

TO THE TWELVE TRIBES

James 1: 1

In order to better understand this epistle keep in mind what these early believers were enduring. Sinners saved by grace in our day face the same problems.

First, they were learning that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all who believe. They were learning that they are no longer under the law of Moses but under grace (Romans 14: 17.) Many of these babes in Christ were having great difficulty with this (Acts 21: 20.)

Secondly, they were learning that God has an elect people, not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles. God's grace has no respect of persons but is solely God's choice to save whom he will and pass by whom he will. James, along with many of these Jewish brethren, heard Paul correct Peter at Antioch declaring that a respect of persons is the opposite of salvation by grace. (Galatians 2: 11-15.)

Thirdly, because they believed on Christ Jesus, they were being rejected by their own kinsman after the flesh and "scattered" abroad (Acts 11: 19.) The gospel causes the believer to face many trials within and without—from our own fleshly understanding, as well as religious family and friends.

Yet, the trial that seems to be on James mind most is the trial we face personally as we wait on God to teach us, and our brethren, through his word, rather than being drawn away to our own wisdom and unbridled tongue as if we were the Master. This entire letter is reminding us that the cure for our own self-righteousness, as well as the edification of our brethren, comes by God alone through the word of God's grace alone.