

# JAMES: CHAPTER FOUR

## Preface

On October 02, 2016, we began the study of chapter one of the Epistle of James. It contains 189 lessons that include the verse-by-verse exegesis and a review of the chapter plus the expanded translation covering 734 pages. This study was concluded on December 21, 2017.

On January 10, 2018, we began a study of chapter two of the Epistle of James. It contains 215 lessons that include the verse-by-verse exegesis and a review of the chapter plus the expanded translation covering 826 pages. This study was concluded on June 16, 2019, first session.

On June 16, 2019, second session, we began the study of chapter three of the Epistle of James. It contains 254 lessons that include the verse-by-verse exegesis and a review of the chapter plus the expanded translation covering 992 pages. This study was concluded on June 20, 2021, second session.

## Introduction:

We have already studied chapter 3's verbal lacerations of believers' tongues. James left nothing out in his doctrinal browbeating of this crowd. He continued his onslaught for the first 16 verses before taking time off to remind them of believers' primary obligation to continue their study of the Word of God until they have acquired the summit of spiritual growth which he refers to as "wisdom from above."

In verse 17, James defines this wisdom by assigning to it six composites: (1) inner tranquility of the soul: "inclined to avoid argument or violent conflict," (2) equitable: "guided by principles displaying a spirit that is unbiased, impartial, and candid," (3) affable: "ready to be compliant with wisdom from above" and "readiness to respond," to divine guidance, (4) compassionate: "sorrow or pity excited by the distress or misfortunes of another; sympathetic," (5) production: "application of doctrine in word or deed," and (6) unbiased: "free from all prejudice and favoritism; eminently fair."

This is a nice summation of what James considers to be the soul inventory of mature believers in opposition to the mentality and behavior patterns of those he addressed in verses 1 through 16. However, these last two verses serve only as a breather between his critique in chapter 3 and his resumption in chapter 4.



James's approach has to do with believers' continued residence in the cosmic systems. The use of their tongues continues unabated and he begins the chapter with two questions:

**James 4:1** What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? (NASB)

In verse 1, James offers his synopsis of the problem which he identifies as "quarrels and conflicts." In the second sentence he argues that the source of these is their pleasures that "wage war against your members."

The source is from their sin natures which send out agent provocateurs to the soul seeking permission to wage war against fellow believers. This verse indicates the reversionism of those James addresses. This behavior destroys the copacetic environment intended for the local church.

The situation James confronts must be dealt with through spiritual growth. To remove parishioners from the throes of reversionism they must be awakened to the problem that rages in their bodies: the agent provocateurs of the sin nature have been successful in entering the believers' souls resulting in what are said to be "quarrels and conflicts."

**Principle:** The body's sin nature, achieves entry into the soul resulting in the production of overt sins.

The fourth chapter opens with two interrogatives. The first begins with the conjunction **πόθεν (póthen)**: "From what," followed by the subject **πόλεμος (pólemos)**: "source."

We commonly expect a verb to appear next but this sentence has no finite verb. Translators smooth this out by adding a verb. The NIV inserts "causes," the NASB adds "is," and the KJV goes with "come."

However, the absence of a finite verb in the *Koiné* Greek adds great intensity to the sentence and the verse. The sentence actually reads, "What the source of quarrels and conflicts ...."

The absence of the verb indicates that in chapter 4, James will continue his polemic against the behavior patterns of his parishioners. What follows are his first two observations. The first is the plural noun translated, "quarrels," for the Greek noun, **πόλεμος (pólemos)**: "war; military conflict."

This application does not literally refer to armed conflict. These people are not lined up opposing each other on a field of battle. It is hyperbolically used here for "a state of hostility, antagonism, strife."



There are good reasons for nations to engage in armed conflict in order to defend its shores. It is a righteous thing to defeat those who are intent on conquering the nation, subduing its population, and overthrowing its government.

It is quite another thing to do much the same thing in a local church, usually sans guns. Therefore, the ordnance of a fort's magazine is exchanged for wagging tongues deployed from the souls of parishioners.

