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James: Rebuilding our Lives Ethically

### *The Work of Patience (1:2-4)*

**Introducing** The Epistle of James. This is a book of wisdom, the only of its kind, in the New Testament. It jumps from subject to subject and recalls the broader teachings of the Christian movement in the first century. It often rests on the dominical sayings, the teachings of Jesus, in order to advance the cause of teaching the believer to do the works of God in the world, that is, to live ethically.

The Apostle James, also known as James the Just, is to be distinguished from the Apostle James, son of Zebedee. James in Greek is actually Jacob. He calls himself the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (James 1:1). He acknowledges the place of God and the Lordship of his brother (Gal 1:19). He recognizes Jesus as his Savior and Lord.

The Epistle is written to the 12 tribes of Israel in the Diaspora. We have to remember that at this moment Israel has not been centralized. The majority of Jewish people lived outside of the boundaries of Israel/Palestine. But the assumption of this text is that these are not just Jews but Christian Jews. These are Jewish believers in Jesus the Messiah. As such, they are called the “tribes” in that they represent the true Israel, those who have obeyed the call to be faithful to God through Messiah Jesus.

The Book of James serves to give instructions on how Christ believers were to live their lives obediently. We can see within this text an opportunity on how our lives are being rebuilt through the ethics of the Kingdom of God. Our hope should be to take what we learn to live more obediently to our call as God’s beloved children.

#### **Rejoicing in tribulation is necessary (1:2)**

-It is hard to find something about which to be joyful when times are hard.

-Life in Christ is always worth celebrating even when change seems unlikely. A change in perspective matters.

#### **We have to remember that our faith is being examined for our betterment (1:3)**

-Tested faith produces patience. *Patience is the spiritual essence of delayed gratification. Patience is the ability to maintain one's position between the request for change and the change.*

#### **Patience in this process makes us complete (1:4)**

-Patience has a completing function. We ask for things because we lack. Patience causes us to be completed; it teaches us contentment with God.

-It helps us maintain trust that God will continue to keep us even when we do not have what we were asking for.