20 For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off:*

*So the meek are saved, but the scorner, who speaks naughtiness, is consumed.*

*21 That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.*

*You see, they speak with froward words, but condemn the just when they reprove with words of truth. They make him an offender for a word. They are the PC police, who watch for iniquity, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.*

*22 Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.*

*23 But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.*

*So he will save the meek of the earth, and destroy the wicked. And the children of Israel will be made great.*

*Christ quoted Isaiah 61 during his ministry, and he will say it again when he returns:*

***Isaiah 61:1** The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the **meek**; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;*

*2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;*

*3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*

*So he will preach good tidings to the meek, and they will be as the trees of the LORD, and will shake like Lebanon. They are meek, and will hear his word, and he will be glorified.*

## ENGRAFTED

Now, when James tells them to receive the engrafted word, it is clear what he is speaking of. There is only one other passage that uses the term graft in the Bible. And that is Romans 11, when Paul is talking about the Gentiles being grafted into the faith.

So James is telling them to receive the NT, the word of faith spoken to the Gentile churches. Yes they are of Israel, and they've been raised on the OT, but they need to with meekness be receiving the engrafted word, which God has now spoken. The NT that he's grafted into that OT. Because that engrafted word is what is able to save their souls. If they will receive it with meekness.

## Verse 22

**James 1:22** But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

So James tells them to hear the word, the engrafted word, but not just to hear it. To also do it. He's not telling them to hear it just because hearing it will save them. Hearing it will not save

them. But the engrafted word *is* able to save their souls. But not just those that hear it, but those that believe and do it, those that have faith.

And this is something that we see consistently in scripture. Those that hear the word are called upon to do it.

**Deuteronomy 5:1** And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, **Hear**, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and **do** them.

**Deuteronomy 6:3** **Hear** therefore, O Israel, and observe to **do** it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

And so they needed to not just hear the word, but to do it, if they wanted to be blessed.

**Deuteronomy 30:11** For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may **hear** it, and **do** it?

13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may **hear** it, and **do** it?

14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest **do** it.

And so the very reason that God has sent them the word, that he has made it accessible to them, is so that they would do it. That they would hear it, and do it.

15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

And we quoted that last time, when we were talking about the fact that God gives good gifts, and not evil. When they hear *and do* the word, then they would receive good from God. It is only when they turn away from him that he punishes them with evil. Not to tempt them, but in judgement.

And so they needed to both hear the word, and do it, if they wanted to receive the blessing. As it says:

**Romans 2:13** (For not the **hearers** of the law are just before God, but the **doers** of the law shall be justified.

So James says that if they hear it, but don't do it, they are deceiving themselves.

And he's going to explain what he means by that, in the next verses, and really in much of the rest of the book.

But essentially if you are hearing the word, and you're thinking that is sufficient, then you're deceiving yourself. Because it's not. You can't just hear the word, you have to do it. And there are some passages that talk about that.

**Ezekiel 33:21** And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten.

22 Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.

So Ezekiel wasn't able to speak for a long time, after God made him a prophet. He could only talk when God gave him a prophecy to declare.

And so Ezekiel was a meek man. He could only speak the words of the LORD, not his own words.

But God told him that his mouth would be opened in the day that the city of Jerusalem was taken. And so it was.

23 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

But he remained meek. He continued to speak the word of the LORD:

24 Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance.

And God is asking him to prophesy against some people who aren't meek. They are boasting about what they are going to do, and they haven't considered the will of God.

That is something that James is going to warn about later.

25 Wherefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land?

26 Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abomination, and ye defile every one his neighbour's wife: and shall ye possess the land?

So they were filthy, and their mouth was filled with superfluity of naughtiness. They aren't meek, they won't heed God's will and his word. They won't be blessed.

27 Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence.

28 For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through.

29 Then shall they know that I am the LORD, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed.

30 Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and **hear** what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD.

So God told Ezekiel that the people were talking against him, and yet they come to him to hear the word of the LORD.

31 And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they **hear** thy words, but they will not **do** them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

So they don't mind coming to hear his words, but afterward they find a quiet corner to whisper against him, and they will not do them. But they think that because they go through the act of listening, of hearing the word of the LORD, that they are God's people. They're deceiving themselves. When they hear the word, but will not do it, but instead speak their own naughty words against it. They're not God's people.