**It is worth noting that in spite of the positive use of images from the soldier's life the words πόλεμος and πολεμέω are never used either literally or figuratively to describe what the Christian should do; according to James 4:2 warrings and fightings are not compatible with the Christian.<sup>1</sup>**

James's opening query is actually a rhetorical question that sets up his argument for the chapter. With the addition of the missing finite verb, here is how the opening sentence reads in the NASB: "What is the source of hostility and conflicts among you?"

**Πόθεν** (*póthen*) is an adverb of source that poses the question, "from what source." Actually, James proposes two, the first being, **πόλεμος** (*pólemos*): "hostility." This word indicates squabbles with lots of people involved.

The next word is **μάχη** (*máchē*) which refers to an individual Donnybrook between two people.<sup>2</sup> There is fighting and fisticuffs, but without actual weapons."

Let's pull this together with this chapter's first expanded translation:

**James 4:1a**      What is the source of hostility and fisticuffs and Donnybrooks among you? (EXT)

### Analysis:

David opens his first Messianic Psalm with this verse:

**Psalm 2:1**      Why      do      the      nations  
[ **Gentiles/Goyim** ]   rebel?   Why   are   the   countries  
devising plots [ **anti-Semitism** ] that will fail? (NASB)

David's context is the Tribulation when the Gentile nations of the world conspire to eliminate the Jew from history.

<sup>1</sup> Otto Baurenfeind, "πόλεμος, πολεμέω" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 6:515.

<sup>2</sup> Suburb of the city of Dublin, Ireland; scene of an annual fair notorious for debauchery and fighting (*Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary*, 3d. ed. (2007), s.v. "Donnybrook."



There is a recent increase in anti-Semitism in the United States as noted from this excerpt:

Statistics on anti-Semitic hate crimes, assaults, and rhetoric provide clear evidence of an increasing threat. In California alone, anti-Semitic hate crimes surged by 21 percent from 2017 to 2018, and reports of anti-Semitic incidents have continued to make headlines in 2019. In a 2018 study done by the Center for Extremism, the United States saw anti-Semitic assaults double from the previous year.<sup>3</sup>

On May 24, a Jewish cemetery was vandalized in the city of Bordeaux, France. On May 26, Germany's government anti-Semitism Commissioner warned Jewish men against wearing the kippah (ké-pä)<sup>4</sup> in public following a spike in attacks against Jews. On May 28, the United Kingdom's national human rights institution launched a formal investigation into anti-Semitism within the Labour Party, including whether the party has unlawfully discriminated against, harassed, or victimized people because they are Jewish.<sup>5</sup>

**Psalm 2:2** The kings of the earth take their stands [ a cosmic coalition of nations ], and the rulers plot together against God, and against His Anointed [ מָשִׁיחַ (Meshiyach) ], saying,

**v. 3** “Let us cast off their restraints from us [ become lawless ] and ignore the laws of divine establishment [ the Law of Liberty ]. (EXT)

David's description of the organized chaos in the Tribulation includes the elimination of the Laws of Divine Establishment. This eliminates every person's liberty to make his own free will decisions. The introductory clause of the Constitution's Amendment I: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” is summarily quashed.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pacificcouncil.org/newsroom/growing-anti-semitism-california-and-globally>

<sup>4</sup> “A skullcap worn by Jewish men and boys, especially those adhering to Orthodox or Conservative Judaism. Also called kippah” (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th ed. (2016), “yār'mulke.”)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/04/alarmed-rise-anti-semitism-europe>



Presently, in the faltering days the United States' client nation status, this initial right of the free exercise of religion is also joined by suppression of the freedom of speech.

Finishing off Amendment I is the phrase, "... to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." So far, no organization has submitted such a petition to the Government for the lawlessness that is stalking the land, seizing police departments, and browbeating citizens to "take a knee" to a terrorist organization. The silence is deafening!

Although David's context is the Tribulation, events at the close of the Church Age cause some to erroneously speculate that global lawlessness forecasts the Rapture. Scripture does not make the claim that because of current geopolitical circumstances and the significant loss of thought within a client nation indicates the nearness of the Rapture.

The Rapture is always imminent simply because it is the next event on the prophetic agenda. Nations have risen and fallen throughout history including client nations. An altered Zeitgeist within a client nation is not the essential circumstance that forecasts the Rapture's occurrence.

The principle that must be remembered is that the Church Age contains just two prophecies, one for its origin and one for its termination:

**For its origin:**

**Acts 1:7** "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;  
**v. 8** but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

The Lord's prophecy was fulfilled in Acts 2.

