



**THE EPISTLE OF JAMES THE LEGATE
ACCORDING TO THE
CHRISTIAN SYRIAC SCRIPTURES**

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**TRANSLATED FROM
THE SYRIAC PESHITO VERSION**

**A Literal Translation from the Syriac Peshitto Version
By James Murdock, D.D. - 1852**

**A New Edition in Modern English
WITH THE DIVINE NAME RESTORED
ACCORDING TO THE CHRISTIAN SYRIAC SCRIPTURES**

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**Prepared by the Editorial Committee of the
Theocratic Bible Institute (Kingdom Witness Ministries)
Principle Editors: Kepha and Yaaqov Yonan**

A NOTE TO THE READER FROM THE EDITORS

A copy of the Christian Syriac Scriptures as published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1905 was consulted for the preparation of this modern English edition of James Murdock's translation. The main differences between the second edition and that of the first involves the use of the Name "Yahweh" instead of "Jehovah," the former being agreed upon by most scholars as the most accurate form of the Divine Name. The Christian Syriac Scriptures uses "Yah" in all occurrences of God's Name throughout the Scriptures.

For the sake of historical accuracy and consistency, we have used John W. Etheridge's example when rendering the Aramaic Name of Christ, but with the letter "Y", forming "Yeshua" instead of "Jeshua" or "Jesus".

Some grammar and choice of terms and phrases have been updated for the second edition. A typographical error was corrected in chapter 4, verse 14. Footnotes and references have been added at the bottom of each chapter. A new format was also undertaken for this edition based on the paragraph layout presented in *Biblia Peshitta – Traducción de los Antiguos Manuscritos Arameos* published by Broadman & Holman Publishing Group (Nashville, TN) and Instituto Cultural Álef y Tau, A.C.

The Symbol on the cover page is actually two Aramaic letters "YH" signifying the Divine Name "Yah" in Syriac/Aramaic.

Kepha and Yaaqov Yonan
October 16, 2009

The Epistle of James the Legate

Chapter 1

¹ James^a, a servant of God^b, and of our Lord^c Yeshua^d the Messiah^e; to the twelve tribes dispersed among the Gentiles^f; greetings^g.

² Let it be all joy to you, my brethren, when you enter into many and various trials. ³ For you know, that the trial of [your] faith, makes you possess patience. ⁴ And let patience have its perfect work, so that you may be complete and perfect, and may lack nothing. ⁵ And if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask [it] of God, who gives to all freely, and does not reproach; and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, not hesitating: he who hesitates is like the waves of the sea, which the wind agitates. ⁷ And let not that man^h expect to receive any thing of Yahwehⁱ, ⁸ who is hesitating in his mind, and unstable in all his ways.

⁹ And let the depressed brother rejoice in his elevation; ¹⁰ and the rich, in his depression; because, like the flower of an herb, so he passes away^j. ¹¹ For the sun rises in its heat, and dries up the herb; and its flower falls, and the beauty of its appearance perishes: so also the rich man withers in his ways.

¹² Blessed is the man who endures temptations; so that when he is proved he may receive a crown of life, which God has promised to them that love him.

¹³ Let no one when he is tempted, say, I am tempted of God: for God is not tempted with evils, nor does he tempt any man. ¹⁴ But every man is tempted by his own lust; and he lusts, and is drawn away. ¹⁵ And this [his] lust conceives, and brings forth sin; and sin, when mature, brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not err, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom is no change, not even the shadow of change. ¹⁸ He saw fit, and brought us forth by the word of truth; that we might be the first-fruits of his creatures. ¹⁹ And be, my beloved brethren, every one of you, swift to hear, and slow to speak; and slow to wrath: ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore, remove far from you all impurity, and the abundance of wickedness; and, with meekness, receive the word that is implanted in our nature, which is able to save^k these your souls. ²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only; and do not deceive yourselves. ²³ For if any man shall be a hearer of the word, and not a doer of it, he will be like one who sees his face in a mirror: ²⁴ for he sees himself, and passes on, and forgets what a man he was. ²⁵ But every one that looks upon the perfect law of liberty and abides in it, is not a hearer of something to be forgotten, but a doer of the things; and he will be blessed in his work. ²⁶ And if any one thinks that he worships God, and does not restrain his tongue, but his heart deceives him; his worship is vain^l. ²⁷ For the worship that is pure and holy before God the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and that one keep himself without spot from the world.

