

Episode: James Series No. 06

Narrator: King Solomon

Primary Scriptures: James 1:6-16; 2:1-7; 3:14-16; 4:1-17; 5:1-6

Story Summary: Verses with content about foolishness

Location: Kingdom of Judea (Israel)

Time: Circa 50 AD

Suggested Memory Scriptures: James 1:6, 12; 4:1, 3; 5:1-3

King Solomon is reputed to be the wisest man who ever lived. While this may have been true for a period of his life, he also acted as foolishly as any man who ever lived. Through his five hundred wives and three hundred concubines, he introduced and instilled idol worship in Israel, which became the initial impetus for the nation's downfall and destruction.

From the writings of King Solomon, it is undeniable he had knowledge of what constituted wisdom and what constituted foolishness. Whenever he acted foolishly, it was by his own informed choice, and as his distant relative, James almost certainly knew all of King Solomon's writings and actions.

One of James' biggest problems was the persecution of the Jerusalem church by the Jewish leaders. He surely wished they had taken Gamaliel's advice to leave the church alone, since it would flourish if God wanted it to and would perish if it was human-based. If they persecuted the church, they might be fighting God, which was a foolish thing to do.¹

One of the outcomes of the foolish behavior of the Jewish leaders was that it inadvertently helped spread Christianity. James may have recognized it as a bittersweet thing, since it shrunk the size of the Jerusalem church and led to many Christians giving up under the stress of persecution.

Watching the many members of his church, James surely became an expert in the wide variety of things people can do to be foolish. But no matter how foolishly they behaved, he possibly thought he had no room to criticize them. After all, he was around Jesus his entire life and was unable to recognize Jesus as the Messiah until after his death.

¹ Acts 5:33-40

Discussion Questions:

1. After you ask for wisdom, it is foolish to do what?
 2. What makes a person unstable?
 3. Is it wise or foolish to treat rich people with favoritism?
 4. What causes fights and quarrels among Christians?
 5. Why doesn't God give us what we want?
 6. Can you be a friend of the world and a friend of God?
 7. How should we treat business opportunities?
 8. Is it a sin to choose not to do a good deed?
 9. Is it foolish to be rich?
1. Doubt that God will give it to you. 2. Unbelief and doubt. 3. It is foolish to treat them with favoritism, but it is wise to treat all people with the respect due them. 4. Desires and coveting. 5. We don't ask God, we ask with the wrong motives. 6. No. 7. As possibilities that only come to fruition if it is God's will. Otherwise we are boasting. 8. James 4:17 says, "if anyone knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them." 9. It is foolish to act foolishly whether rich or poor. The rich have many opportunities to acts foolish by mistreating poor people or people who depend on them.

Application Questions:

1. Name something foolish you have done. How could you have avoided that foolishness?
2. Do you treat anybody with favoritism? What makes you want to do that?
3. Do you treat the advice of a celebrity, politician, or pundit with more validity than wisdom from the Bible?
4. Read James 5:1-6. Do you think that means rich people should be condemned Christians? What does the New Testament say about rich people?

Application Questions:

1. When you follow the advice of a celebrity or purchase items because of their endorsement, are you treating them with favoritism? Why do you care what a celebrity thinks?
2. What is the last foolish thing you did? Why did you choose to do that? Do you tend to be foolish because you don't have knowledge or because you are not wise?
3. Who are the wisest people you know? Who are the most foolish people you know? How can you be more like the wise people, and less like the foolish people?