

James 5

James 5.1-6 – More dangers for rich people

V1 – Is James talking to rich Christians here? He does not seem to be - no reference to “my brethren” (*verse 7*)

-**What should be the attitude toward rich people?** Sadness over their wealth (remember *James 1*)

“**Coming upon you?**” 70 A.D. and general persecution of Jews or the Day of Judgment

-If this is a reference to 70 A.D., the poor but faithful Christians would have escaped the destruction, because of Jesus' warning in *Matthew 24.1-35*

V2 – Is it a sin for a Christian to be rich? No, it is one's attitude towards money that is important

-**Any rich Christians in the New Testament?** Philemon (the church met in his house, and he had a slave) – also, Joseph of Arimathea

-**Why should we not place our trust in money?** It will all rot in time anyway

V3 – Do gold and silver rust? Not literally, but they do become tarnished

-**If we misuse money, what will happen?** It will testify against us in the Day of Judgment

-**What is the greatest danger in being rich?** It will become a god to us (See: *Matthew 6.19-21*, *Mark 10.23-34*)

V4 – What had the rich people done wrong, according to James? They had not paid their workers on time

-**Have you ever not been paid on time? How did you feel?** Enraged, bitter, hurt, etc.

-**Who hears the cries of the workers not paid properly or not paid on time?** Heaven

-**Notice:** Lord of Sabaoth (Lord of Hosts), **not** Lord of Sabbath (day)

V5 – Does this remind us of a account in the New Testament? Rich man and Lazarus

-The rich man had gotten fat when others were in great suffering

V6 – What else had the rich done? Killed the righteous men

-James was very hard on rich people, as was also the Lord Jesus Christ

James 5.7-11 – Having patience when suffering

V7 – Notice “brethren” again = James talking to Christians once again

-**What does James recommend?** Patience

-**What illustration does James use?** The farmer who is waiting for his crop

-The farmer has to believe that the harvest is coming, so he is patient and knows that God will not fail the farmers

V8 – There is no way to speed up the harvest, so Christian also should be patient

-**What does “at hand” mean?** The coming of Jesus Christ

-**In what sense?** Always at hand (or: the coming of Christ in punishment on Jerusalem)

-**Imminent?** Always ready to take place

-If the coming of the Lord is at hand, then what should our lives be like? Ready at all times
(See: *2 Peter 3.10-13*)

-Meaning of "Maranatha"? Come, Lord Jesus (*1 Cor. 16.22, Rev. 22.20*)

V 9 – We are to put away a quarrelsome attitude

-Why? Because Christ is watching, and Satan is at the door

V 10 - Name some prophets who showed great patience? Jeremiah, Elijah, Elisha

V 11 – What character of the prophets was the greatest? Their endurance

Read Hebrews 11.32-38

-So many times people ask us to explain why Christians suffer in this world today - we can point them to the book of *James*

-In the end, what happened to Job? Everything he lost was restored

-Lesson for First Century Christians? Don't give up, and have the endurance of Job

James 5.12 – No swearing

V 12 – Notice “my brethren”

-What does James tell them not to do? Not to swear – See *Matthew 5.34-37*

-We are not to use God's name to “reinforce” our statements

-Our statements should not need to be bolstered by those words

-Examples of how some people swear: "On my mother's grave...."

James 5.13-18 – The power of prayer

V 13 – What are we to do when we are suffering? Pray

-Do we have examples in the New Testament for that? Paul prayed about his thorn in the flesh
(*2 Corinthians 12*)

-What is the cheerful person to do? Sing (note: sing, not play musical instruments)

V 14 – What is the sick person to do? Call the elders

-Notice **he** is to call the elders, not the other way around

-“Why didn't you come to see me?” “Because we didn't know that you were sick”

-The elders cannot keep up with the health of all the members, so it is the responsibility of sick member to notify elders or their wives that they are sick

-What are the elders to do about a member who is sick? Pray over them and anoint him with oil

-What kind of oil? Olive oil (used both as medicine and for ceremonial purposes in the First Century)

Two viewpoints on this scripture:

1. The “oil” represents the best medical care that can be given to a person

-Remember the Parable of Good Samaritan – *Luke 10.34* – the Good Samaritan poured oil in the wounds of the victim for healing purposes (not for ceremonial purposes)

-The elders can arrange for the person to go to a doctor or hospital or whatever it takes to help the

sick person – the elders are to help that person get well (if he is poor and destitute)

2. This may be a reference to a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit in the First Century for healing

-The elders would have had the power to heal a person, but these gifts ended in 95 A.D. (with the completion of the New Testament)

V 15 – What would the prayer do if it is offered in faith?

-Restore sick person, and his sins would be forgiven

-Notice that Christians can get sick, contrary to the teaching of the Christian Scientists

V 16 – What does this have to say about the confession of sins to Roman Catholic priests and prayer partners in Boston movement, etc.)? Not just limited to “clergy”

-**What sins are we to confess to a fellow Christian? Read Matthew 5.23-24** – before worship

-**How public should the confession be?** As public as the sin

-**Healing?** Spiritual sins and forgiveness and relief from guilt

-**What can the prayer of a righteous person do?** Accomplish much (not everything, but much)

V 17 – What is James’ example of this? Elijah

-**What did Elijah do?** Prayed that it would not rain

-**Did it work?** There was no rain for 3½ years (*1 Kings 17*)

-**What are we told about Elijah?** He was a man just like us

V 18 – *1 Kings 18.41-45*

James 5.19-20 – Farewell

V 19 – Notice “my brethren” (the usage of this word would make an interesting study in the book of *James*)

-**Is it possible for us to stray from the truth?** Yes, according to *v 19*

V 20 – What does James say about a Christian who brings another Christian back to the church? It will cover a multitude of sins

Revised 2013-01-28