

Parallels between James and the Sermon on the Mount

The Letter of James	Sermon on the Mount (Gospel of Matthew)
“Whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy” (1:2).	“When people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you. . . . Rejoice and be glad” (5:11–12).
“You may be mature [<i>teleioi</i>] and complete, lacking in nothing” (1:4).	“Be perfect [<i>teleioi</i>] . . . as your heavenly Father is perfect” (5:48).
“Ask God . . . and it will be given you” (1:5).	“Ask, and it will be given you” (7:7).
“Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers” (1:22).	“Everyone then who hears these words . . . and acts on them will be like a wise man” (7:24).
“Has not God chosen the poor in the world . . . to be heirs of the kingdom?” (2:5).	“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (5:3).
“Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it” (2:10).	“Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments . . . will be called least in the kingdom of heaven” (5:19).
“Judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy” (2:13).	“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy” (5:7).
“What good is it . . . if you say you have faith, but do not have works? Can faith save you?” (2:14).	“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father” (7:21).
“Can a fig tree . . . yield olives, or a grapevine figs?” (3:12).	“Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?” (7:16).
“A harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace” (3:18).	“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (5:9).
“Friendship with the world is enmity with God” (4:4).	“You cannot serve God and wealth” (6:24).
“Purify your hearts” (4:8).	“Blessed are the pure in heart” (5:8).
“Who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?” (4:12).	“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged” (7:1).
“Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted” (5:2–3).	“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal” (6:19).

“Do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged” (5:9).	“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged” (7:1).
“Do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your ‘Yes’ be yes and your ‘No’ be no” (5:12).	“Do not swear at all, either by heaven . . . or by the earth. . . . Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’” (5:34–37).

Other passages in James that parallel sayings of Jesus include 1:6 (cf. Matt. 21:21); 1:9 and 4:10 (cf. Matt. 23:12); 1:12 (cf. Matt. 10:22); 1:21 (cf. Mark 4:14); 4:9 (cf. Luke 6:21, 25); 4:17 (cf. Luke 12:47); 5:1–6 (cf. Luke 6:24); 5:9 (cf. Matt. 24:33); 5:17 (cf. Luke 4:25).