**For its termination:**

Paul gives two extensive sermons on the subject in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12.

The singular event that will initiate the Rapture will be when God verifies the last person on His prophetic agenda to respond positively to the gospel and thus complete the formation of the body of Christ. All else is secondary to this event. It could be a bright, sunny, halcyon day or a reboot from a Covid-21 pandemic. Or neither.

In the meantime, we presently remain in the dispensation of the Church. The Covid-19 pandemic put everything on hold and its impact will pass. However, in the meantime Client Nation America's Zeitgeist has been drastically altered.

The ability of the nation to restore law and order is severely damaged, new ideas that betray freedom are amalgamating into and drastically altering the cultural landscape. The days of peace and tranquility are bygone values now morphed into an environment of lawlessness.

The Bill of Rights are in danger of becoming a relic of bygone era where peace and prosperity were the defining ingredients of the Law of Liberty. Where there is no law that can be equally enforced upon everyone then chaos gains ascendancy in the absence of law and order.

What the lawless desire becomes the new normal. What is the source of this inversion of thought? Well, we have current examples of that loss but the exposition of its arrival is the collective subscription to what James wrote in the early first century A.D.

James continues his exposition in the second sentence of James 4:1 which begins with the phrase, "Is not the source."

It begins with the negative conjunction, οὐκ (*ouk*): "not." Again, this sentence has no verb so that the next word is the adverb, ἐντεῦθεν (*enteúthen*): refers to the cause or the source. The missing verb, "is," must be supplied for the translation, "Is not the source?"

What comes next is James's accusation that the hostility and fisticuffs are motivated by the plural, feminine noun, ἡδονή (*hēdonē*): "the desire for sensual pleasures."

This is preceded by the ablative or source of the preposition, ἐκ (*ek*): "from the source of." All together the sentence reads. "Is not the source your insatiable desire for sensual pleasures?"

The "desire for sensual pleasures" is now revealed to "wage war," the noun, στρατεύομαι (*strateúomai*). At this point we have located the expression of the problem of "waging war." But where is the battleground where this war is waged?

The last phrase in the verse is "in your members?" The word, "members," is the plural noun, μέλος (*mélos*). The question that arises is, which members?

*Mélos* can be used for parts of the body, but it must have σῶμα (*sōma*) as its object, i.e., "head, arm, leg." It can be used for the essence of the sin nature but, if so, it must mention σὰρξ (*sárx*): "flesh," i.e., the cell structure, or DNA.





However, if neither is stated, then its object must be in the **ψυχή (psuchē)**: “the soul.”

The essence of the soul consists of its mentality, volition, conscience, self-consciousness, and memory center including, vocabulary, viewpoint, frame of reference, and norms and standards.

When the soul is in status-quo reversionism, its function is the state of emotional revolt. The sin nature rules and controls the soul by its agents provocateurs through their ordinance made up of lust patterns, character traits, and fleshly lifestyle.

Here is the expanded translation of the opening verse of James 4:

**James 4:1** What is the source of hostility and what is the source of fisticuffs and Donnybrooks among you? Is not the source your insatiable desire for sensual pleasures that wage war in the compartments of your souls?” (EXT)

### Principles:

Hostility and fisticuffs among believers find their origin in the soul’s decline into the various stages of reversionism, the act of a believer whose spiritual advance is halted under the influence of human viewpoint.

Uncorrected, the believer’s soul inventory becomes open to the influences of evil as he gradually adopts the teachings of *cosmos diabolicus* leading to divorcement from reality.

This person is now heading in the opposite direction from where he once was. Propaganda from the dark side gains credence due to the loss of fellowship with the Holy Spirit and His ministry of recall from previously instilled doctrines of divine viewpoint.

Luciferian propaganda is brilliantly presented by those who are under the influence of *cosmos diabolicus*, a Latin term coined by Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer that is translated, the “devil’s world.”

The human soul is well-equipped to take in information and be influenced by well-crafted presentations from the master of deceit himself. One of his most effective tactics is to attack the thought processes of those who want to be liked.

Every person has a collection of attitudes and opinions that are developed from certain life experiences—some are valid, but not considered acceptable in genteel society.