32 And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they **hear** thy words, but they **do** them not.

God says that Ezekiel might as well just be singing about something. You get up and sing about something, and everybody listens, but nobody takes any action based on what you said. It is just a song. It's not real.

That's the way they treat the word of God.

33 And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them.

But God is going to bring his words to pass, and then they'll know that Ezekiel is indeed a prophet, and that God will perform his word. They may hear and not do, but when God speaks, he certainly will do.

If they think otherwise, if they think that they are doing what is necessary to be God's people, just to hear his words, but not to do them, they are deceiving themselves.

You know, this is very relevant for the modern church. There are a lot of people who hear the word, who go to church each week, and so think that they are God's people. But they are deceiving themselves. They don't do the word, they don't do the work. They actually disagree with what God says.

But they like to go and hear the preacher, because he is so eloquent, and tells such funny stories. And they like to hear the lovely songs of music, and sway back and forth.

And they're deceiving themselves. They hear his words, but they will not do them.

This isn't a religion. It doesn't do you any good to go to church. It doesn't do you any good to hear the words. You need to hear, and believe, and have faith, and do.

That's going to be James's message throughout this book.

And Jesus also warned of this in his sermon on the mount:

**Matthew 7:21** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth** the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Just before this Jesus warned of false prophets, who would bear evil fruit. And so these people think that they've done all these wonderful works in Jesus's name. But they've deceived themselves. They were false workers. They weren't doing the will of God. Jesus says that they

were working iniquity. Sure, they worked miracles, but not by God's will. They weren't wholly following God's will, they were also working iniquity.

And so Jesus likened the false prophets to trees that would be cut down and cast into the fire, just as James spoke of the rich being like grass that would wither and be burnt up.

24 Therefore whosoever **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth** them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

So those that hear *and do* are those that will be preserved by the word.

26 And every one that **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth** them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

But those that don't do the word, but work iniquity, they're deceiving themselves, and their house will not stand.

*Now as we were talking about those that hear the word and do not do it, we looked at the passage from Christ's sermon on the mount where he talks about building a house on a foundation of sand, and how it will fall.*

*And this is something that had implications for those that heard his words at that time. We talked about that as we went through Hebrews, how a flood of the ungodly would come in 70 AD, the armies of Rome, and would destroy the house built upon the sand, upon the temple system, the Jewish religious system.*

*But this is also something that is prophetic of when the kingdom comes in the last days.*

*At the end, those that work iniquity will build their house with the antichrist, having heard the word, but refused to do it.*

*Remember how we were just studying about that there in 2 Thessalonians 2 when it talks about the falling away, how they left the church with the antichrist. Because they didn't receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. Instead it said that they obeyed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. As Jesus said here, they heard the word, but didn't obey and do it. Instead they did iniquity.*

*And so they built their house on the antichrist. On a false christ. Not the true Rock. They chose the wrong foundation.*

*But those that hear and do the word will look for that house that is built upon a rock, of the true Christ, and will receive the city with twelve foundations.*

*And so those that are meek, that hear and do the word, will receive the inheritance. Those that hear and don't do, will not. In the end there will be a large movement of people like that who will follow the antichrist, the man of sin, and will be washed away by the flood of Christ in the end.*

*The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the seas. And their foundation of sand will not stand.*

And if you'll recall, this was actually something that Paul talked about in Hebrews. He talked about those that heard the word, but weren't profited at all by it.

We mentioned before how he talked about the word coming off upon them, but that if they weren't bringing forth fruit, their end would be to be burned.

But he really started on that subject earlier in Hebrews, in chapter 3:

**Hebrews 3:14** For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

15 While it is said, To day if ye will **hear** his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had **heard**, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

So some when they had heard, did not keep the word, did not follow it. They didn't believe it and do it, instead they hardened their hearts.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

So because of that, because when they heard the words, they didn't do them, but sinned, they died. They received no inheritance. Because they wouldn't truly believe the word, and do it.

4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that **heard** it.

So Paul says that they've had the gospel, the good news of the coming kingdom and inheritance, preached to them, just as their fathers did. But they shouldn't think that just because the word has been preached to them, just because it has been proclaimed, that they'll be partakers. The word preached didn't profit their fathers, when that same word was preached to them, because it wasn't mixed with faith in them that heard it. They heard it, but that didn't profit them, because they didn't believe it, and do it.

And so Paul tells them not to deceive themselves, not to think because they've heard the word that they'll receive the inheritance. They need to have faith, to believe and do the word.

