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- To be “*quick to listen*” is to be ready to listen. To listen is to obey, to give attention to, or to learn. Within the context James warned his readers to listen to his advice as a “servant of God” (verse 1), and not to give ear to those who, like in the time of Israel were not serving God – they were discouraging the people not to trust God in times of adversity – just like the readers of James.
 - “slow to speak” is a warning against spreading the rumour of those who, like in the time of Israel discouraged people to trust (or have confidence) in God in spite of adverse circumstances.
 - “slow to anger”, within the context is to act upon the bad rumours of those who do not trust God and then do exactly as the Israelites did at Kadesh Barnea

READ NUMBERS 14:10. What did the people plan to do with Joshua and Caleb after they were poisoned by those spreading the bad rumours?

READ JAMES 1:20 and **NUMBERS 14:30-34.** Is there a connection between these verses?

READ JAMES 1:4 AND 12. What is the righteous like God desires for us?

An outburst of anger does not produce the type of righteousness, which reflects God’s standard. It does not meet his demand, especially if the outburst of anger is aimed at God who ostensibly can’t provide in time of need, allowing adverse circumstances, which might put at risk our faith and salvation.

READ JAMES 1:21. To see and understand God’s plan, and to believe Him fully, even in the sight of adversity, constantly calls for repentance. Christians must turn once for all from sin (filth): they must repent. The expression includes the anger just mentioned, but is certainly not limited to it; the whole pre-Christian life is in view. Repentance is not only a *turning away from something*, but is always implies a *turning towards something*.

READ JAMES 1:21 again. *Meekness* (humility) is important in the passage. It not only stands in contrast to *anger* but it describes the attitude of those who are God’s “poor” who have come to the end of their resources and wait humbly, trustingly upon God. **READ ALSO MATTHEW 5:3.**

The reference to the “word” here is introduced in verse 18 as “the word of truth” which gave us spiritual birth, made us children of God who never comes back on his word.

ACCORDING TO JAMES 1:21, what should we *repent of* and what should we *turn to*?

God who does not “change like shifting shadows” (verse 17). Besides, like in the case of Israel, God called them to life by his Word, and his Word never fails (verse 18)

READ JAMES 1:19-20

To understand the underlying thought of James here we have to continue with the thought he himself introduced in earlier verses: the example of Israel.

READ NUMBERS 13:30 AND 14:6-9. The background here is the report of those who had explored the Promised Land. Why did Joshua and Caleb encourage the people to take possession of the land?

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READ JOSHUA 14:6-15. Which part of the land did the Lord apportion to Caleb as a result of his faithfulness (compare verse 15 with **NUMBERS 13:30 AND 14:9**)?

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READ NUMBERS 13:31-33. What was the reason the other spies offered why they should *not* go and inherit the Promised Land?

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According to **NUMBERS 13:31**, what did they specifically do?

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According to **NUMBERS 14:4 AND 10** what was the result?

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Years later, when assembled east of the Jordan, and about ready to enter the Promised Land, the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh came up with a plan and approached Moses to apportion to them the land they had captured from the people who had lived east of the Jordan – they did not want an inheritance *in* the Promised Land. The reason was that they “had very large herds and flocks” and “that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock.” (Numbers 32:1)

What was the initial reaction of Moses to this proposal? **READ NUMBERS 32:6-15**?

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Read **NUMBERS 32:7** again. What is the main objection?

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If the people who failed to do what they committed themselves to what would happen? **READ NUMBERS 32:23.**

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Now, let’s return to our study of James. Let’s read **JAMES 1:19-20.**

With the history of Israel’s rebellion at Kadesh Barnea in mind, and with the circumstances James’s readers found themselves in, what do you think does James mean with “quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry”?



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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FAITH AND DEEDS

A BIBLE STUDY FROM JAMES

DON'T GIVE AN EAR TO DOUBTFUL TALK

Let's **READ JAMES 1:19-27**.

Our study of the first chapter of James helped us to understand:

- What testing produces – maturity and joy (verses 2-4)
- How to be victorious in times of testing – faithful prayer (verses 5-8)
- Material things are not everything – what counts is our riches in the Lord (9-11)
- The outcome of “hanging in” when trails come – the crown of life (verses 12)
- The source of testing and temptation – it does not come from God (verses 13-15)
- God's faithfulness, his steadfastness and his eternal calling (verses 16-18)

Today we will learn that the Christian should not give ear to those who do not take God on his promises; and if they have done so, they must repent and once again trust God and the promises of his Word.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems we have in reading the Scriptures is that we read paragraphs or certain blocks of Scripture at a time. This was not the case for original readers, especially those who received letters in the Bible, now kept for us as books.

If someone wrote a letter to us, we certainly will not start halfway through it, or read only one paragraph at a time. Once we read through it, we might come back to certain paragraphs in it, but we will always understand it in the context of the whole letter.

Most translations of the Bible put a heading between verse 18 and 19. This might be helpful, but it subconsciously creates in our minds the idea that James introduces a complete new idea, which is disconnected with the previous train of thought. I believe this is not the case.

James's advice and pastoral guidance to the previous members of his congregation does not come as a bunch of unconnected subjects. What follows in verse 19-27 is a logical application for what he has already told them.

Let's sum it up: After the persecution of the church in Jerusalem, where James was the leading pastor, a lot of Christians had to flee for their lives. As a result they were “scattered among the nations” (verse 1). They were tested in many ways, losing loved ones, property and income (verse 9-11). They found themselves living in new cultures, languages and customs – the hardest for these might have been mixing with “pagans” who had become Christians. In all of this, James says, they should consider it joy when they face trails (verse 2), for it is a testing of their faith, which develops perseverance (verse 3), which result in receiving the crown of life (verse 12). To get through these trials they need to prayerfully trust God (verse 5) and trust Him without doubt (verse 6). Like Israel at Kadesh Barnea, when they rebelled against God, not putting their confidence in Him, but rather “testing” Him to believe He brought them out of Egypt to have them die in the desert - *because He was not able to provide for them!* – they should never think that God will not provide for them. Such a thought will lead to sin, which gives birth to death (verse 13-15). Instead, they should put their trust in