

JAMES CHAPTER FIVE

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF JAMES

- I. Greeting (1:1)
- II. The Testing of Faith (1:2-18)
 - A. Trials Produce Perfection (1:2-11)
 - 1. Through the development of perseverance (1:2-4)
 - 2. Through growth in wisdom (1:5-8)
 - 3. Through a right perspective on wealth (1:9-11)
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 - 1. The ultimate reward—the crown of life (1:12)
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 - 1. The proof of wisdom (3:13)
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- X. The Ministry of Prayer (5:13-18)
- XI. Restoring Those Who Have Strayed (5:19-20)

VIII. ABUSE OF STEWARDSHIP (5:1-6)

KJV—1 Go to now, [ye] rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon [you]. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. 3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. 4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. 5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. 6 Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.

NIV—1 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

NASB—1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! 4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, *and* which has been withheld by you, cries out *against you*; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

A. CONTEXT

1. Shift of target audience—now James addresses a different group

a. Previous group = merchant class—**4:13-17**

Those who do business in other cities—concerned with business and profit—**4:13**

b. Now it is the landholding class—**5:4**

Laborers have mowed their fields
The outcry of those who harvested

2. Other passages in James dealing with wealthy

a. The correct attitudes of the rich and the poor

1. The person in humble circumstances should glory in his high position (of humility)—**1:9**

2. The rich person

a. Should glory in his humiliation (being put in his rightful place)—**1:10**

b. Should realize that he (and his wealth) will fade away—**1:11**

b. Do not show favoritism to the rich—**2:1-13** (showing them partiality—special attention)

- This makes unwarranted distinctions in the church—**2:4**
- This dishonors the poor man—**2:6**
- This blasphemes the name of Christ—**2:7**
- This is the commission of sin—**2:9**

3. Other passages in the NT related to the rich

a. Negative context

1. Hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God—**Mk 10:25** (the Rich Young Ruler)
2. Rich persons often portrayed in the Gospels as ungodly/wicked/uncaring—compared to the poor—**example:** the Rich Man (Dives) and the beggar (Lazarus)—**Lk 16**
3. Contrast: rich put much into Temple treasury—vs—poor widow who gave all—**Mk 12**
4. In Luke—Jesus pronounces Woes—in *contrast* with the Beatitudes that He had just pronounced

Lk 6:24—*But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.*

5. James uses the same kind of **eschatological** tone as Jesus' above

- a. The end and judgment are coming!
- b. This is underscored by James's reference to the 'parousia' below—in **verses 7-8**

b. Positive context

1. At the same time—some rich people did follow Jesus
 - Zacchaeus—**Lk 19:2ff**
 - Joseph of Arimathaea—**Mt 27:57**
2. So—it is not *impossible* for the rich to enter the kingdom

B. STRUCTURE OF PASSAGE

1. The warnings—**5:1-3a**

- Misery is coming upon you
- Wealth has rotted—clothes moth-eaten
- Gold and silver corrupted—corruption will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire

2. The reasons—**5:3b-6**

- You have hoarded your wealth
- You have not paid the laborers
- You have lived in luxury and self-indulgence (at others' expense)
- You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter
- You have condemned and murdered innocent men

C. MEANING—MAIN POINTS

1. WARNINGS

a. **Misery** is coming upon you

1. Meaning—misery = **ταλαιπωρια**

- o To be ‘wretched’—experience calamity, trouble, hardship
- o This will be one of God’s great reversals—from comfort and ease—from first to last
“Many who are first will be last, and the last first”—**Mk 10**

2. What this suggests

- o Judgment is coming soon—**eschatological** tone
- o There will be a day of reckoning for you—implied
- o The result of your guilt—will bring your pain and punishment

3. Call to repent—“weep and howl”

a. “weep” = mourn

1. Same verb used in **4:9**—“let your laughter be turned to weeping”
2. Linked to James’s earlier call to humility

b. “howl” = lament

1. Onomatopoeic verb—**ολολυζω**
2. Sounds like howling!!!

4. Eschatological allusion to eternal suffering

a. For anyone thinking they are privileged—just because they ‘belong’ to the kingdom

Mt 8:10-12—after Jesus saw the faith of the centurion—*Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

b. For those *in the kingdom*—who commit lawlessness

Mt 13:4-42—Parable of Wheat and Tares—*So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

b. The Temporality and Corruptibility of Earthly Possessions

1. Earthly wealth *and things it buys* are **temporary**

2. Uses three examples in **verses 2-3**

α. Riches = **πλουτος**

- Plenty—abundance—riches
- General term for wealth
- Root word for ‘plutocracy’—rule of the wealthy—like Rome, Athens, Italian city states

β. Garments—ancient measure of wealth

γ. Gold and silver

3. Reminder from Jesus—to the Rich Young Ruler—**Mk 10**

- Riches often are impediment—keep people from following God
- True riches are heavenly ones—not earthly possessions
- “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor—and you will have treasure in heaven”

c. Garments are moth-eaten

Reminder of Sermon on Mount—**Mt 6:19-21**

- Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth—where moth and rust corrupt . . . !!!
- But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven . . .
- Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

d. Gold and silver—corrupted will testify against you and burn your flesh

1. Gold and silver becoming **corrupt**

a. Corrupt = covered with rust—cankered

b. Gold can tarnish—from several causes

- Perspiration
- Sulfur compounds
- Perfumes and hair/deodorant sprays

c. Silver tarnishes from

- Exposure to sulfides (don’t eat eggs with real silverware!)
- Air pollution

2. Wealth—**testifying** against you—and **burning** your flesh

a. **Desire** for wealth—like desire in **4:1**—has led to your downfall

b. What such desire causes: it makes you act dishonestly and ungodly

- c. Warning: you will be condemned and punished—**judgment**
- d. Evidence for condemnation: your own wealth will be a testimony against you
- e. Ultimate consequence = burning of flesh—allusion to hell and eternal destruction