And it uses that term, talks about people deceiving themselves, in several different NT passages. And I think that it is interesting that the context is consistent with what James is talking about here. It is used in reference to people who are hearing the word, but not doing it. People who are hearing the word, but also doing iniquity, like Jesus talked about. And it says that they are deceiving themselves.

One passage is 1 Corinthians 3. Paul is talking about how different ministers have declared the word to them:

**1 Corinthians 3:10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

So Paul explains that as a minister of the word builds upon the foundation of Christ, that work that he's done is going to be tried by fire. The people that he has spoken the word to, are going to be manifest as either gold, silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay, and stable that will be burnt up. They'll all have heard the word, but only some will be saved.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

So the minister has spoken the word to these people, and built them up upon the foundation of Christ, thought that they brought them into the church. Some of them were real, some of them weren't.

And so those that weren't real, they aren't holy, they're filthy, and if they truly were brought into the temple of God, the minister would have defiled the temple. And God would have had to destroy them. But they'll be saved by fire, the minister will be saved because God won't suffer the unclean things to actually be brought into the temple, he'll burn up the wicked that heard the word but did not have faith.

18 Let no man **deceive himself**. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

So Paul instructs them not to deceive themselves about this. That if they are a minister not to deceive themselves by thinking that all that hear the word, all that respond to it, and they bring into the "church" are actually God's children. Some of them have heard the word but haven't truly done it.

And so if they think that they are wise in this world, and can share their wisdom, and people will hear, and they'll be brought into the church, and they'll receive a great reward in heaven. They won't offend them by talking about sin or hell. They'll be wise, they'll be prudent, they'll be tolerant and avoid anything offensive, and they'll have an even greater reward in heaven because they'll have reached so many more people with the word.

God says, no, you're not going to get a greater reward. Don't deceive yourself. You're barely going to make it in. Because you're going to be trying to defile the temple of God, with people who you've ministered the word to, and tried to build upon the foundation of Christ, who weren't actually God's children, who wouldn't actually believe and do the word, who would only hear it. You're only going to be saved so as by fire, when it burns up all that work you did, all those people you spoke the word to, but didn't take heed to how you built upon the foundation of Christ.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

So Paul tells the Corinthians not to glory in men. Not to deceive themselves into thinking that this or that minister is so great because so many people listen to them, and they speak such wisdom. Don't do that. Don't glory in men, don't glory in how many people this or that minister has spoken the word to, how many people he's brought down the isle. All that he's done is try to defile the temple of God. Don't deceive yourself. Not the hearers are just before God, but those that believe and do, those that have faith.

A few chapters later Paul would tell them this:

**1 Corinthians 6:9** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not **deceived**: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

So those that hear the word, but work iniquity, will not inherit the kingdom of God. Just as we talked about last week. You remember how he warned them not to be deceived with vain words into thinking that filthy sinners would inherit the kingdom? He said don't be deceived, they'll receive no inheritance. If they hear the word, but don't do it, but continue in sin, they'll be locked out of the city at best, or burn in hell at worst. Don't be deceived.

And in Galatians 6 Paul again says something similar to what he said to the ministers. He again speaks to those that are spiritual in the church, those that speak, and tells them not to be deceived:

**Galatians 6:1** Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of *meekness*; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

So he tells them to be meek when they are tempted, and when correcting others' faults.

2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he **deceiveth himself**.

4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

So he tells them not to deceive themselves into thinking that they are something, when they are nothing. To not just rejoice in their words, but for every man to prove his own work. Not just to rejoice in what they have heard, but to do the word, and then they can rejoice in themselves, and not in another man, not just in what they have heard. Not just glory in the man that they've heard, the minister of God, but instead in that they have both heard the word, and done the work. Then they can rejoice in themselves alone, having borne their own burden.

Otherwise, if they are rejoicing in themselves, if they are thinking themselves something, and they're just words, just speaking and hearing, really just nothing, then they are deceiving themselves. Words are vain. Talk is cheap. Rejoice only in what you do.

And John also speaks of them deceiving themselves, in his general epistle:

**1 John 1:5** This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

So John is declaring the message that they've heard. But it isn't just a message to be heard. Because the message is that God is light, and in him is no darkness, and that they should be like him:

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:  
7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

So it is only when they do the word, when they walk in the light, and not just hear the message of light, that they have fellowship with the Father.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we **deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

But if they don't walk in the light, if they hear the word but continue to walk in darkness, then the truth isn't in them. If they say, "I'm not sinning, that's not really a sin," then the truth isn't in them. They deceive themselves. Because God said that it was a sin, and they've heard the word, but they haven't done it. They've transgressed it, but still said that they hadn't sinned. They've deceived themselves, thinking that they can hear the word, and not do it, and get away with it. That God won't call it sin.

