



The General Epistle of James

The Call to Patience

James 5:1-20

I. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

A. Remember the Timing of the Epistle

1. A time when “the twelve tribes” were “scattered abroad” (James 1:1; Acts 8:1, 4; Acts 11:19)
2. This would place the authorship (and delivery of this epistle) sometime around or between Acts chapters 8-14 (according to some, this would date sometime between AD 35 and AD 45).
3. The revelation of the mystery of the church’s rapture did not come until Paul’s ministry (likely first through 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18—supposed by some to have occurred sometime around AD 52).
4. Laying out the dates of major events; Note: Although I have a great deal of apprehension concerning the historical dates provided by historians, I only provide this for the sake of context.
 - a. The crucifixion of Christ = ~AD 29
 - b. The day of Pentecost = ~AD 29
 - c. The death of Stephen = ~AD 35
 - d. The conversion of Paul = ~AD 37
 - e. The revelation of the mystery of the rapture
 - (1) 1 Thessalonians 4 = ~AD 52
 - (2) 1 Corinthians 15 = ~AD 57

B. Revealing Terminology

1. James suspected they were in the last days. Rich men “heaped treasure together for the last days” (James 5:3).
2. James suspected that the Lord was soon to return.
 - a. The brethren were admonished to “Be patient...unto the coming of the Lord” (James 5:7).
 - b. The brethren were to “Be...patient...for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8).
 - c. James wrote that “the judge standeth before the door” (James 5:9).
3. James knew that the brethren were in danger of “suffering affliction” and needed to consider the prophets (James 5:10) and Job (James 5:11) as examples of patience.
4. All this being said, this chapter was not intended to prepare Christians for the rapture of the church, but to prepare believing Jews for the second advent.



II. THE LAST DAYS WARNINGS TO THE RICH (James 5:1-6)

A. The Impending Judgment for the Rich (James 5:1-3)

1. The future state (James 5:1, 3)
 - a. The audience—"ye rich men" (James 5:1)
 - (1) This may seem odd, but the presence of persecution and disparity made it a great concern for a man to be rich at this point in the early church. It will likewise be of concern in Daniel's Seventieth Week when no man can buy or sell without the mark of the beast.
 - (2) Consider also the following passages:
 - a) The fading of the rich men—"So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways" (James 1:11).
 - b) The unjust behaviour of the rich men—"Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?" (James 2:6).
 - b. The present admonition (James 5:1)
 - (1) "Go to now."
 - (2) "Weep and howl" (see Isaiah 13:6; Luke 16:25).
 - c. The pending problem (James 5:1, 3)
 - (1) "Your miseries" (James 5:1)
 - a) Misfortunes
 - b) Mental distresses
 - (2) "Shall come upon you" (James 5:1)
 - (3) "The rust of them [gold and silver] shall be a witness against you" (James 5:3).
 - (4) They "shall eat your flesh as it were fire" (James 5:3). Note: See Proverbs 15:16. Riches tend to consume a man's flesh, both in their acquisition and in their preservation.
2. The present state (James 5:2-3)
 - a. Their "riches are corrupted" (James 5:2).
 - b. Their "garments are moth-eaten" (James 5:2).
 - c. Their "gold and silver is cankered" (James 5:3a).
 - d. They "have heaped treasure together for the last days" (James 5:3b).
 - e. Note: Consider the teaching of Christ that they would have heard (Matthew 6:19-21):
 - (1) "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth" (Matthew 6:19).
 - a) "Where moth and rust doth corrupt"
 - b) "Where thieves break through and steal"
 - (2) "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20).
 - a) "Where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt"
 - b) "Where thieves do not break through nor steal"
 - (3) "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21).



B. The Fraudulent Gains of the Rich (James 5:4-6)

1. The coming trouble of the rich (James 5:4)
 - a. Their behaviour
 - (1) They hired labourers to reap down their fields.
 - (2) The work was accomplished; but, when it came time to pay for the labour, the money was withheld.
 - (3) This practice was a violation of the Old Testament admonition: “Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning” (Leviticus 19:13).
 - b. The behaviour of the poor
 - (1) They laboured.
 - (2) They cried.
 - c. The behaviour of the Lord
 - (1) The clear statement—“the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.”
 - (2) The inferred statements
 - a) The Lord was attentive and listening to the cries of the poor.
 - b) The Lord was fully prepared to respond on behalf of the poor. Note: This is especially obvious when one considers the meaning of the word *sabaoth* which means hosts.
 - i) “And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of **Sabaoth** had left us a seed...” (Romans 9:29)
 - ii) “Except the LORD of **hosts** had left unto us a very small remnant...” (Isaiah 1:9)
2. The unexpected end for the rich (James 5:5)
 - a. They had lived in pleasure on the earth.
 - b. However, regardless of their acquisitions, they had been wanton.
 - c. They nourished their hearts, as in a day of slaughter.
 - d. In other words, the more they acquired, the more they hastened the coming slaughter.
3. The danger for the just (James 5:6)
 - a. They condemned the just.
 - b. They put the just to death.
 - c. There was no resistance to the condemnation.

III. THE LAST DAYS NEED FOR PATIENCE (James 5:7-11)

A. The Call for Patience (James 5:7-9)

1. The initial admonition (James 5:7)
 - a. The content
 - (1) The admonition—“Be patient.”
 - a) The word *patience* is historically connected to the word *passion* which is biblically defined as suffering (Acts 1:3).