

## THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

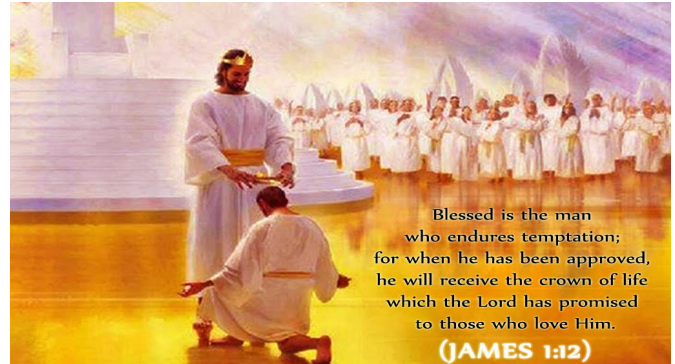
### Theme: "The Testing of Your Faith"

Lesson: 5 Text: 1:12 Date: 2-19-23

Trinity Lutheran Church

Pastor David Nehrenz

[www.tlcnorman.org](http://www.tlcnorman.org)



#### TEXT AND STUDY NOTES

(12) Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which **God** has promised to those who love him.

(Gen 22:1; Ex 20:6; Ps 1:1; Jer 17:7-8; Dan 12:12; Mt 5:3-12; 10:22; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; 9:25; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Pet 3:14; 5:4; Rev 1:3; 2:10; 3:11,19)

#### Commentary on James – "The Epistle of Faith" – Dr. David Scaer - CPH

James and the Beatitudes from being developed. The ideal man who spends day and night meditating on God's law is the Messianic man recognized by God as king in Psalm 2.<sup>3</sup> The Messiah was so closely connected with His people that the Jew believed he shared in all the benefits the Messiah earned. As the Jew read in Psalm 1 about the Messiah, that one ideal Jew, he also saw described in those words what God wanted him to be and what he would become in the Messiah. Without the Messianic interpretation Psalm 1 can too easily be understood only as moralistic injunctions. The Beatitudes without a primary Christological understanding suffer the same moralistic doom. When Psalm 1, and for that matter the other related psalms, are understood in a wider Messianic sense, then the Beatitudes and the James passage become clearer. Using dogmatic terms, Christology and sanctification constitute a totality.

The great blessings promised in the Beatitudes belong to Christians because they have shared in Christ's work. Even the last beatitude (Matt. 5:10-12) has its application to Christians only in connection with persecution endured for Christ's sake. The use of the singular in Ps. 1:1 and James 1:12 and the plural in the Beatitudes is significant in showing that the Messiah's work has its meaning only in relation to His people. His people have their life only in relationship to the Messiah. The Messiah can be isolated from His people as little as they can be isolated from Him.

knew otherwise. The reference to the crown of life as a theological term applying to eternal life could have taken on special significance, since Stephen in Greek means crown. James might have been making a deliberate play on Stephen's name. The proportionately large amount of space given to Stephen's martyrdom in Acts 8 indicates that even nearly a generation later, when Luke penned the Book of Acts and others had died for the faith, the martyrdom of Stephen was still prominent in their minds. He was the first to endure the ultimate trial. He confessed the faith without denial and had been given the crown of life.<sup>4</sup> James is indeed writing a theology which is eminently practical, but he weaves into the fabric the duplicity of a wavering Peter and the constancy of a steadfast Stephen. Others would suffer martyrdom, as Jesus had promised, but the initial shock of the first martyr, Stephen, would leave the most lasting impression. The death of James, the son of Zebedee, the first apostle to be martyred, is mentioned only in passing. Stephen's death became the standard for Christian martyrdom.

The giver of the crown of life is not absolutely clear. Some manuscripts have attempted to put in God, and others the Lord, as the subject of the verb "promise." Who is the One who promises the crown of life to those who love Him? The parallel in 2 Tim. 4:8 can be helpful. There the crown of righteousness is given to all who love the appearing of Jesus as Lord rather than God as Father. Love in James and the Johannine writings is a synonym for Paul's

Another real possibility is that these words were spoken directly by Jesus to James after the resurrection in connection with his conversion. Rev. 2:10 specifically attributes the promise of the crown to Jesus in His glory and not in His humility. The promise is intended for a church under persecution. The crown of life is for those faithful unto death. It was the Lord in glory and not in humility who called His brother James into the apostleship. If James is the real brother of Jesus, his conversion occurred by an appearance of Jesus to him during the 40 days following the resurrection. James may have heard the words then. Regardless of the phrase's precise origin, it became and remains a popular phrase in the church.

### LIFE APPLICATION

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive

**the crown of life**, which **God** has promised to those who love him.

What does this say to you  
about the purpose for your life  
here on earth  
in view of your future life in heaven?