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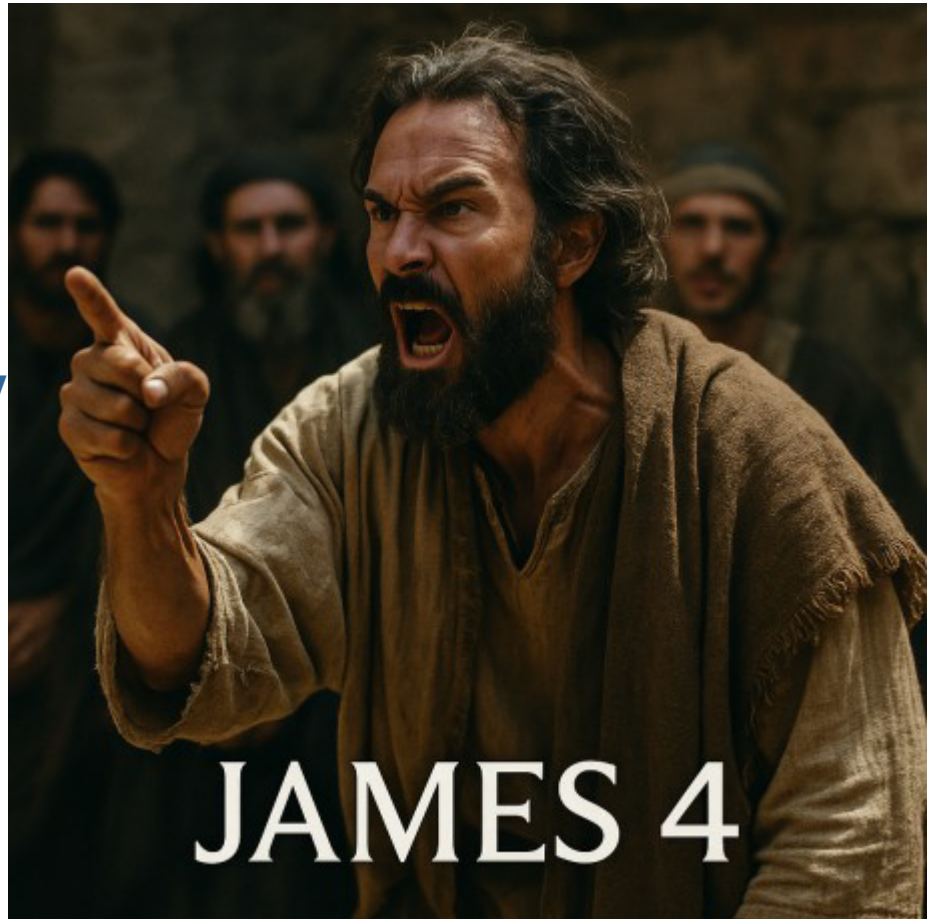
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James 4 This study has not been posted on facebook yet



By Dan Maines

James 4

James 4:1

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is the source not your pleasures that wage war in your body's parts?

† James traces quarrels not to outside enemies but to inward desires. Strife comes from passions battling within.

† Josephus (Wars 4.6.1) describes how zealots in Jerusalem turned on each other because of ambition and desire for power, proving James' point.

† Philo (On the Virtues 38) wrote that unchecked passions are like soldiers at war within the soul, echoing James' imagery.

James 4:2

You lust and do not have, so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask.

† Desire without satisfaction leads to violence and division. James exposes envy as the root of quarrels.

† Philo (On the Virtues 21) describes how uncontrolled desire enslaves the soul and leads to sin.

† James adds the spiritual diagnosis: they do not ask God, showing they seek selfish gain instead of prayerful dependence.

James 4:3

You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

† Prayer is not a tool for selfish desire. When motives are wrong, requests are denied.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 5.11-12) condemn prayers from deceitful lips as void before God, aligning with James.

† Jesus taught in **Matthew 6:33** to seek first the kingdom, not selfish pleasure.

James 4:4

You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

† James calls worldliness spiritual adultery. To love the world is to betray God.

† The prophets used the same imagery: **Hosea 3:1** compared Israel's unfaithfulness to adultery.

† Josephus (Antiquities 8.13.1) said Israel's idolatry was

spiritual adultery, matching James' rebuke.

James 4:5

Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, "He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us"?

† God's Spirit within His people longs for faithful devotion. James appeals to Scripture's overall testimony of God's jealous love.

† **Exodus 34:14** calls the Lord "a jealous God," demanding covenant loyalty.

† Philo (On the Decalogue 65) explained that God's jealousy is His passionate guardianship of the soul.