2. THE REASONS—the **specific actions** that will lead to your *misery* and *judgment*

a. The basic reason is **selfishness**

- Satisfying and indulging yourself—at others' expense

b. The sequence of three specific actions

1. You **hoard**—i.e. you desire it for yourself alone
2. In order to accomplish this—you **don't pay** your workers
3. So you live in **luxury**—at their expense
 - a. Analogy: you have **fattened** yourselves (in the day of slaughter)
 - b. **Result:** depriving others virtually **condemns** them to death for lack of provision—this is **murder**

c. ACTION 1 = you **hoard** your treasures

1. Implied message:

- a. God has blessed you with wealth—every good and perfect gift comes from above—see [1:17](#)
- b. God expects you to use this wealth to bless others
- c. Instead—you have used it selfishly only for your own purposes

2. 'Hoarding'

- You have 'heaped' them—stored them up—built big reserves
- Similar to Parable of the Rich Fool (farmer with barns full)—[Lk 12:16-21](#)

4. Analogous to heaping up God's wrath

Rom 2:5-8—*But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.*

d. ACTION 2 = you have not paid your laborers

1. Old Testament Background

- a. Long history in Israel of unfair treatment of laborers

- o Late pay—or cheating workers of fair day’s wage
- b. Prophetic denunciation against the wealthy/powerful who abuse the poor
 - o **Amos 2:6-8**—*Thus says the Lord, “For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they sell the righteous for money and the needy for a pair of sandals. These who pant after the very dust of the earth on the head of the helpless also turn aside the way of the humble; and a man and his father resort to the same girl in order to profane My holy name. On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar, and in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined.*
 - o **Amos 6:1-7**—8th century—from Judah but prophesying against Israel—*Woe to those who are at ease in Zion and to those who feel secure in the mountain of Samaria, the distinguished men of the foremost of nations, to whom the house of Israel comes. Go over to Calneh and look, and go from there to Jamath the great, then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are they better than these kingdoms, or is their territory greater than yours? Do you put off the day of calamity, and would you bring near the seat of violence? Those who recline on beds of ivory and sprawl on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall, who improvise to the sound of the harp, and like David have composed songs for themselves, who drink wine from sacrificial bowls while they anoint themselves with the finest of oils, yet they have not grieved over the ruin of Joseph. Therefore, they will now go into exile at the head of the exiles, and the sprawlers’ banqueting will pass away.*

2. New Testament Background

- a. Many tenant farmers working the land—for rich landlords
 - o Background for Jesus’ Parable of Owner of Vineyard (in Temple—**Mk 12**)
- b. Many day laborers struggling day to day
 - o Background of Parable of Laborers in Vineyard (**Mt 20**)—when late workers got equal pay
- c. Unfairness of the rich continued in Jesus’ and James’s day—many who followed Him maybe were clamoring for agricultural reform and fairness
- d. Reminder of Jesus’ words against the Scribes—**Mk 12**

Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the market places, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows houses, and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.

e. ACTION 3 = living self-indulgently at others’ expense—in the “day of slaughter”

1. Sinful stewardship of what God has entrusted to them
2. Best illustrated by Jesus’ story of Dives and Lazarus

Read Luke 16:19-31

3. James is calling Christians to two things
 - a. At a minimum—fair treatment of people in business

- Those whom we directly deal—pay our debts
- b. The bigger picture—greater sense of responsibility
- To use our wealth to help the less fortunate
4. The “Day of Slaughter”
- a. Eschatological term—the Day of Judgment—which is impending
- b. Irony—the rich have fattened themselves by the slaughter of many animals
- c. But the day of judgment is coming upon them—and they don’t even realize it—even as they feast!!!
- f. **Verse 6—You have condemned and murdered the righteous man; he does not resist you.**
1. Legal language—suggests these rich have abused the legal system to take advantage of the poor
 2. Result—by depriving the poor—the rich are guilty of their deaths
 3. Christological imagery—obvious parallels
 - Jesus is The Righteous One
 - He went silently to His death
 4. Irony
 - In the same way—the poor suffer silently
 - [Could be an allusion to future suffering of Christians—and non-resistance]
 - But they will be vindicated in the Judgment
 - Because He who remained silent in suffering—will be the Judge on the Last Day!

IX. PRACTICING ENDURANCE (Verses 7-11)

KJV 7-11—7 *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. 9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. 10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. 11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

NIV 7-11—7 *Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. 9 Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! 10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

NASB 7-11—7 *Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. 10 As an example, brethren, of suffering and*

patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. James begins to close the letter. So, this is the first section of that closing.
2. "Therefore" means three things
 - a. In context with **previous** passage (5:1-6)—past problems
 - Some of you have suffered—at the hands of dishonest and ungodly rich people
 - There may still be some suffering ahead
 - So remain patient—relief is on the way—the Lord is returning!
 - b. In context of anticipating the **future**
 - Just as God will judge and punish the rich who have abused you
 - When the Lord comes—He will bring judgment for everyone
 - So—watch you own behavior—The Judge is coming!
 - Also, looking *forward* to the end of verse 8—therefore—since the Lord is coming soon!
 - c. In context of the **whole book/letter**
 - In closing—James returns to some previous themes—that he will repeat or emphasize
 - In light of everything already written—he give the following directions.

