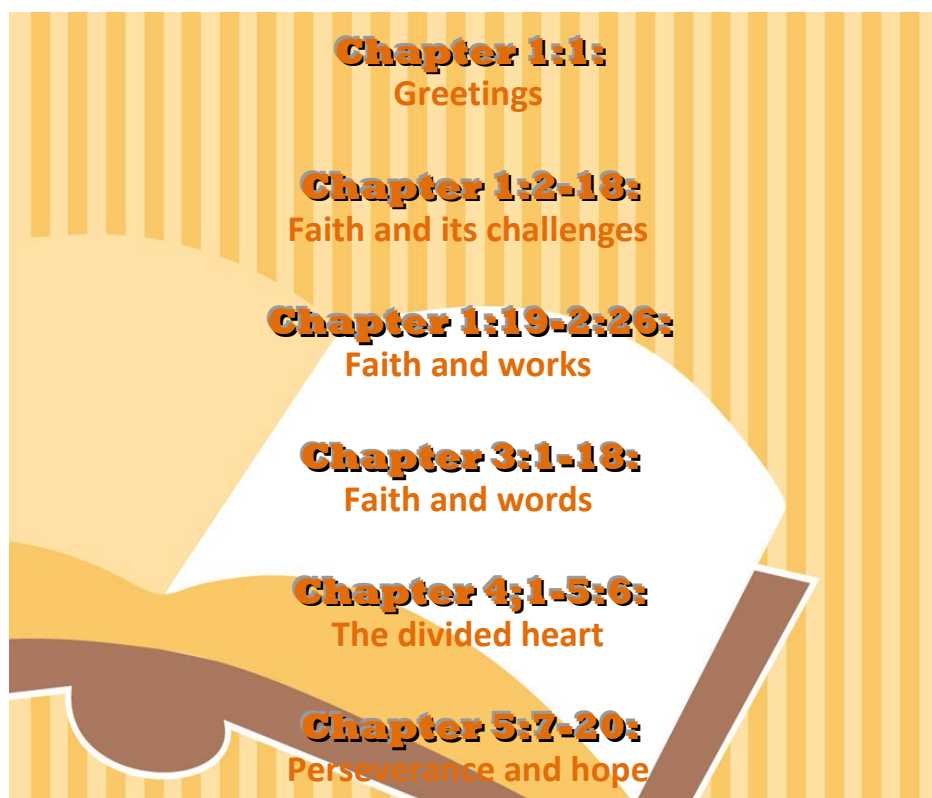


The letter of James

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." Mark 10:45



How it started: It is not known when the letter of James was written. It is quite possible that this letter was written very early. Maybe it is the oldest writing of the New Testament generally. The writer James was a brother of the Lord Jesus (Mark 6:3). At first he didn't believe, but after the resurrection he belonged to those who believed (John 7:5; 1 Corinthians 15:7).

The recipients of this letter are Israelites who lived in the dispersion – that means those who didn't return to Palestine after the Babylonian captivity.

James addresses believing and unbelieving Israelites, although of course he focuses mainly on the believers.

What it is all about: The Israelites who believed in Jesus Christ found it difficult to understand the nature of the Christian faith. At the beginning of Christianity, especially Christians from a Jewish background had very close contact to their countrymen who were not Christians. They hang onto the Law of Moses and the religious ordinances received from their forebears. But James writes about a Christian's practical life of faith. According to James, faith is lived and shows itself in good works.

How about today? Questioning the nature of your faith is very important. Christian faith has nothing to do with theories, but is a practical thing and should have visible consequences in your life.

If you read the letter of James carefully, you will gain much valuable advice for your day to day life as a Christian.

Maybe James would have summarized his letter for you like this: "Show your faith!"