

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Chapter 5

Introduction

- 1) Our study of the **epistle of James** continues in seeking “the wisdom which is from above”
- 2) Chapters 1-4 review
 - a) Enduring trials and temptations and being doers of the word (Ch. 1)
 - b) Avoiding the sin of partiality and a dead faith that does not have works (Ch. 2)
 - c) The danger of the tongue; showing works done in the meekness of wisdom (Ch. 3)
 - d) The danger of strife and the need of humility; putting God first (Ch. 4)
- 3) Chapter five warns of judgment, being patient, and the effectiveness of prayer

I) **Condemnation of the Ungodly Rich (vv. 1-6)**

- A) James addresses the rich who will come under the judgment of God (v. 1)
 - 1) Rich previously mentioned (1:10-11; 2:2, 6) and those who desire earthly gain (4:13)
 - 2) Written to Christians to inform of God’s judgment on the ungodly rich (5:1, 3, 5), similar to OT prophets’ condemnation of the ungodly nations (Isa. 13:6; Jer. 46-51)
- B) Their riches corrupted, garments moth-eaten, gold and silver corroded (vv. 2-3a)
 - 1) Earthly treasures in any amount or substance do not last (Matt. 6:19-21; 1 Tim. 6:17)
- C) The actions of the ungodly rich (vv. 3b-6)
 - 1) Heaped up treasure “in the last days” – destruction to come (AD 70? Final judgment?)
 - 2) Held back wages of their laborers and reapers (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:15)
 - 3) Lived in pleasure and luxury (Lk. 16:19)
 - 4) Condemned and murdered the just/righteous, who does not resist (Jas. 2:6; Acts 7:58)

II) **Be Longsuffering (vv. 7-12)**

- A) “Therefore, be *patient*, brethren” (v. 7) – Gk. *makrothumeoi* = longsuffering (vv. 7-9)
 - 1) Like a farmer waits patiently for the harvest – knows it will come
 - 2) Coming of the Lord “at hand” – judgment on rich oppressors – 70 AD? Final judgment?
 - 3) Do not grumble/complain at other brethren – frustration, anger
- B) Remember the example of suffering and endurance of prophets (vv. 10-11; Matt. 5:10-12)
 - 1) Count them blessed who endured (Heb. 11:39 obtained a good testimony through faith)
 - 2) Longsuffering of Job – Lord very compassionate and merciful at the end (Job 42:12)
- C) “Above all,” avoid unnecessary oaths by always speaking the truth (v. 12; Matt. 5:33-37)

III) **The Effectiveness of the Prayer of Faith (vv. 13-18)**

- A) Those suffering should pray and the cheerful should sing psalms (v. 13)
- B) The sick/weak (spiritual or physical?) should call for elders of the church to pray and anoint with oil – the prayer of faith will be answered with healing and forgiveness (vv. 14-15)
- C) Confess sin and pray together – the supplication/prayer of a righteous man is powerfully effective in its working (v. 16); the prayer of faith to God is very effective!
 - 1) Example of Elijah and prayer (vv. 17-18; 1 Kgs. 18)

IV) **Turning a Sinner Back to the Truth (vv. 19-20)**

- A) In conclusion, James encourages brethren to help those who wander from the truth (Gal. 6:1)
 - 1) Christian wanders away from the truth = a sinner in error whose soul is in danger of death
 - 2) Turning one back [repentance] covers a multitude of sins – gain forgiveness from God

Conclusion

James concludes by encouraging the brethren to actively do what he has done in this epistle, to turn erring brethren back to an active faith that will obey and apply the word of God to their lives.