B. THEME, SUMMARY, STRUCTURE AND CONTEXT OF SECTION

1. MAIN THEME = patience and perseverance
 - a. This returns to opening them of **1:2-4**
 - Trials → faith → perseverance → perfection/maturity
 - That passage talks about the *role* and *result* of perseverance in going from trials to maturity
 - This passage talks about *how* to persevere
 - b. Patience and perseverance mentioned 7 times
 - **Verse 7**—be patient
 - **Verse 7**—how the farmer is patient
 - **Verse 8**—You too be patient
 - **Verse 10**—as an example of patience
 - **Verse 11**—consider those who have persevered
 - **Verse 11**—you have heard how Job persevered

2. SUMMARY

Be patient and stand firm—because the Lord promises He is coming soon. Stay united—because the Lord warns He will judge those who divide His church. Be patient in the face of suffering—to the point of persevering like the prophets and Job. You will benefit from the Lord’s compassion and mercy.

3. STRUCTURE

a. FLOW—AND DIRECTION of passage

1. **One way** to read it is forward—from beginning to end

a. How this looks

- Be patient—the Lord is coming
- Be patient and stand firm—the Lord’s coming is near
- Don’t grumble—the Judge is standing at the door
- Consider the examples of the prophets and Job—the Lord is compassionate and merciful

b. The emphasis is on *our* taking the initiative

c. We *choose* to do these things in reaction to circumstances or consequences

2. **Another way** to read this is regressively—from end to beginning

a. How this looks

- The Lord is coming—so be patient
- The Lord’s coming is near—so be patient and stand firm
- The Judge is at the door—so don’t grumble—be united
- The Lord is compassionate and merciful—consider the examples of the prophets and Job

b. This puts more emphasis on the *Lord’s* initiative—and the hope/warning attached to it

- His coming—*inspires* and *enables* us to be patient and to stand firm
- His standing at the door—acts as a strong guard on the unity of His body
- His compassion and mercy—blessed the prophets and Job by enabling them to persevere

3. **Result**—a different approach to reading the text

The Lord is coming.

So be patient

He enables/inspires you to be patient like a farmer waiting for his crop.

The Lord is coming soon.

So be patient and stand firm (and united)—He enables/inspires this.

So don’t grumble—He stands as Guardian of His unified body and will Judge those who divide it

The Lord is compassionate and merciful

He will enable you to persevere.

Look at how he blessed the prophets and Job

He enabled them to persevere—(implied—He will help you too)

b. ELEMENTS of structure

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| 1. Command | v 7 | Be patient |
| 2. Illustration | v7 | Like the farmer |
| 3. Command | v 8 | Be patient and stand firm |
| 4. Promise | v8 | The Lord's coming is near |
| 5. Command | v9 | Don't grumble |
| 6. Warning | v9 | Or you will be judged |
| 7. Assurance/Warning | v9 | The Judge is standing at the door |
| 8. Illustration | v10 | Prophets who endured suffering |
| 9. Illustration | v11 | Job who persevered |
| 10. Promise | v11 | The Lord is compassionate and merciful |

4. CONTEXT

- a. James returns to theme at the beginning of the book—perseverance

1:3-4 = perseverance = 5:11

- b. In previous section, he talked about the *process* and *possibility* of persevering to maturity/perfection

- c. Here he shows *how* to persevere:

1. Be patient
2. Stand firm
3. Don't grumble—remain united (perseverance is collective as well as individual)
4. Remember and be motivated by three truths:
 - a. The Lord is coming—and His coming is near
 - b. The Lord is/will Judge—and He stands watch!
 - c. Depend on the Lord's compassion and mercy—this blessing is the source of your strength

- d. Shift in focus and tone

1. **James 1:2-4**—has a conditional (if-then) and indicative (factual) tone—and a present (here-now) focus
2. **James 5:7-11**—has an urgent and imperative tone—and an eschatological focus
3. **James 1:12**—reminder of the ultimate future—He who perseveres—will receive the crown of life

C. EXPLANATION—verses 7-11

1. **Verses 7-8**

7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

- a. “**Therefore**”—remember the three contexts—previous passage—future looking—and overall letter

b. “be patient”

μακροθυμέω = long + burning = slow-burning—long-suffering—enduring

- Fairly rare—used only 7 times in NT
- Examples outside Gospels—it suggests ‘endurance’ associated with promise
 1. **I Cor 13:4**—Love is patient, love is kind.
 2. **Heb 6:13-15**—When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.” And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.
 3. **II Pe 3:9**—The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

c. “the farmer **waits**”

ἐκδέχομαι = to look for—to expect

- Again—this is fairly rare—used only 8 times in the NT
- It adds another dimension to patience
 1. Not the normal word for wait—**μένω**—which means to remain or stay
 2. But to wait expectantly—to anticipate—looking forward eagerly [in a forward-leaning way!]
 - **John 5:3**—those waiting by the pool at the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem—Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed—and they waited for the moving of the waters.
 - **I Cor 11:33**—when we take the Lord’s Supper—Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, **wait** for one another.
 - **Heb 11:10**—of Abraham and his faith—For he was **looking forward to** the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

d. “be patient; **strengthen** your hearts”

στηρίζω = stand+ hard/firm/fast/strong = immovable—steadfast—fixed—resolute

- As when Jesus set his face—steadfastly—towards Jerusalem—**Lk 9:51**
- Of the gulf between heaven and hell—Abraham said to Dives—**Lk 16:26**—And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been **fixed**, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.