And so that is what the NT has to say about deceiving yourself. It says that to deceive yourself is to think that just hearing the word is enough, that that will get you in, and you can continue to sin and work iniquity. No, you can't just hear the word, you have to do it. You have to believe it, and follow it, and live by it, and walk in it. You have to have faith. Just hearing it is not enough, you have to do it. You're deceiving yourself.

## Verses 23-24

**James 1:23** For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

So James says that if you're a hearer of the word, and not a doer, then you're like a man looking at your face in the mirror. He looks at himself, and then goes on about his day, and doesn't think any more about what he looked like.

So he's saying that they hear the word, and go their way, and immediately forget what they've heard.

Like a man who looks in the mirror, but then goes his way. Doesn't do anything, it doesn't cause him to take any thought or action.

Now, if it had been a woman, that would have been a different story. When a woman looks in the mirror, she probably needs fifteen minutes get her hair right, and she can't stop thinking about it

all day. But a man looks in the mirror, and says, “Hmmm, looks like I’ve got some dirt on my face,” and just goes right back out to work. Doesn’t do anything about it. Doesn’t think anything about what he looks like.

That’s what happens when a *man* beholds his natural face in a glass.

And so that’s what these people are like. They hear the word, but they don’t take any action on it, they just go right on their merry way, and don’t think a thing about what they’ve heard.

## Verse 25

**James 1:25** But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

But the man who looks into the mirror, the man who hears the words, who looks into the perfect law a liberty, and continues in it, he’ll be blessed. He that not only hears, but does the work, he’ll be blessed in his deed.

So you need to not just hear the word, but be mindful of it, and do it. Not forget it. The word won’t bless you when you just hear it. You’ll be blessed in your deeds, when you do it.

You know, Paul uses the same figure of this in 2 Corinthians. He compares hearing the word to looking into a mirror. And he tells us what ought to happen when we do that:

**2 Corinthians 3:12** Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

Paul says that they have hope in the word of God, in the gloriousness of the ministration of the word of God. Because when they minister the word, it is a powerful word, that can transform the heart that hears it. So that he even called them the epistle of God ministered by them.

So seeing that the word can transform them, they use great plainness of speech:

13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

So they don’t conceal the word, they proclaim it openly, knowing that the ministration of the word is glorious, that they can look to it, and when they do, they may be transformed.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

So in the Law, that glory was shrouded. The minister of the Law didn’t have that hope. There was a vail that prevented it from penetrating the heart of its hearers.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

But now they are no longer under the Law, but under liberty.

And you’ll note that James called the word the perfect law of liberty here.

So the law of Moses didn’t let them see that glory, it didn’t have that transforming power, but the NT, the word of liberty, does.

18 But we all, with open **face beholding** as in a **glass** the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

So they no longer look at the law of Moses through a veil. We now look into the perfect law of liberty. And it shines forth that transforming glory, that can reach and transform our hearts. And so when we look into the perfect law of liberty, it is like we see the glory of the Lord. It is like we are as Moses, and have our faces illuminated with that glory. And when we look into the word it is like we are looking into a mirror with open face, without a veil over our face, and we see that glory. It is as if that glory we behold in the word, is actually the glory shining from our own face, being beheld in a mirror. As he said, it is like we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.

In other words, God's Spirit enables us to become a mirror image of the word that we hear. To be doers of the word, and not hearers only.

It enables us to like Moses, look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein. His face continued to shine. And we don't put a veil over it, we continue to shine. When we look into the word, we remain illuminated by it, and through God's Spirit we shine it out in our lives. We not only hear the word, we do it. We continue therein, being not forgetful hearers.

So that is what happens when we look into the perfect law of liberty. The perfect word, the complete word. Not just Moses, not just the OT, but the new. The perfect law, of liberty. Not just the OT, but the engrafted word.

The law won't do that for you. Only the engrafted word, the perfect law of liberty, will.

And so that is what James admonishes them to do. To not just hear the word, but do it. To look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein.

Not to think that they are meek just because they hear the word. They'll only be blessed if they *do* it.