a. Aram. *Yaaqob* | b. Aram. *Alaha* or *Aloha* | c. Aram. *Maran* | d. Aram. *Eesho*; same as the Greek *Jesus*

e. Aram. *Masheecha* anointed | f. or *nations* | g. Aram. *Shlama* (peace); same as Heb. *Shalom* | h. or *that man should not*

i. Aram. *Mar Yah* (Lord Yah/Yahweh) | j. or *he too shall pass away* | k. Murdock *vivify* | l. or *without significance*

Chapter 2

¹ My brethren, do not hold the faith of the glory of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah with a respect^a to persons. ² For if there come into your assembly a man with rings of gold or splendid garments, and there come in a poor man in sordid garments; ³ and you show respect^a to him who is clothed in splendid garments, and say to him, Seat yourself here, conspicuously; while to the poor man, you say, Stand there, or sit here before my footstool; ⁴ are you not divided among yourselves, and become expositors of evil thoughts? ⁵ Hear, my beloved brethren; has not God chosen the poor of the world, but the rich in faith, to be heirs in the kingdom which God has promised to them that love him? ⁶ But you have despised the poor man. Do not rich men exalt themselves over you, and drag you before the tribunals? ⁷ Do they not revile that worthy Name, which is invoked upon you? ⁸ And if in this^b you fulfill the Law^c of God, as it is written, You shall love your neighbor as yourself^d, you will do well: ⁹ but if you have respect^a of persons, you commit sin; and you are convicted by the Law, as transgressors of the Law. ¹⁰ For he that shall keep the whole Law, and yet fail in one [precept], is obnoxious to the whole Law. ¹¹ For he who said, You shall not commit adultery^e, said also, You shall not murder^f. If then you commit no adultery, but you murder, you have become a transgressor of the Law. ¹² So speak and act as persons that are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment without mercy shall be on him, who has practiced no mercy: by mercy, you will be raised above judgment.

¹⁴ What is the use, my brethren, if a man says, I have faith; and he has no works? Can his faith save him? ¹⁵ Or if a brother or sister is naked and devoid^g of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you say to them, Go in peace, warm yourselves, and be full; and you do not give them the necessities of the body, what is the use? ¹⁷ So also faith alone, without works, is dead. ¹⁸ For a man may say, You have faith, and I have works; show to me your faith that is without works; and I will show to you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God^h; you do well; the demons also believe, and tremble. ²⁰ Would you know, O frail man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹ Abraham our father, was he not justified by works, in offering his son Isaac upon the altar? ²² Do you see that his faith aided his works; and that by the works his faith was rendered complete? ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled, which says: Abraham believed in God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of Godⁱ. ²⁴ You see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone. ²⁵ So also Rahab, the harlot, was she not justified by works when she entertained the spies, and sent them forth by another way? ²⁶ As the body without the spirit, is dead^j; so faith without works is dead also.

a. or *discrimination* | b. 2 Tim. 2:3 | c. Heb. *Torah* | d. Lev. 19:18 | e. Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; | f. Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17
g. Murdock *destitute* | h. Deut. 6:4 | i. Gen. 15:6 | j. Gen. 2:7

Chapter 3

¹ Do not let there be many teachers among you, my brethren; but know that a severer judgment we incur. ² For we all offend in many things. Whoever does not offend in discourse, is a perfect man, who can also keep his whole body in subjection. ³ Behold, we put bridles in the mouths of horses, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. ⁴ Huge ships also, when strong winds drive them, are turned about by a small timber, to what place the pleasure of the pilot looks. ⁵ So likewise the tongue is a small member, and it exalts itself. Also a little fire inflames large forests. ⁶ Now the tongue is a fire, and the world of sin is like a forest. And this tongue, which is one among our members, defiles our whole body; and it inflames the course of our generations that roll on like a wheel; and it is itself on

fire. ⁷ For all natures of beasts and birds and reptiles, of the sea or land, are made submissive^a by the nature of man. ⁸ But the tongue has no one been able to tame: it is an evil thing, not coercible, and full of deadly poison. ⁹ For with it, we bless Yahweh^b and Father; and with it we curse men, who were made in the image of God: ¹⁰ and from the same mouth, proceed curses and blessings. My brethren, these things are not proper to do. ¹¹ Can there flow from the same fountain, sweet waters and bitter? ¹² Or can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olives? or the vine, figs? So also salt waters cannot be made sweet.

