

James - 5W/H Questions

Intro- These are given to help lead a discussion of James or to do your own personal study.

James 1:1-12 – 5W/H Questions

1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

WHO IS THE AUTHOR?

HOW DOES HE IDENTIFY HIMSELF?

WHAT IS THE IDEA OF A BONDSERVANT (DOULOS)?

“No rights” One’s will subsumed in will of his master, etc

WHAT IS UNSUAL ABOUT JAMES’ SELF IDENTIFICATION? (CLUE: Who is he related to?)

Most writers think he was the half-brother of Jesus

WHO ARE THE RECIPIENTS? 12 tribes

WHO IS THAT REFERRING TO? Jews

WHAT IS UNUSUAL ABOUT THAT DESIGNATION? Includes the 10 “lost” tribes exiled into Assyria in 722 BC! None of them are lost to God!

WHAT IS THEIR CONDITION? Dispersed abroad

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? Scattered among the Gentiles.

WHY WERE THEY DISPERSED? God dispersed them (and some went voluntarily).

WHAT IS JAMES’ SALUTATION? Greetings

WHAT IS THE GREEK WORD? Chairō = rejoice

WHAT MIGHT THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE FOLLOWING SUBJECT? “consider it all joy (chara)”

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

WHAT IS THE COMMAND? Command (aorist imperative = “Just Do It!”) – the idea is every time a new trial comes, they were to obey this command.

HOW MUCH JOY? All joy (WHAT IS IMPLICATION? Every trial is an opportunity to express joy!)

HOW DOES JAMES ADDRESS THEM AND WHAT IS IMPLIED? My brethren ~ believing Jews (cf Jas 1:9)

WHAT IS THE “TIME SENSITIVE WORD” IN THIS VERSE? **When** – in other words not say “IF” but **WHEN** implying trials were guaranteed to come!

WHAT IS THE GREEK WORD FOR “TRIALS”? [peirasmos](#) from [peirazo](#) – means to test, prove, examine. It is a “neutral word” with no negative connotation by itself. Think of a coin - temptations and trials are two sides of the same coin as in Jas 1:2 and Jas 1:13 (peirazo). Source of trial – TRIALS from God are to build us up. TRIALS from our flesh or Satan are tear us down.

- Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us
- God tests us to bring out the best, always seeking to make us more like His Son.

WHAT IS THE IDEA OF “VARIOUS ([poikilos](#)) TRIALS”? Variegated. “Many colored.” All shapes, sizes, etc, little, big, etc.

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

NIV reads "**Because you know...**" indicating this is an explanation (ESV is similar)

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE COMMAND TO BE JOYFUL IN TRIALS? You know it has a spiritual benefit specifically producing endurance.

(SIMILAR QUESTION) WHAT IS THE VALUE OF TESTS OF YOUR FAITH? endurance

WHAT IS THE GREEK WORD FOR ENDURANCE? [hupomone](#) = Literally means "remain ([meno](#)) under (hupo)." Not a grim resignation or a passive "grin and bear it" acceptance but a triumphant facing of difficult circumstances knowing that even out of the test God promises good.

Morris on hupomone: "It is the attitude of the soldier who in the thick of battle is not dismayed but fights on stoutly whatever the difficulties."

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

AMPLIFIED - let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, SO THAT (introduces result) you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [in your faith], lacking in nothing.

WHAT IS THE RESULT OF BEARING UP UNDER THE TRIAL TRUSTING GOD IS IN CONTROL?

(1) You may be perfect (Greek – TELEIOS from telos – goal)

(2) complete (Gk – [holokleros](#) = complete in all parts, all Christian virtues or graces). One writer says "That which retains all that was initially allotted to it and wanting nothing for its wholeness. It expresses the perfection of man before the fall"

Barclay writes that **holokleros** means "entire, perfect in every part. It is used of the animal which is fit to be offered to God and of the priest who is fit to serve him. It means that the animal or the person has no disfiguring and disqualifying blemishes. Gradually this unswerving constancy removes the weaknesses and the imperfections from a man's character. Daily it enables him to conquer old sins, to shed old blemishes and to gain new virtues, until in the end he becomes entirely fit for the service of God and of his fellow-men. ([James 1](#))

(3) lacking in nothing (SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING)

WHAT IS THE IDEA OF THE RESULT THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECT ([teleios](#)) IN JAMES 1:4? It does not mean sinless! Perfect is best understood as "mature."

