

CHAPTERS IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE  
OCTOBER 25, 2015  
THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF JAMES:  
THE EFFECTS OF THE WORLD SYSTEM  
ON BELIEVERS

## INTRODUCTION

While the chapter divisions in the New Testament are not inspired, the division breaks in many instances bracket through doctrinal issues. There are chapters throughout Scripture that deal exclusively with crucial doctrinal issues pertaining to the origins of life (Gen. 1); the fall of man (Gen. 3); Israel's destiny (Dan. 9); The second coming of Christ (Matt. 24); The heroes of the Old Testament (Heb. 11), to name a few. There are chapters in the New Testament that deal exclusively with matters concerning the believer's battles against his spiritual enemies. Such chapters offer insight into the Christian life through detailed doctrine and, in some cases, early church illustrations. The fourth chapter of the book of James is indicative of such a chapter. The chapter contains great insight into the believers on the run after the murder of James (the brother of John -- Acts 12). Highlights of the chapter include:

- ❖ The problems the believers were having in asking communication with God.
- ❖ The relationship of pleasures to fondness for the world and spiritual adultery.
- ❖ The problem with the believer's use of his determinative will towards the wrong object.
- ❖ The relationship of the devil to the World System vs. 7
- ❖ The proper perspective of doing the will of God. vs. 13

It is hope that a delving into these chapters will provide believers with more insight for understanding our spiritual enemies and how to have victory over them.

- I. PRODUCTS OF LIVING IN THE WORLD SYSTEM OUTSIDE OF THE WILL OF GOD SEEN AMONG THE BELIEVERS IN THE DIASPORA.
  - A. The results of strivings in the world system apart from God is manifest in two things.
    1. Wars is *polemoi* which are **prolonged fights, disputes or quarrels** that is often highlighted by physical combat. cf. Rev. 12:7 (of Michael and his angels fighting against the devil)
    2. Fightings is *machomai* which focuses more on **the contention that can exist between men over disagreements**. cf. 2 Tim. 2:23 (the result of foolish and ignorant speculations); 2 Tim. 2:24 (servant of the Lord not required to do) Tit. 3:9 (a result of disagreements about the law)
  - B. The origin of fights from the World System.
    1. They are out from pleasures. vs. 1

- a) Hedone -- "**what is enjoyable to the senses; the satiation of bodily desires at the expense of other things.**" -- Helps Word Studies
  - b) Pleasures are in connection to biological life. Lk. 8:14
  - c) The unsaved are characterized by serving as a slave to pleasures. Tit. 3:3
  - d) The use of the Greek preposition ek reveals the source of the wars and fightings among the believers were their pleasures.
2. Pleasures mount a military campaign in the believer's members. vs. 1
- a) "War" as used here is the word strateuomai which is different from polemoi in that it emphasizes "**to perform military duty, serve as a soldier.**" -- Thomas Green lexicon cf. 1st Co. 9:7; 2 Co. 10:3 (of spiritual war)
    - (1) The sin nature leads a war against the soul. cf. 1st Pet. 2:11
    - (2) The pres. mid. part. notes that the war is authored by their own natures for their benefit.
  - b) "Members" is melesin, a word used in the New Testament to emphasize the parts of the human body individualized by the sin nature. cf. Rom. 6:13; 7:5,23

C. Pleasures produce other works. vs. 2

- 1. Lusts -- epithumia (pres. act. ind.)-- **strong desires**
- 2. Murder -- phoneus (pres. act. ind.)-- **senseless slaughter, killing for one's selfish purposes.** cf. Matt. 5:21 (forbidden in the 10 commandments)
- 3. Envy -- zeloo -- (pres. act. ind.) "**to bubble over because so hot (boiling); to be deeply committed to something, with the implication of accompanying desire.**" -- Help Word Studies Gal. 4:18, 2 Co. 11:2 (there is good zeal); Acts 7:9, 17:5 (illustrates bad zeal)
- 4. Fights -- machomai (pres. mid./pass. ind.)
- 5. Warring -- polemeo (pres. act. ind.)

II. THE SOURCE OF WARS AND FIGHTS OUTLINED. vs. 2-3

A. They were not "obtaining". vs. 2

B. The believers were asking for themselves.

C. The believers were not receiving from God.

- 1. They were not receiving because they asked "amiss".
- 2. They were not receiving because they "consume it on their own lusts."