e. “the **coming** of the Lord is **near**”

1. The parousia = the (second) coming

2. Not just “is near”

- This is not an adjective
- Instead the verb **draws near**
- Perfect active indicative—suggests movement towards us—“is drawing near”

2. Verse 9

9 *Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.*

a. Background consideration

1. The Lord’s return (parousia) is near—see **verses 7-8**
2. When the Lord returns—He wants to find church members united and at peace with each other

b. Do not complain, brethren, against one another

1. Is it ever all right to groan—to show exasperation—or complain?
 - a. **στεναζῶ** = sigh—groan
 - b. Sometimes this is an appropriate response—in the right context
 1. Jesus ‘groaned’ (sighed) when He healed the deaf-mute in the Decapolis—**Mk 7:34**
 2. Paul says Christians an creation ‘groan’ as they await the fulfillment of God’s redemption:
 - As we await the completion of our adoption—**Rom 8:23**
 - In fact, all creation groans in bondage, awaiting freedom—**Rom 8:22**
 - As we wait to be clothed with our heavenly body—**II Cor 5:2**
 - As we wait for this mortality to be swallowed up by life—**II Cor 5:4**
2. But do not groan/sigh against one another—brothers in the church
 - a. This is like Israel’s grumbling in the wilderness:
 - **Ex 16**—because they missed food of Egypt—God provided manna and quail
 - **Ex 17**—they had no water at Rephidim—God provided it from the rock
 - **Nu 11**—they wanted meat—God gave them quail
 - **Nu 14**—after the bad report from the spies Israel was discouraged
 - b. Like the Pharisees grumbling against Jesus because he ate with sinners—**Lk 15:2; Lk 19:7**
 - c. This echoes **4:11**—**Do not speak evil against one another, brothers.**
 - d. But this goes even deeper than the previous prohibition

- Previously—James warned against aggressively overt activity like slander and malicious talk
- Here—he deals with the more subtle level of attitudes and mannerisms—not always verbal
- Here—he prohibits general agitation—gripping and complaining—that fosters discontent
- Sometimes—this may be done in very subtle ways
 - ‘sighs’ and others similar non-verbal cues
 - Our whole demeanor—when we show an ‘attitude’
 - Silence—the ‘look’—the ‘raised eyebrow’

e. Reciprocating effect

1. In this prohibition there is another warning
2. When we ‘grumble’ it is rarely one-sided—or without reciprocation
3. It usually generates a response and becomes infectious—‘against **one another**’

3. Is there any justification for groaning against one another?

a. *Several* causes might seem to justify complaining in James’s church

- Some have shown partiality—favoring rich over poor—[Chapter 2](#)
- Some probably have slandered others—[Chapters 3 and 4](#)
- Some have been bickering with each other—[Chapter 4](#)
- Some rich have abused the poor—[Chapter 5](#)
- They “did not have”—their desire for pleasure unfulfilled—[Chapter 4](#)

b. But none of these problems justifies grumbling against each other

1. Implies—that the Lord wants unity in His church
2. Implies—those who abused others should be repentant—not giving cause for grumbling
3. Implies—those who suffered should trust God and forgive—and not grumble

c. Watch out—a groaning attitude can turn into a judgmental one

1. Sometime when we are hurt—we think we are justified in judging those who have hurt us
2. Be careful—James says—as he moves to the issue of judgment

c. **So that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.**

1. Background consideration—**the Judge is standing right at the door**

a. The Lord is coming soon—[parousia]—as the Judge

- b. He is standing right at the door—*watching your behavior*
- c. Implication—watch not only your grumbling—but also your own judgmental behavior
- d. This reference to the Judge connects with previous passage

4:11-12—which—again—deals with opposing another brother and causing disunity:

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

2. So that you yourselves may not be judged

- a. Language is similar to Sermon on Mount—**Mt 7:1-2**

1 Do not judge so that you will not be judged. 2 For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

- b. In fact—**James 5** and **Matthew 7** serve as good commentary on each other
 - 1. Look at the rest of the **Matthew** passage:

7:3 Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

- a. This deals with judgment in general
 - b. It reminds us that none of us is without fault—so, we must all be repentant
 - c. This does not preclude discernment of sin (judging) and speaking against it
 - d. But—if we judge—we must proceed with caution—recognizing our own sinfulness
- 2. Look at the **James** passage
 - a. This deals with judging those who have hurt us personally
 - b. We should not complain, but be willing to forgive
 - c. We should not harbor a grudge and be judgmental
 - d. So Matthew's words applied here would be absolute—simply—Do not judge!

- 3. The eschatological tone of **verse 9** serves to remind us of two things

- a. The imminence, certainty, and unpredictability of the Second Coming

Mk 13:32-37— *But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will*

come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"

- b. The certainty of judgment attached to the parousia

II Cor 5:10— *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

3. Verses 10-11

10 *As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.*
11 *We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.*

- a. Context

1. These verses return to the original theme of **verses 7-8**

- a. Be patient (**vv 7 and 8**)—and strengthen your heart (**v8**)

- b. **Verse 9**—not grumbling with each other—also fits this theme

1. Being patient—also means—corporately we should tolerate and understand one another
2. Strength comes from unity—united hearts that are at peace with one another

- c. One reason all this is necessary—the Lord is watching and is coming soon

2. **Verses 10-11** also give *another* reason for being patient and strong

- a. A situation is coming that will do three things:

- Cause suffering
- Require patience
- Produce endurance (hopefully)

- b. The language suggests two things:

1. Situation probably will be persecution—the prophets were persecuted
2. Situation may be a very severe trial—like that of Job

3. Larger context—enduring trials/temptations

- a. Fits opening idea of book—enduring trials/temptations—to grow in faith—see **1:2**

- b. Also fits idea of **1:12**—enduring trials/temptations—to gain the crown of life

- b. Meaning

1. Language of **verses 10 and 11a** is reminiscent of Sermon on Mount—last beatitude—**Mt 5:10**
 - Prophets who suffered (persecution)
 - We count them ‘blessed’ (beatitude)
 2. The example of the prophets
 - a. **ὑπόδειγμα**—an example
 1. Not simply the word for a descriptive example = **τυπος**
 - a. ‘type’—*could* mean something to be copied/imitated
 - b. But it is more typically used for descriptive examples of what things are like
 - b. Instead— **ὑπόδειγμα**—means a pattern to be **imitated** (or avoided)
 1. For example
 - **Jn 13:15**—after foot-washing, Jesus said—this is an example you should follow
 - **Heb 4:11**—warns against—following after the example of unbelief
 - **II Pe 2:6**—Sodom and Gomorrha—became an example warning against ungodly behavior
 2. So—this is an example **you** will be expected to imitate—following the prophets
3. Expectations—of imitating the prophets
 - a. **Prophetic witness**
 1. The reason they were persecuted
 - Because they “spoke in the name of the Lord”
 - Equation: suffered for righteousness sake = speaking in the Lord’s name
 - They not only spoke on His behalf—but spoke what the Lord truly required
 2. Implication—we too must speak in the name of the Lord—what the Lord wants us to say
 - b. **Suffering affliction**
 1. **κακοπάθεια** = bad/evil + pathos/lust/affection = suffering of evil
 2. Unique usage in the NT
 3. The consequence of speaking in the name of the Lord
 4. Implication—we too will encounter opposition and suffer
 - c. **Patience—Endurance**
 1. **μακροθυμία**—long-suffering
 2. Cognate of ‘be patient’ in **verse 7** = be like a long burning fire/fuse/candle

3. Can also mean—be slow to respond—[so don't respond quickly to those who grumble?]
 4. Returns to general theme at beginning of James—different noun/verb—to endure/persevere
 5. Part of the fruit of the Spirit—**Gal 5:22**—love, joy, peace, longsuffering . . .
 6. This is not just a quality—but a *product* that only be developed when tested—under trial
 7. A product of God's grace—His mercy and compassion—not our own strength—see **verse 11**
4. The reward for endurance
- a. 'Blessed' = the reward for endurance
 - b. Like the reward in the last Beatitude
 - c. This blessing is a result of 'endurance'
 1. Here the word is different than patience in **verse 10**
 2. **υπομενω** = to persevere—hold fast—wait steadfastly
 - Same word used in **1:12**—for those who endure trials/temptations
 - Parallel idea—**1:12**—they will receive the 'crown of life'—the ultimate reward for the 'blessed'
5. The patience of Job
- a. This *may* warn—of the severity of the coming trial
 - b. But it clearly serves to show three things
 1. God *promise*

God *can help* one through even the *severest* of situations—with Him, hope is never lost
 2. God's *purpose*—his 'end'—revealed with/to Job

God can/will use even adversity to accomplish His good will—**Rom 8:28-29**
 3. The *source*—God's mercy and compassion are our ultimate source of hope

He gives all the things in this passage [**verses 7-11**]:

 - Patience—the ability to wait on the Lord
 - Strength of heart
 - Unity—ability to overcome grumbling
 - The example of the prophets
 - The privilege of speaking in His name
 - Endurance—in the face of trials—and to withstand affliction
 - Blessing(s)—for enduring trials and temptations
 - Assurance in the example of Job

X. SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD SPEECH (Verse 12)

KJV 12— Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

NIV 12— Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

NASB 12— But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

A. CONTEXT

1. The **fifth** passage in James related to use of the tongue

a. **1:26**—The tongue indicates the sincerity of one's religion

Anyone who thinks himself religious but does not bridle his tongue—he deceives himself—and his religion is worthless.

b. **3:1-17**—The power of the tongue

It controls the whole body—like the bit in a horse's mouth—like the rudder of a ship.
It can be iniquitous and set things afire—like a spark starting a great fire.
It is untameable—restless evil full of deadly poison
It is duplicitous—says both good and evil—blesses God but curses men

c. **4:1-3**—Behind the cause of quarrels and conflicts

The ultimate cause is desires/pleasures
These are unfulfilled—because you **do not ask**
Or you ask with the wrong motive

d. **5:9**—Do not complain against one another

2. It continues theme of previous passage (verses 7-11)—to be patient

Controlling what we say—and not rushing to make hasty, frivolous statements or promises

B. OTHER PASSAGES RELATED TO OATHS

1. Parallel passage—Sermon on Mount—closest parallel

Mt 5:34-37— "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

2. Other instances—referring to oaths

a. Jesus condemned Scribes and Pharisees for taking oaths—3rd of 8 woes

Mt 23:16-22—16 "Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone **swears** by the temple, it means

nothing; but if anyone **swears** by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ 17 You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? 18 You also say, ‘If anyone **swears** by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone **swears** by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.’ 19 You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 Therefore, he who **swears** by the altar **swears** by it and by everything on it. 21 And he who swears by the temple **swears** by it and by the one who dwells in it. 22 And he who **swears** by heaven **swears** by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.