Compare the following uses of [teleios](#):

Ephesians 4:13+ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **mature** ([teleios](#)) man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Phil 3:12+ Not that I have already obtained it or have already **become perfect** (VERB – [teleioo](#)), but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

IN CONTEXT WHAT ARE SOME THINGS A BELIEVER MIGHT BE DEFICIENT IN?

- Wisdom (Jas 1:5),
- Faith (that wavers, is tossed about) (Jas 1:6-8);
- Proper view of the value of humility and riches (Jas 1:9-11).

GREAT TRUTH ABOUT GOD TO RECALL NEXT TIME WE ARE IN A TRIAL - When God puts us in the furnace, He always keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat.--Warren Wiersbe

CROSS REFERENCES RELATED TO JAMES 1:2-4

Romans 5:3-5+ And not only this, but we also **exult** (NIV, NLT = "REJOICE") in our **tribulations** ([thlipsis](#) - literally pressure = difficult circumstances), **knowing** (cf "know that the testing of your faith..." Jas 1:3) that tribulation brings about **perseverance** ([hupomone](#) as in James); 4 and perseverance, proven character ([dokime](#) cf "perfect, complete, lacking nothing"); and proven character ([dokime](#)), hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

WHAT SIMILARITIES (at least 5) DO YOU SEE IN RO 5:3-5 AND JAMES 1:2-3? See yellow highlights – (1) rejoice, (2) pressuring circumstances, (3) knowing something good will result (4) perseverance (hupomone) and (5) proven character (cf perfect, complete, lacking nothing)

1 Peter 1:6-9+ In this you **greatly rejoice** ([agalliao](#) = “JUMP FOR JOY”), even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various ([poikilos](#)) trials ([peirasmos](#)), 7 so that the proof ([dokimon](#)) of your faith ([pistis](#)), being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested ([dokimazo](#)) by fire, may be found to **result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ**; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

WHAT SIMILARITIES DO YOU SEE IN 1 PETER 1:6-9 AND JAMES 1:2-3?

Note “**in this**” refers to the preceding (v3 born again, v4 an imperishable inheritance, v5 protected until glorification) Some will think this refers to trials but John MacArthur says “In this refers back to the preceding passage (1:3–5) (AS DO MOST COMMENTARIES).

- (1) Trials are necessary
- (2) They have a time limit (“a little while”) (This should encourage us to persevere).
- (3) Cause real distress
- (4) Are various (like Jas 1:2) – same Greek word “[poikilos](#)”
- (5) Of inestimable value - Suffering refines our faith = fire tested (removes the impurities) (2) Such a tested faith will be rewarded by praise, glory and honor

1 Peter 4:12-13+ Beloved, **do not be surprised** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) at the **fiery ordeal** among you, which comes upon you for your **testing** ([peirasmos](#)), as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing ([chairō](#)), so that also at the revelation of His glory you may **rejoice** ([chairō](#)) **with exultation** ([agalliao](#)).

WHAT SIMILARITIES DO YOU SEE IN 1 PETER 4:12-13 AND JAMES 1:2-3?

- (1) Do not be caught off guard -- Fiery ordeal is guaranteed like Jas 1:2-3
- (2) It is for testing ([peirasmos](#)) like Jas 1:2-3
- (3) Keep rejoicing ([chairō](#)) now – you are participating in the sufferings of Christ
- (4) You will rejoice in future when His glory is revealed

5 But if (1st Class condition = this is true ~ “Since”) any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

WHEN WE ARE ENVELOPED BY THE TRIAL, WHAT IS OFTEN OUR RESPONSE AND WHAT DO WE NEED? “Why me Lord?” “Why now?” etc. We need Wisdom from above, not earthly wisdom.

