

# Understanding James —

## To the Saving of the Soul

Ver. 1A

— by Cindy Zeigler

...in humility receive the word implanted which is able to save your souls  
(James 1:21)

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# Welcome

Welcome to this Bible study entitled: UNDERSTANDING JAMES — TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL! The Book of James may be one of the most misunderstood epistles in the New Testament. Although this epistle may have been the first one written in the early Church, due to its contents it was questioned for canonization and was one of the last books to be canonized. Martin Luther called this Epistle of James the “epistle of straw.” Others have stated that because James deals so much with works, he contradicts Paul’s message of free grace. This isn’t the case at all! The fact is that both Paul and James, as well as the remainder of the New Testament writers, in some way or another deal with the whole council of God’s Word — the *Gospel of the grace of God* and the *Gospel of the glories of Christ* (cf., Acts 20:24-27; II Cor. 4:4). Despite these seeming controversies over the centuries, the Book of James has weathered the confusion and may well be the message of the hour! Christians would do well to strive to correctly understand this book.

So, why the controversy? Can we read and study James with assurance that this is indeed God’s Spirit-breathed Word? Oh, hear the Holy Spirit answer that question with a resounding, “Yes!” The Holy Spirit breathed into James His very Own Words (II Tim. 3:16).

We, as believers, are not only to **hear** this Word from God, but we are also to **do** it (Jas. 1:22). Part or all of the controversy over the Epistle of James is due to the lack of understanding concerning a few basic teachings in Scripture. For example, James deals with salvation from a different perspective than most Christians understand. Scripture teaches that being born from above is a *spiritual birth* and is the free gift of life for eternity through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. But the *salvation of the soul*, the salvation with which the Book of James deals, is the working out of ones salvation (Phil. 2:12; Jas. 1:20, 21).

The Book of James is a book dealing with believers *receiving in humility the implanted Word, which is able to save ones soul* (Jas. 1:20, 21). What does James mean when he tells his readers to humbly receive this implanted (engrafted) Word? What does he mean when he says the implanted Word is able to save ones soul? Is the soul different from the spirit? Is James referring to a different and distinct part of our salvation than the free gift of eternal life? Herein is the misunderstanding and the controversy.

The study of the Book of James is part of an ongoing series of Bible studies offered by Seeking the Kingdom Ministries. The foundational study to this series is entitled UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE — BIBLICAL SURVEY<sup>1</sup>. It is preferable that you take this foundational study *prior to* taking any of the other studies in this series (including this study on James), because the survey study lays the foundation of the big picture of Scripture. The survey study allows a person to better handle the larger picture of Scripture, which then allows that individual to better handle the smaller portions of Scripture. While we will be reviewing the differences between *the birth from above* — the spiritual birth — and *the salvation of the soul*, these distinctions have been laid out in Lesson Twelve of UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE — BIBLICAL SURVEY.

One more thing — May I speak to your heart for a moment? (I pray to the Holy Spirit, even as I write these words to you, that you will hear and understand what I am about to say.) *Please do not lean on your own understanding in*

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<sup>1</sup> If you would like to receive a hard copy of UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE — BIBLICAL SURVEY, send an email to Kseeker1@aol.com.

*your study of Scripture, nor on my understanding, nor on any man's understanding! Confess to the Lord that you will **study His Word** with open and receptive ears and you will believe what HIS WORD says. Then, when God's Word states an issue clearly, simply believe that it is true! Do not reject something which is clearly spoken by God on the basis of a lack of understanding nor on the basis that you have never been taught it before. Simply believe what God says because God said it. Pray, pray, pray for understanding! He will give it to you.*

Read this passage, noting the last part of v. 8:

**Luke 11**

**5 And He said to them** [His disciples], **“Suppose one of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; 7 and from inside he shall answer and say, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.**

**9 “And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. 11 Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? 12 Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”**

With that — I welcome you to this study! I am very excited to work with you through the pages of the Book of James. What an exciting book! Learn it well! Commit to become a *doer of the Word* and not a *hearer only*. Remain teachable. Give yourself to the Lord for these next twelve weeks. Continuously ask Him for insight and understanding. He will meet with you for sweet fellowship.

*Cindy*