

## **JUDGEMENT AGAINST RICH OPPRESSORS**

### **JAMES 5:1-20**

**INTRODUCTION:** James seems to be addressing those who are rich and not necessarily members of the Church. In fact, these are most likely people outside the church who are oppressing the Christians. This chapter is intended to try to encourage those who are being oppressed and to give them methods of getting through these times.

The message from the president of the US shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, bombing was we will not be afraid, we will not shrink back, we will not be robbed of freedom, but rather let freedom, ring! Was this message a message to encourage those who perpetrated the attack, was it a message that would lessen the pain and suffering for those who had lost loved ones in the mishap? The obvious answer is no, it was to encourage and instruct US citizens in ways to get through and at the same time to notify the terrorist that they were not successful. We who are Christians look to the word of God for encouragement during situations such as this. We know where our trust and confidence is found and we know ultimately who will be the final judge for the terrorist.

#### **I. GOD WILL JUDGE RICH OPPRESSORS**

A. Rich will suffer for their oppression: One might decide that this is written to Christians, since the Epistle is written in general to Christians. Most of the commentators seem to think, however, that it is speaking of those who are not Christians, but oppressing those within the church.

1. Crimes of the rich:
  - a. Hoarded up wealth vs, 2-3
  - b. Held back wages or salaries vs. 4
  - c. Were guilty of luxury and self indulgence vs. 5
  - d. Guilty of the murder of innocent people. Vs. 6
  - e. Question: what happens, how does that get settled?
2. God is the one who will ultimately meet out judgment, whether in this life or on judgment day.
  - a. Rom. 13:1-5; 14:11-12
  - b. Isaiah 13:6; 15:3
  - c. Amos 8:3
  - d. Mat. 8:12; 24:51; 25:30
3. Much is said in the scriptures concerning the danger of wealth:
  - a. Forget God: Deut. 6: 10-13; 8:11-20; 1 Tim. 6:9-10
  - b. Act Dishonestly & take advantage Prov. 10:2; 22:16
  - c. Become greedy Ex. 20:17; Luke 12:15-21; Eph. 5:5
  - d. Allow it to replace God: Prov. 11:28; Mat. 6:24

4. End Results of Riches:
  - a. Rot: vs. 2; Mat. 6:19-20
  - b. Clothes eaten by moths
  - c. Gold and silver corroded
  - d. Harsh treated of workmen will testify against you vs. 4
    - i. Deut. 24:14-15
    - ii. Prov. 3:27-28
    - iii. Jer. 22:13
    - iv. Malachi 3:5
  
5. Benefits of Saving
  - a. Good stewardship
  - b. Help others in need
  - c. Responsible preparation for tomorrow
  - d. Causes one to evaluate spending
  - e. 1 Tim. 6:10 “money not wrong”

## **II. THE NEED FOR PATIENCE IN OPPRESSION**

### **A. Actions or Attitudes needed for facing Oppression**

This is “brethren”, because he says so: vs. 7 They are being confronted by James in the means and ways of dealing with the oppression. The how to for Christians in the midst of persecution.

1. Be patient vs. 7
  - a. Illustration: as the farmer waits on his precious harvest.
  - b. 2 Peter 3:8-9
  - c. How we handle stress & oppression is important
  - d. Not to seek vengeance, but leaving that to God Rom. 12:19
  
2. Establish Your Hearts 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 Peter 1:13
 

The idea being conveyed, is much as it was on for the US on Sept 11. Let your hearts be strong or strengthened, fixed. Not fearful, which is what the terrorist hoped to achieve. So James tells Christians stand fast, let your hearts be strong.
  
3. Do not grumble, against one another (similar 2 Cor. 5:2
 

When troubles come we tend to grumble and complain, often we look for someone to blame for our troubles. Sometimes, the ones closest to us suffer because we take it out on them. (Ill. Jorg in Harrodsburg). Don’t let the outside conflict conquer and divide
  
4. Patiently wait on the ultimate judge
  - a. Second Coming Heb. 9:28; Rev. 1:7.

### **III. VALUE OF ENDURANCE IN OPPRESSION JAMES 5:10-12**

#### **A. Example: vs. 10-11 Job**

1. Ezekiel 14:14, 20
2. Psalm 37

#### **B. THE Value**

1. The Lord will provide compassion and mercy
2. Rom. 15:4;
  - a. Phil. 2:13 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”
3. Restoration of Job’s wealth, etc.
4. Don’t take an oath:
  - a. Mat. 5:33ff; 23:16-22
  - b. Look at lesson on oath taking

### **IV. PRAYER FOR DEFENSE DURING OPPRESSION JAMES 5:13-18**

#### **A. Correct Response to Oppression**

1. Prayer (Psalm 30)
2. Sing Psalms (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
3. Sick: call the elders, let them pray over you  
Anointing with oil: “in the name of the Lord”  
Along with prayers for healing, anointing with oil was very often used by the early church,. (Lk. 10:30-37), also as the Spirit of God (1 Samuel 16:1-13) “Thus the oil may have been a sign of the power of prayer, and it may have symbolized the setting apart of the sick person for God’s special attention (Barton, p. 138 NIV, Life App. Commentary). Ps. 133:1-3
4. Importance of elders:
  - a. Acts 20:17, 28
  - b. Phil. 1:1
  - c. Acts 14:23
  - d. Titus 1:5
  - e. 1 Peter 5:1ff

#### **B. What it will accomplish**

1. Prayer of faith will save the sick
2. Prayer for forgiveness removes sin
  - a. Christians only (Eph. 1:3)
  - b. Confess faults & pray
  - c. “the effectual fervent prayer avails much”
  - d. Example of fervent, believing prayer (Elias) vs. 17-18

**V. RESTORE THE ERRING JAMES 5:19-20**

James is most likely still concerned with the matter of praying for those who are sick, spiritually. The erring, those who have failed to worship God, and Jesus Christ the Son of God, who died for their sins. It was apparently a major problem then as it is now. Consider:

**A. Scriptural References to Restoration**

1. Gal. 6:1ff
2. Hebrews 2:1ff; 6:4-8; 10:25ff
3. The need was to bring them back in a religious and moral sense.
4. Luke 13:3 “except ye repent you shall all likewise perish.”
5. Psalm 85:2
6. Neh. 4:5 Nehemiah Prayed that God would not blot out sin

**B. It is about our attitude in doing the right thing**

God will show mercy to those who give mercy James 2:13

James may very well be thinking of all the problems of brethren he has discussed in this epistle.

1. misuse of the tongue
2. jealousy,
3. lack of concern for the poor
4. worldliness
5. quarreling