James 1:1-4: Rejoice in Trials Now, My Brethren. *"From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ: Greetings to all God's people scattered over the whole world. My brothers, consider yourselves fortunate when all kinds of trials come your way, for you know that when your faith succeeds in facing, such trials, the result is the ability to endure. Make sure that your endurance carries you all the way without failing, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."*

These articles on the Book of James are devotional articles and not a detailed commentary. It is not the intent to go detail as to the identity of the author of this book. It is the position of this writer that the author was James the brother of Jesus (*Galatians 1:19*, *Galatians 2:9*).

Some writers have called the Book of James the proverbs of the New Testament, and others believe this was the earliest book in the New Testament. The book is not addressed to a specific city or church. In fact, it is addressed to the twelve tribes that were dispersed abroad. James became prominent in the Church, but his heritage was Jewish.

In the beginning of the Church, the first Christians were Jewish. When the church in Jerusalem was scattered during the first persecution, those Jewish Christians either returned to their homes or spread out into other areas. James was not omitting non-Jews, but rather he was addressing the changed attitudes and actions that ALL Christians would have to follow.

James 1:1-4: Rejoice in Trials Now, My Brethren

Verse 2 is a remarkable statement. Afterall, who looks forward to trails, problems, or suffering in life? In the Old Testament, the people of Israel were told, “IF you will be devoted to the Lord God Almighty AND you followed the statutes set out in the Law of Moses, THEN you would have peace and prosperity.”

Yet, here James is saying that not only do trials occur, but Christians should view suffering in a positive way. Yes, suffering can come as punishment, but it can still occur to the righteous Christian, and that Christian is to see that as an opportunity to grow and strengthen spiritually.

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Many people expect their physical lives to improve when they become Christians. There is nothing in the New Testament that supports that belief. False preachers proclaim that a person can get rich and leave their troubles behind IF they will just follow their teaching that they received “by the spirit”. That is false teaching and the author of such lies is not God.

Christians must understand that this physical world is no longer their home. In fact, the spiritual powers in this world will OPPOSE those who are Christians and will try to undermine their faith. Suffering will occur, not because the person has done something wrong, but because allegiance has been given to someone else.

James 1:1-4: Rejoice in Trials Now, My Brethren

Christians must remember that they now serve a new Master, God the Father, and a new King, Jesus Christ, Lord, King, and Savior. James had been the brother of Jesus Christ, yet he called himself, “a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”. He recognized the new relationship he had with his older brother.

So, what do trials and suffering accomplish? For a faithful Christian, it will lead to a stronger ability to withstand such situations. A man or woman that participates in athletics, or some strenuous activity, does not just get up one day and perform perfectly. It takes practice, training, hard work, sore muscles, sweat, and fatigue. Some might call that “suffering” or “trials”, but for the person involved in that exercise and practice, it is merely a part of what is needed to reach the goal of being the best.

James 1:1-4: Rejoice in Trials Now, My Brethren

That is the attitude that a Christian is expected to have when facing the trials of life. Once a person becomes a Christian, that person is expected to grow and mature in faith and in serving the Lord. That requires the exercise of “spiritual muscles”. There are no passive by-standers in the Lord’s kingdom.