

## The Book of James

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***“All Play”***: what is one thing that stood out to you in last week's study?

***Turn to James 1:1.*** Read it out loud together. Put down this sheet.

**PONDER:** Who do you think ***“the twelve tribes scattered among the nations”*** are?

It's interesting, because most of the epistles (letters) in the New Testament are written to specific churches. Turn to ***1 Corinthians 1:2*** for an example.

**But James addresses this letter to a larger group - "the twelve tribes."**

What happened? ***Turn to Acts 8:1-4.*** Remember that "Saul" is the **Apostle Paul** who later converted (see Acts 9) and wrote many of the epistles in the New Testament.

**Back to the "Twelve Tribes" thing.** What other times in the Bible were there **twelve** "things"?

Look up ***Genesis 49, Exodus 24:4, and Matthew 10:1-4.***

So it looks like James is seeking to encourage ***“Jewish Christians,”*** (Jews that accepted Jesus as Messiah) that were now carrying on God's plan in the New Testament.

So remember what we read in ***Acts 8:1-4.*** The church was really suffering. Now, read ***James 1:2-4.***

**What is perseverance?** Come up with a definition as a group. Write it down here. Now look it up in a dictionary.

**To learn more about real perseverance, we're going to take a few minutes to read about some Christians suffering NOW.**

***Do you remember hearing about the horrifying school tragedy that happened in Beslan, Russia on September 1, 2004? Read below to find out some details that weren't reported on the news.***

## **TRAGEDY IN BESLAN**

**by Anneta Vyssotskaia**

A little town Beslan in North Ossetia was targeted by terrorists claiming to be fighting for the independence of Chechnya. They took over 1000 people hostage - mostly children and women - of whom hundreds were killed and hundreds more severely injured. This happened soon after two planes flying in Russia were blown up at the same time and another explosion took place in one of the most crowded places in Moscow near the Metro station Rizhskaya.

The bloody horror that erupted in the school in North Ossetia has captured the attention of people worldwide. It started on 1 September, known as the Day of Knowledge when children in Russia begin their school year. It is a time of special celebration for schoolchildren, their families and teachers. In Beslan many of them will never return home from their first day at school. **The victims of the atrocity are mostly Protestant and Orthodox Christians.**

Those who survived the three days of Beslan hell will always bear its physical and emotional scars. As for the parents and other family members who lost their loved ones - who can imagine or describe their pain and desperation? Amongst those who suffered loss are families of two local Christian workers and brothers, Sergey and Taymuraz Totiev. Of their eight children, two are injured, one has died, and five remain unaccounted for at the time of writing. [Another church member escaped from the school with one of her children but witnessed her nine-year-old son shot to death.] In the midst of their own suffering the local believers are called to comfort and help those who have experienced the same tragedy. **Christians in many countries and churches are called to come together to pray and help those who are suffering in Beslan. (Turn to Hebrews 13:3 and read that together)**

Blood, death, terror and pain are terrorism's dark toys. Most terrorists claim they are acting in the name of Allah and say they will go straight to paradise for doing what they do. Most suicide bombers believe what they are doing is good, a deadly self-deception that costs their own lives and those of their many innocent victims. Radical Islam it is called. However, looking at their actions it is difficult to accept that they can have any god. The only one god whom they worship and serve is the one who came 'to steal, to kill and to destroy'. The main enemy is the spiritual enemy who uses these people for stealing, killing and destruction. Their religion is satanic in origin.

Terrorism can be conquered by the power and Gospel of Jesus Christ **who came to give his own life so that other people can live. Terrorists deserve death and eternal punishment for what they are doing, but God has called us to pray for them too.**

**PLEASE PRAY SPECIFICALLY FOR:**

- ✓ God's comfort, healing and peace for the suffering people of Beslan. 'And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.' (Phil 4:7 NIV)
  - ✓ God to supernaturally strengthen the local Christians who suffered the loss of their own children and other relatives and friends.
  - ✓ the local churches to be good witnesses of Jesus both in word and in practical help to all the people who suffered, regardless of their religion or nationality.
  - ✓ the Russian government to have courage to see their own mistakes and to have wisdom to seek peace and safety for people in their own country.
  - ✓ the spirit of terrorism to be bound and conquered by the power and name of Jesus Christ.
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**Now look back at your group's definition of "perseverance."** How can the church in Beslan apply this passage about perseverance from *James 1:2-4*?

**Commit as a group to praying for Beslan's Christians for the next month.** Perhaps use a different one of the requests listed above each week for 4 weeks.

**Pray specifically about perseverance in your own lives.** Pray for the person on your right.

## **LEADERS' GUIDE**

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Make sure you spend time going over this study before you study it with the students.

If you don't finish it all this week, it's fine to extend it. Just don't drag it out – otherwise, they'll get sick of the Book of James before they even get to the good stuff!

**Encourage them to each bring a Bible.** Help them get one if they do not have one, or just own a “little kid” Bible from their childhood.

Ask them to:

1. Write their name on their copy of the study.
2. Bring the study back each week.

### **THIS WEEK'S DISCUSSION:**

**Response to “Twelve” question** > original twelve sons of Jacob; twelve tribes of Israel; twelve disciples of Jesus. You want to help them see that God builds continuity between the Old and New Testaments by making references in the NT that refer back to the OT. It is so important for our students to see (slowly – it takes awhile) how God's plan starts in Genesis and ends with Revelation.

### **The Persecuted Church:**

This is a crucial part of their discipleship –to care deeply about suffering Christians around the world. Start them off by reading this section. To get further information about Christians suffering elsewhere, you can turn to <http://www.evangelicalalliance.org.au/rlc/>