¹³ Who is wise and instructed among you? Let him show his works in praiseworthy actions, with modest wisdom. ¹⁴ But if bitter envy is in you, or contention in your hearts, do not exalt yourselves against the truth, and do not lie. ¹⁵ For such^c wisdom comes not down from above; but is earthly, and from the devices of the soul, and from demons. ¹⁶ For where envy and contention are, there also is confusion, and every thing wrong. ¹⁷ But the wisdom which is from above, is pure, and full of peace, and mild, and submissive, and full of compassion and of good fruits, and without partiality, and without respect^d of persons. ¹⁸ And the fruits of righteousness are sown in stillness, by them who make peace.

a. Murdock *subjugated* | b. Aram. *Mar Yah* (Lord Yah/Yahweh) | c. Murdoch *this* | d. or *discrimination*

Chapter 4

¹ From where among you does strife and wars come? Is it not from the lusts, which war in your members? ² You covet, and do not possess; and you murder, and envy, and effect nothing: and you fight and make attacks; and you have nothing, because you do not ask. ³ You ask, and do not receive; because you ask wickedly, that you may indulge^a your lusts. ⁴ You adulterers, do you not know that the love of the world is hostility towards God? He therefore who chooses to be a lover of this world, is the enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think, that the scripture has vainly said: The spirit dwelling in us lusts with envy? ⁶ But our Lord has given us more grace. Therefore he said: The Lord humbles the proud, and gives grace to the lowly. ⁷ Subject yourselves therefore to God; and stand firm against Satan^c, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners: sanctify your hearts, you divided in mind. ⁹ Humble yourselves, and mourn: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into grief. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before Yahweh, and he will exalt you. ¹¹ Do not speak against each other, my brethren; for he that speaks against his brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the Law, and judges the Law. And if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the Law, but its judge. ¹² There is one Law-giver and Judge, who can make alive, and [can] destroy: but who are you, that you judge your neighbor?

¹³ But what shall we say of those, who say: Today or tomorrow we will go to such or such a city, and will abide there a year; and we will labor, and make profit? ¹⁴ And they do not know what will be tomorrow: for what is our life, but an exhalation that is seen a little while, and then vanishes and is gone? ¹⁵ Whereas they should say: If Yahweh will, and we live, we will do this or that. ¹⁶ They glory in their pride. All such glorying is evil. ¹⁷ He that knows the good, and does not do it, to him is sin.

a. Murdock *pamper* | b. or *the accuser*

Chapter 5

¹ O you rich ones, wail and weep, on account of the miseries that are coming upon you. ² For your wealth is spoiled and putrid; and your garments are moth-eaten: ³ and your gold and your silver have contracted rust; and the rust of them will be testimony against you; and it will eat your flesh. You have heaped up a fire to you against the last days. ⁴ Behold, the wages of the laborers who have reaped your ground, which you have wrongfully retained, cries out; and the clamor of the reapers has entered the ears of Yahweh of Sabaoth^a. ⁵ For you have lived in pleasure on the earth, and reveled, and feasted your bodies as in a day of slaughter. ⁶ You have condemned and slain the just^b, and none resisted you.

⁷ But, my brethren, be patient until the coming of Yahweh; like the farmer^c, who waits for the precious fruits of his ground, and is patient as to them, until he receive the early and the latter rain. ⁸ So also be patient, and fortify your hearts; for the coming of our Lord draws close. ⁹ Do not be groaning against one another, my brethren, lest you be judged: for behold, the judgment, stands before the door. ¹⁰ For patience in your afflictions, my brethren, take for yourself^d the example of the prophets, who spoke in the Name of Yahweh. ¹¹ For behold, we ascribe blessedness to them who have borne suffering. You have heard of the patience of Job; and you have seen the result which Yahweh produced for him: for Yahweh is merciful and compassionate.

¹² But above all things, my brethren, do not swear; neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your language be yes, yes, and no, no, lest you incur a severer judgment. ¹³ And if any of you shall be in affliction, let him pray; or if he is joyous, let him sing psalms. ¹⁴ And if one is sick, let him call for the elders of the congregation; and let them pray for him, and anoint him with oil in the Name of our Lord: ¹⁵ and the prayer of faith will heal him who is sick, and our Lord will raise him up; and if sins have been committed by him, they will be forgiven him. ¹⁶ And confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed; for great is the efficacy of the prayer which a righteous man prays. ¹⁷ Elijah also was a man of sensations like us, and he prayed that rain might not descend upon the earth; and it did not descend for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth gave forth its fruits.

¹⁹ My brethren, if one of you err from the way of truth, and any one convert him from his error; ²⁰ let him know, that he who turns the sinner from the error of his way, will saves his soul from death, and will cover the multitude of his sins.

a. or *Armies* | b. or *righteous* | c. Murdock *husbandman* | d. Murdock *take to you*

End of the Epistle of James, the Legate.

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