b. Peter swore—after being challenged the third time about knowing Christ

Mk 14:69-71—69 When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, “This fellow is one of them.” 70 Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” 71 He began to call down curses on himself, and he **swore** to them, “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

C. THE USE AND GUIDELINES OF OATHS IN THE BIBLE

1. The Old Testament required them in certain circumstances—some examples:

- Nazarite vow—**Nu 6:1-21**
- Vow that a person has not damaged property he has sold to another—**Ex 22:10-11**
- God said He would not forget the covenant He had ‘sworn’ with their fathers—**Dt 4:31**

2. Several OT passages warned against swearing falsely—categorizing it with lying, murdering, stealing, adultery

3. New Testament instances of vows being legitimate

a. Jesus responded to the High Priest (in a way) under oath

Mt 26:63-64—**High priest ‘adjured’** Jesus by the ‘living God’ to tell whether or not He was the Christ, the Son of God. **Jesus responded** “you have said it yourself”—in Mark 14, Jesus said “I am.”

4. Paul swore vows

- Rom 1:9—For, as God is my witness,
- I Cor 1:23—But I call God to witness against me
- Phil 1:8—For as God is my witness
- After leaving Corinth—he cut his hair to fulfill a vow—Acts 18:18
- In Jerusalem—he took a vow and purified himself to satisfy Jewish Christians—Act 21:23-26

D. THIS REFERS TO PRIVATE SPEECH

1. So, the Scripture did not prohibit oaths in court—or for official purposes

- Such things were necessary to validate things publicly—matters of public/legal record

2. What is meant here—oaths should not be necessary in private/personal conversation

- When we make a special effort to show honesty in personal speech—with oaths
- This calls into question our honesty when we do not give such oaths
- Creates a two-tiered level of speech: what we normally say—vs—what we pledge as truth
- We ought *always* to tell the truth—so that oaths are not necessary to verify our truthfulness

3. Jesus’ condemnation of Scribes and Pharisees in Mt 23—verifies this point

- They were creating a multiple-tiered system of truth-telling
- Not only did they use oaths—they had levels of oaths
- If I pledge *this* way I am bound to it—but if I pledge *that* way I am not liable for what I say!

4. The main points

- a. Your personal speech should be honest—straightforward—and sincere
- b. Your simple word should be your bond—your oath

E. USAGE BY PARTICULAR GROUPS—AND MODERN PRACTICES

1. In Jesus' day—the Essenes forbade *any* use of oaths

2. Anabaptists prohibited use of *any* oaths

- Taking Jesus' command literally in *all* cases
- And not before the civil ruler—based on separation of church and state

3. Quakers prohibited use of *any* oaths

- Same basis as Anabaptists—plus not giving deference to human authority

4. Roger Williams—one of the charges that led to his banishment from Mass. Bay

- Opposed government requiring citizens to pronounce religious oaths
- Based on principle of separation of church and state

5. England—Toleration Act—initially required one to swear allegiance to crown—but was changed to allow 'affirmation' of allegiance.

6. USA—oaths for public office—allow officeholder to 'swear or affirm'

XII. THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER (5: 13-18)

KJV—13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. **14** Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: **15** And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. **16** Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. **17** Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. **18** And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

NASB—13 Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. **14** Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; **15** and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. **16** Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. **17** Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. **18** Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

NIV—13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. **14** Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. **15** And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will

be forgiven. **16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. **17** Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. **18** Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

A. REMEDY FOR SUFFERING—v 13

1. Renews the idea of ‘suffering’ in **verse 10**—the prophets who were patient in the face of suffering
2. So it could be the coming persecution—and warning about future suffering
3. It is **not illness** (addressed further below), but situations of misfortune or difficulty

κακοπαθεω = suffering/feeling affliction

4. Could be the poor suffering need—or being mistreated by the rich

Like the poor in the church to whom James has already spoken

5. Notice the **NIV** translation—“If any of you is in **trouble**”

This is a legitimate translation—word can mean general ‘hardship’ of any kind

6. Remedy

- a. Implied—what we are **not** to do

1. **Do not** lash out—or strike back
2. **Do not** try to bear it alone—in quiet solitude

- b. But seek help from God

1. James returns to the theme of prayer
2. Previously James said:

- a. Ask God for wisdom—**1:5-6**

- b. You do not have, because you do not ask—or you ask with wrong motives—**4:2-3**

- c. The power of prayer—James illustrates this below—**verses 16-17**

B. RESPONSIBILITY IN JOY—v 13

1. Opposite situation from suffering

- a. When joyful/happy—**ευθυμοεω** = being of good cheer/feelings

- b. Ironic word combination

- Literally—‘good’ fierceness’— ‘good anger/heat—‘good passion’
- Much like when something is ‘bad’ today—it is really ‘good’

2. Proper response

a. Praise God

- ψαλλω = ‘rub’ or ‘pluck’ the harp
- Derived from word for ‘psalm’—sing psalms = praise

b. Usage elsewhere = **Eph 5:19**

Speaking to one another **with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.**
Sing and **make music** from your heart to the Lord

3. Similar response—as when suffering

In **both** instances—turn to God—in **bad** times and **good** times

4. Two reasons—for praising God

- To glorify God and thank Him
- To witness to others what God has done for you

5. Always rejoice and praise God

Ph 4:4—Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice

Eph 5:20—always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God

I Th 5:16-19—Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.