(SIMILAR) WHAT ARE WE TO DO WHEN IN A TRIAL & CONFUSED, WEAK, UNCERTAIN AS TO HOW TO RESPOND? Ask our Father

WHAT CHARACTERIZES GOD’S GIVING WHEN WE ASK IN FAITH?

- (1) generously, liberally
- (2) without reproach (He won’t rebuke us for asking!)

HOW CERTAIN CAN WE BE THAT GOD WILL ANSWER? It will be given

6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

WHAT CONDITION(S) MUST WE FULFILL FOR GOD TO ANSWER OUR PRAYER FOR WISDOM IN THE TRIAL? Ask in faith without any doubting

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ASK IN FAITH? Trust that He is good, He is sovereign (in control), His purposes for us in the trial are good

WHAT IS THE IDEA OF DOUBTING? Not a momentary doubt we can all have, but the picture of one who continually doubts God.

WHAT IS THE PICTURE (SIMILE) OF A PERSON WHO DOUBTS GOD? Like surf driven, tossed by wind.

WHAT DOES SURF DRIVEN, TOSSED BY WIND DEPICT REGARDING THE PERSON'S FAITH? It wavers, vacillates, a divided heart, a wavering between trusting God and relying on one's own understanding or the world's wisdom.

7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

HOW DOES JAMES EXPLAIN THE "DANGER" OF DOUBTING FAITH? They won't receive anything, and "anything" in this context refers to divine wisdom.

8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

HOW DOES JAMES DESCRIBE A MAN DOUBTING IN PRAYER?

- (1) double minded ([dipsuchos](#) -"literally two souls") – WHAT DOES THAT PICTURE? Divided allegiance —torn between trusting God and trusting self.
- (2) Unstable in all his ways

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF UNSTABLE ON HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE? "All his ways" describes one who cannot trust God wholeheartedly so that their instability spills into every area of their life -- relationships, moral choices, priorities, etc.

9 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position;

WHO IS CONTRASTED IN Jas 1:9-11 AND WHAT ARE 3 CONTRASTS?

- (1) Poor (humble circumstances) // rich
- (2) Brother (probably believer) // man (not specified)
- (3) high position // will fade away

NOW KEEPING THE CONTEXT IN MIND → TRIALS, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE "TRIAL" IN V9-11? Riches, money, wealth

WHAT IS THE HIGH POSITION OF THE BROTHER? He is a believer and is possessor of spiritual riches that more than counter his material poverty.

10 and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away.

WHY SHOULD RICH BOAST IN HIS HUMILIATION? Because like flowering grass he will pass away

11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

HOW DOES HE EXPLAIN "FLOWERING GRASS?" (1) Sun – scorching wind (2) withers grass (3) flower falls (4) beauty is destroyed

HOW DOES JAMES APPLY THIS PICTURE TO THE RICH MAN? "SO TOO" - in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

WHAT CAN WE DEDUCE AS THE TRUTH ABOUT TEMPORAL RICHES? WILL FADE AWAY

12 Blessed ([makarios](#)) is a man who perseveres ([hupomeno](#)) under trial ([peirasmos](#)); for once he has been approved ([dokimos](#)), he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

WHAT IS THE REWARD FOR THE MAN (RICH OR POOR) WHO PERSEVERES UNDER TRIAL? He will be blessed

HOW DOES HE EXPLAIN THE BLESSING?

WHO RECEIVES IT? The one who has been **approved** = Greek means passed the test

WHAT IS IT? Crown of life

WHAT DID THEIR PERSEVERANCE IN TRIALS SHOW REGARDING THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD? Their love for Him – they obeyed the command to consider it all joy – and as Jesus taught in Jn 14:15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

HOW WOULD JAMES 1:2-12 ENCOURAGE/MOTIVATE HIS POOR JEWISH READERS?