James 4:6

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

† Grace is greater than human sin. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

† **Proverbs 3:34** is the source of James' quotation, showing continuity between covenant wisdom and Christ's teaching.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QH 5.35) praise God for giving grace to the humble of spirit.

James 4:7

Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

† True victory comes through submission to God. Resistance to the devil is effective only when grounded in obedience.

† The Greek "antistēte" (resist) was a military term for standing firm against an enemy.

† Early church fathers taught this plainly: Ignatius of Antioch urged believers to "stand firm against the works of the devil by faith in Christ."

James 4:8

Come close to God and He will come close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

† Drawing near to God brings His nearness. Holiness requires both outward cleansing and inward purity.

† **Psalm 24:3-4** says only those with clean hands and pure hearts may ascend God's hill.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 3.6-9) stress purity of heart and hands for those approaching God, echoing James.

James 4:9

Be miserable, and mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into gloom.

† James calls for repentance, not lightheartedness. Godly sorrow brings true change.

† Jesus said in **Matthew 5:4**, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 56) exhorts believers to repent with tears and humility, in harmony with James.

James 4:10

Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

† Exaltation comes through humility, not pride.

† Jesus taught in **Matthew 23:12** that whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

† Josephus (Antiquities 11.5.6) praised those who humbled themselves before God and were raised up in due time.

James 4:11-12

Do not slander one another, brothers and sisters. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the Law and judges the Law; but if you judge the Law, you are

not a doer of the Law, but a judge of it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you, judging your neighbor?

† James warns against slander and judgment. To judge a brother is to usurp God's place as the sole Judge.

† **Leviticus 19:16** forbids slander among God's people.

† Josephus (Wars 2.8.9) condemned sects that judged one another harshly, showing how such judgment destroyed unity.

James 4:13-14

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. For you are just a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away.

† James rebukes arrogant planning apart from God. Life is fragile, like a vapor.

† **Proverbs 27:1** warns, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring."

† Tacitus (Annals 14.22) describes businessmen cut off suddenly by death, showing how uncertain life is.

James 4:15

Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

† James teaches dependence on God's will in every plan.

† This echoes **Acts 18:21**, where Paul said, "I will return to you again if God wills."

† Early Christians lived in light of God's providence, not in human certainty.

James 4:16

But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is

evil.

† Boasting is condemned because it denies God's sovereignty.

† **Jeremiah 9:23-24** says, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom... but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me."

† Philo (On the Special Laws 4.164) condemned arrogant boasting as the opposite of true wisdom.

James 4:17

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

† James concludes by showing sin is not only doing wrong but failing to do right.

† This echoes **Luke 12:47**, where Jesus says the servant who knows his master's will and does not act will receive punishment.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 34) declared that knowing the truth and failing to act is sin before God.

How it applies to us today

† James 4 cuts to the heart of worldliness, pride, and arrogance. Believers must resist selfish desires and submit to God.

† Quarrels, jealousy, and boasting destroy unity, but humility, repentance, and dependence on God bring peace.

† Today, like then, life is a vapor. Planning apart from God is arrogance, but living under His will brings peace and purpose.

† **This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

Source Index

† Josephus, Wars 2.8.9 – sects judging one another

† Josephus, Wars 4.6.1 – strife among zealots

† Josephus, Antiquities 8.13.1 – idolatry as adultery

- † Josephus, Antiquities 11.5.6 – humility before God brings exaltation
- † Philo, On the Virtues 21 – uncontrolled desire enslaves the soul
- † Philo, On the Virtues 38 – passions at war within the soul
- † Philo, On the Decalogue 65 – God's jealousy explained
- † Philo, On the Special Laws 4.164 – boasting condemned
- † Tacitus, Annals 14.22 – businessmen cut off by death
- † Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QS 3.6-9 – purity of heart and hands
- † Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QS 5.11-12 – deceitful prayers void before God
- † Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QH 5.35 – grace given to the humble
- † Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 34 – knowing truth but not acting is sin
- † Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 56 – repentance with tears
- † Exodus 34:14 – the Lord is a jealous God
- † Leviticus 19:16 – law against slander
- † Proverbs 27:1 – do not boast about tomorrow
- † Proverbs 3:34 – God resists the proud
- † Psalm 24:3-4 – clean hands and pure heart required
- † Hosea 3:1 – unfaithfulness compared to adultery
- † Jeremiah 9:23-24 – true boasting is knowing the Lord
- † Matthew 5:4 – blessed are those who mourn
- † Matthew 6:33 – seek first the kingdom
- † Matthew 23:12 – humble will be exalted
- † Luke 12:47 – accountability for knowing and not doing
- † Acts 18:21 – Paul's "if God wills" example
- † Hebrews 12:14 – pursue peace with all men
- † Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrnaeans 4 – resisting the devil by faith

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