6. Another implication—quenching the Spirit

- Not turning to God in these situations is a form of quenching the Spirit
- Not praying* and *not giving praise* to God for the good He has done!
- We inhibit the activity of the Spirit to commune with through us with the Father in all circumstances

C. THE POWER OF PRAYER—vv 14-18

1. Here James does two things:

- Gives a remedy for illness
- And uses this occasion to show the power of prayer

2. “Is anyone of you sick?”

ασθενεω = to be in a weakened state—to be ill

3. This is a severe illness

- a. Not just distressed (as in verse 1)
 - b. So weak that one could not go to the elders, they must come
 - c. Severe enough that human medicines and remedies are not effective
4. Office of elder
- a. Ministerial leader in the church
 - b. Term synonymous with pastor or bishop in **Acts 20** and **I Peter 5**
6. Priority of prayer in the act
- a. Elders *first* pray over person
 - b. Implied—laying on of hands—when being prayed ‘over’
 - c. Administering of oil is an attendant act—but not the primary focus
7. Role of the oil
- a. Not mainly a medicinal agent here—though it could have soothing effect
 - b. But symbolic of God’s unction/power by His Spirit—the source of healing power is God
8. Role of faith
- a. Reliance on two things
 - 1. Trusting in the **name** of **Jesus**
 - 2. Relying on the **certainty** of **God** to accomplish it
 - b. In response to the promises of Jesus Himself
 - 1. Prayer offered “**in the name of the Lord**”—the power of the healing—through Jesus Christ

Jn 14:13-14—Whatever you ask in my name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.
 - 2. Praying in faith

Mk 11:24—Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours
9. Historic precedents
- a. Role of oil in ministering to wounds

Lk 10—Good Samaritan went and tended to man’s wounds, pouring on them oil and wine
 - b. Miraculous healing—bringing glory to God

Mark 6—disciples drove out many demons, and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them

10. Two-fold Promise—**v 15**

- a. The prayer offered in faith—will restore the sick
- b. Also—sin will be forgiven
 1. This does not mean the illness is necessarily a result of sin (though it may be)
 2. Evidence God cares for inside/spiritual wellness as much as outside/physical condition
 3. Reminds us of Jesus’ healing of paralytic in **Mark 2**—“Son, your sins are forgiven”
 4. The greatest miracle is forgiveness of Sin—*only* God can do this—we can only ask

11. Regularly dealing with sin and sickness—the daily responsibilities of the church

- a. Two things we as the church should do regularly
 1. Confess sins to one another
 - a. Nobody is above admitting they are sinners—nobody is perfect
 - b. Mutual humility—and avoiding sin of pride/arrogance of Pharisees
 - c. Especially those sins that affect the body—where we have offended another or brought shame on body
 2. Responsibility to pray for (and visit) one another in illness
- b. Promise: confession and prayer will lead to healing
 1. This refers to individual physical/emotional/spiritual healing
 2. But also corporate healing—confessing/ forgiving one another and praying for one another brings unity

12. The power of effective prayer

- a. Effective prayer = ‘energized’ (verb, not adjective) = **ενεργεω**—operative/working
 - Prayer that really connects
 - Not just show prayers
 1. Like hypocrites— Jesus identified in **Mt 6**
 2. Like teachers of the law—Jesus identified in **Mk 12**
 - Not just vain babbling—like the pagans—again in **Mt 6**
 - Not just rote formulas—or going through the motions
 - But heartfelt—and really talking *with* God—and *trusting* Him to listen and act
- b. Righteous person = one in right *relation* with God—so that one really *connects* with God

- c. The power is not in the person—but in the **relationship** and **prayer** connected to God
- d. **It** can accomplish much—the **prayer** can do this—not the person
- e. Example—**vv 17-18**—it can even accomplish mighty miracles—Elijah

Background:

- **I Kings 17 opens—Elijah prophesies no rain**
- **I Kings 18 closes after prophets of Baal are defeated—Elijah prayed—and it rains**

1. Notice Elijah was a person just like us

- Not a superman—he had his own weaknesses
- He had the same ‘passions’ that we have (anger, desire, ego, etc)

2. But he ‘prayed a prayer’ = he prayed prayerfully

- Double use of word pray—he prayed (verb) a prayer (noun)
- Suggests he spoke his prayers prayerfully
- An attitude of genuine humility and supplication
- Not necessarily harder—not more ‘fervently’ or ‘intensely’ or longer
- But with the right attitude of humble petition before God

3. God stopped the rain—then God started the rain again!

4. God made it clear that this was a miracle

a. Rain stopped for *three and a half* years!!! [**Seven** growing seasons and harvests]

b. When it rained—it ‘poured’

1. Text says it ‘gave’ rain—not just the simple verb ‘rained’
2. Suggests it ‘gave forth’—poured
3. So much rain that the earth produced fruit—long enough to obtain tangible results

5. The result—**v 18**

Not just the return of the rain—as refreshing as that may be

But the return of persistent rain—enough to make a difference

The rain serves an ultimate purpose—the production of fruit

XI. RESTORING THOSE WHO HAVE STRAYED

vv 19-20—KJV—19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; **20** Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

vv 19-20—NIV—19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, **20** remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

vv 19-20—NASB—19 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, **20** let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

A. What this is not about—not about losing salvation and restoring salvation

1. The **doctrine of eternal security** is understood here

a. Our salvation depends on God's **certain promise**—not just our desire for it

1. **Romans 4:20-21**—He first promised this to Abraham.

Yet he [Abraham] did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

2. **Hebrews 12:2**—He both begins and fulfills this promise.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3. Hebrews 6:13-20—He gives **us** the same promise—based on His **universal** call of salvation.

