

The Epistle of James

James 5:1-20

- Questions

1. What problems existed among those who were rich (5:1-3; see 1:9-11; 2:6-7)?
2. What sins were the rich committing and why (5:4-6)?
3. What does James encourage the brethren to do in light of the Lord's coming and what illustration does he use (5:7-8)?
4. What does James discourage the brethren from doing in light of the Lord's coming (5:9)?
5. Who does James set forth as an example of patience (5:10-11)?
6. What practice does James forbid? What was their speech to be like (5:12)?
7. What circumstance in the life of a Christian would call for praise (5:13)?
8. What circumstances in the life of a Christian would call for prayer (5:13-16)?
9. What quality of prayer is found in the example of Elijah (5:17-18)?
10. What is to be done with a brother who errs from the truth and why (5:19-20)?

- Digging Deeper

1. What does “Lord of Sabaoth” mean (5:4)?
2. What “coming of the Lord” is referred to, a temporal judgment in the 1st century, or the second coming at the end of the world (5:7-9)?
3. Where in the OT do we find some examples of patience among the prophets (5:10)?
4. Where in the OT is the story of Job’s patience recorded (5:11)?
5. What is being forbidden here, using a phrase like “I swear to tell the truth...” (in a court of law), or something else (5:12; see Mt. 5:33-37; 23:16-22; 26:63-64)?
6. What is the practice of “anointing him with oil” (5:14; see Isa. 1:6; Lk. 10:34)?
7. Where in the OT is the story of Elijah’s prayer found (5:17-18)? What kind of man was Elijah and how does his character relate to prayer (see 1 K. 17-19)? How did God answer Elijah’s prayer on this occasion and what can we learn from this about how God answers prayer today (see 1 K. 18:41-45)?

- Applications for Today

1. Riches alone are not the problem; it is the improper attitude toward riches and the improper use of riches that is a problem (5:1-3; Mt. 6:19-20; Mk. 10:24-25; 1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17-19; Rev. 3:17-18).
2. We should exercise the patience of Job until the Lord comes (5:7, 10-11; Rom. 2:7; Heb. 12:1).
3. Our hearts should be firmly established until the Lord comes (5:8; 1 Thess. 3:13; 2 Thess. 2:17; Heb. 13:9).
4. We should not spend our time murmuring while waiting for the Lord to come (5:9; Acts 6:1; 1 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:14; 1 Pet. 4:9; Jude 16).
5. One should make an oath and keep his word without having to “swear” to what he says (5:12; 1 Tim. 1:10).
6. A life of persistent prayer and praise should characterize each Christian (5:13-18; Rom. 12:12; 15:9,11; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 13:15-16).
7. “Once saved always saved” is not taught in scripture. It is possible for a Christian to err from the truth and fall away (5:19-20; Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12-13; 6:4-6; 12:15; 2 Pet. 3:17).
8. Helping to convert an erring Christian is an important task for the faithful (5:19-20; Gal. 6:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:8).