Genesis 12:3

Joel 2:32

I Timothy 2:4

Revelation 22:14

4. He has **confirmed** this promise—by the name written on our foreheads

Revelation 14:1

Revelation 22:4

5. The unchangeable and certain nature of this promise—and our hope

His promise is sure and **unchangeable**

This **encourages** us—our hope is **anchored** in Christ.

He wants us to have a secure faith—**James 1:5-8**—without any doubting

6. The certainty is **rooted in the source** of that **promise**

The promise is as certain as the sacrifice Christ made for us:

Our security is rooted in **His** sacrifice

Not in **our** works; not in **our** faith—only in Christ

When we doubt, we question **His** promise and ability, not ours

Hebrews 10:23—*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.*

II Timothy 2:13—*If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*

7. **I John 2:25**—The promise is **eternal life**:

Eternal = life beyond this one

Eternal = life secured so we cannot lose it

b. God **permanently** seals our eternal salvation

1. **John 5:24**—*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes in Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*

We have **enduring** life—that we cannot lose

Life that removes **judgment**

Our state of being is permanently **changed**—from death to life

2. **How** will this be done?

a. **Romans 6:48-9**—Just as the Father raised up the Son—so He will raise us up.

b. Just as Jesus was raised to permanent life—so we are raised to permanent life

3. It is permanently sealed

Ephesians 1:13—*In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*

The Holy Spirit **seals** this

The Holy Spirit is the **promise**—the down payment that guarantees it.

4. It is connected to our sanctification—which is permanent

II Corinthians 1:21-22—*Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.*

We are **established** and completely **set apart**—consecrated

God stamps us with His indelible **seal**—of his **pledge**

5. It is imperishable—and linked to Jesus' own imperishability

who

ready

I Peter 1:3-5—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation to be revealed in the last time.

Our hope is undying—as alive as Jesus—He guarantees our inheritance—**imperishable**

We have a heavenly **reservation**—cannot be cancelled

It is **protected** by God’s power—not ours

We are called to believe this—**He** secures it

c. God **protects** our salvation

1. **Colossians 3:3**—when we have died to Christ our life is **hidden** with Christ in God

2. **II Timothy 1:12**

We should be **convinced** of this

God will **guard** this to the end

3. **John 10:27-29**—Jesus assures us:

Our life is **unending**

Once saved, we **never die**

In His hand we are safe forever—nobody can **snatch** it away

He is in the **Father’s** hand—we are doubly secure

4. **II Thessalonians 3:3**

The Lord stakes his reputation on this—He is **faithful**

He will shield us—**protect** us

5. **John 6:37**

Regardless of our faithlessness—He is faithful

He will **never reject** true believers

d. God confirms that we are permanently saved

1. **Romans 8:38-39**—nothing can **separate** us from God’s love

2. **I John 3:24** and **4:12-13**

If we are in Christ—we **know** we will **continue abiding** in Him

This results in His love being **perfected** in us

Proof that we are in Christ—the **indwelling** Holy Spirit

3. **1 John 5:13**—a chief purpose of God’s Word—to assure us we have **eternal** life

B. What this is about—the saving of sinners who are lost

1. There are some in the visible church who are not true believers, who are in danger of falling away
2. This is *similar* to [but not the same as] the falling away described in **Hebrews 6:4-6**

For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

- a. Such persons partake of all the benefits of being in the church (body of Christ) but are not genuine members
- b. They fall away to the point that they consistently reject Christ and crucify Him openly and habitually
- c. There comes a point that they cannot be restored—based on their own disobedience, not God’s rejection
- d. They have hardened their hearts to the point that they are unreachable

Hebrews 3—like disobedient Israel, it is possible to harden the heart by sin/disbelief, so one cannot be saved

3. But it is not the same—here is the difference

- a. In James 5—these persons are in error = “straying” from the truth (wandering away)
- b. They are like the sheep that strays from the fold

Like the one sheep that strays from the 99 (**Mt 18:12-13**)

Remember—Jesus said the shepherd can recover that sheep!

- c. They are not irretrievably lost—but only temporarily (hopefully) straying from the truth
- d. Possible kinds of straying
 1. Moral disobedience—resulting in sinful lifestyle
 2. Becoming deceived about the truth—doctrinal unsoundness

C. The recovery the sinner

1. This is the act of saving a lost person—not just correction of a believer
 - a. ‘Turning’ is the act of conversion
 1. The turning of a ‘sinner’ from a lifestyle of sin—to one of belief and obedience
 2. Same word used in **Acts 3:19**—call to repent and to be forgiven and saved

3. It is not just restoring a brother who has sinned

e.g. restoring a brother caught in a transgression—**Gal 6:1**

e.g. restoring one who commits a sin not leading to death—**I Jn 5:16**

b. There is an implied sense of urgency here—before the person falls away completely

2. The two results

a. Turning a person away from straying—results in saving the soul from death

1. Brings the person back onto the path of truth and obedience

2. Restores the person to the fold where they follow true belief and are accountable for moral obedience

3. Accomplished by being conformed to God's word—that brings genuine truth and obedience

The aim of **James 1:21**—*Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted which is able to save your souls.*

b. This further covers a multitude of sins

1. Like **I Pe 4:8**—it is *love* that covers a multitude of sins

The love of God that forgives

The love of the believer for the sinner—enough to help in reclaiming the sinner

2. The multitude of sins

Turning the sinner to obedience stops a lifestyle of sin and prevents the damage of those sins

Turning a person away from habitual disbelief/disobedience that hardens them to the point of no return