

**James 5:7-12** – 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. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 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. 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.

**Review:**

- James 5:1-6
  - This is addressed to believers who are rich (have more than enough).
  - The language is a harsh prophetic utterance in the same mold as Joel, Hosea, Isaiah, etc.
  - Proposal – The rich were acting within their lawful rights in the oppression of the poor.
  - The exhortation from 7-11 is specifically directed to the rich believers.
  - The principle of this passage is relevant to all, but we must first see this as a necessary response from those rich, those who are indicted in verses 1-6.
  - What does being patient or enduring mean for them? How does that affect their behavior?
- Patient –
  - Used four times in verses 7-11
  - This word is a Hebraic term.
  - It is an attribute of God – God is patient with us; He is long-suffering.
    - ✓ This attribute is in accordance with grace.
    - ✓ God grants grace even when one does not deserve it.
    - ✓ Though wronged a thousand times, God does not hold that against us.
  - Used in the Hebrew Scripture for the rich being patient with the poor
  - *Patient* is defined as “having your passions under control.”

**Exegetical Analysis:**

Beginning with the proposal that the rich were acting within the local/societal law, we are forced to evaluate the difference between that which is lawful and that which is the will of God. When we look at the Old Testament Law, there are 15-20 basic civil laws that were to govern the actions of Israel. These laws include monetary reparations for loss, property rights, lending practices, and others.

There are laws, both within the Hebrew culture and also the Greek societies, which would provide the necessary framework to hold people accountable for owing money, either from being wronged or indebtedness.

## The Epistle of James to the Twelve Tribes of the Diaspora

Within the Gospels, Jesus was often asked about civil laws and disputes:

- Matthew 5:38-42
- Matthew 7:12
- Matthew 18:23-35
- Matthew 22:35-40

We are a society that, in general, demands justice. We are bent toward vigilantism when criminals get off on a technicality. When we are wronged, we desire to see that person get what is coming to them. When it comes to criminal activity, it is important to have a government which functions judicially and fairly; otherwise society crumbles. But as individuals how do we respond when wronged? Is it our responsibility to demand justice if we ourselves are wronged?

Without going into all the details, it is biblically moral to defend your family and property from thieves and those who seek to kill and destroy? Not only is it right, but it is also the responsibility of the husband and wife to defend their household.

But when we are wronged, it is our job to see to it that the person responsible is prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law? Nowhere in Scripture does it say to lessen the extent of prosecution for lawbreakers. For we know that if a criminal does not get punished, he will repeat the criminal activity.

In Romans, we know that the government is there as an agency ordained by God to punish evil and praise good. At least that is the intention of God.

Now, what if there is a situation between fellow believers? What if someone did not pay you back? What if someone is not appreciative of the time, energy, and money you have spent to help them? What if they commit a crime against you?

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:6-8 – In the eyes of the world, justice is served. Therefore, based on these verses and what we learned last week, when a wealthy believer holds a brother in contempt for wrongs he has suffered by judging him, taking him to court, or not being willing to help him again because he is unable to repay, God views that as sin.

Practically speaking, many people are confused over our responsibility with what God has given us. Your personal resources are designed for:

1. Family provisions – 1 Timothy 5:8
2. Provision of the poor brethren – James 2:15-16
3. Provision for the poor outside – Galatians 2:10

Now, we return back to James and we have the exhortation for those who have more than enough to be patient with the poor among them and be generous, not holding debt against them but providing for their needs.

*“Therefore, be patient, brethren...You too be patient.”*

## The Epistle of James to the Twelve Tribes of the Diaspora

In this context, what does being patient mean? Remember the word means to “have your passions under control.” As believers, they have been taught and understand that God is the one who repays (Romans 12:17; Galatians 6:7,9-10; Hebrews 13:15-16; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:20,23; 3:8-9; 4:19).

From the perspective of the affluent, how does this apply? They are to love God and love others. If that means sharing what they have with those who do not have, so be it. If someone takes advantage of their generosity, so be it. Where is their hope? Where is their treasure? Mistreatment does not mean that it has to come from those who are socio-economically above; sometimes it comes from those who are in need.

In verse 9, we have “*Do not complain, brethren, against one another.*” This is parallel to *be patient* but is contrasted to it. To complain against one another is opposite of being patient. *Complain* is “*στενάζω stenazō*” and this is a word that means to groan, or sigh, to be exasperated, or to hold a grudge.

We are to forgive others because we have been forgiven. Again, this goes both ways. It is better to be wronged than to hold a grudge against a brother for a wrong suffered. If Jesus forgives us without our contrition, why do we have the right to hold anger against someone for offenses, even when they do not say “sorry?”

### **Conclusion:**

Let us sum up what we have so far:

- The Problem – The believers who have more than enough are not acting/reacting appropriately to the believers who have nothing.
- The Solution – Be patient with fellow believers who have harmed you (regardless of their intention).
  - This is the what the believers are to do
  - What has not yet been fully explained is the why or the how

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### **Context:**

We have seen that this section has a direct exhortation to the audience at hand and also has an easily recognizable secondary application to all believers, whether rich or poor.

Last lesson we left off in the middle of verse 8, after discovering that it is widely stated throughout the New Testament that we are to be patient with each other. Being patient with each other means that we do not hold the sins of another against him.

This lesson will detail why:

1. Because the coming of the Lord is near
2. Because the Judge is standing at the door
3. So that you are not judged
4. Because we hold in high regard those who endured

### **Exegetical Analysis:**

What are the reasons given in this text for not holding a grudge, for being patient, and for forgiving wrongs committed by other believers?

In verse 7 it states, "...until the coming of the Lord," and this is repeated in verse 8 – "...for the coming of the Lord is near." The simple answer does not fully explain the why; there is something behind this initial statement that needs to be explained.

What are the implications of this statement? First, we must understand the family paradigm. Let's give an example of two brothers. One brother really messes up and does something really bad against his brother. The babysitter acts as the peacekeeper and tells the offended brother, "Be patient with your brother, your father's return is near." When the father returns, the offended brother tells the father, "Dad it is ok, do not hold this sin against him." What does the righteous father do? He will do two things. He will deal with the brother who sinned and will reward the patient brother for being gracious to his brother.

The second implication is the doctrine of imminence. The return of Jesus Christ is seen and depicted in the New Testament as imminent. This means that this is the next prophetic event to happen and it can happen at any time.

## The Epistle of James to the Twelve Tribes of the Diaspora

Some thoughts on this:

1. The problem with prophecy watching
  - a. There are no prophecies that are necessary to be fulfilled prior to Jesus' return
  - b. 1948 – Israel becoming a nation is not a fulfillment of prophecy
  - c. There are no prophecies that are being fulfilled today
  - d. There are building blocks being laid, but no direct fulfillment
2. All the writers of the Apostolic Age spoke as if they were going to see the coming of the Lord in their lifetime.
3. "Is near," is in the Perfect Active Indicative translated in the Gospel's as "is at hand."

The third implication is the doctrine of the "coming of the Lord." The understanding of the "**παρουσία parousia**" of the Lord begins in Matthew 24:3, 37, 39. This is where a lot of confusion sets in. I stated a couple of lessons ago that James was not fully aware of the eschatology of the "**παρουσία parousia**" of the Lord. In Matthew, the church or the Church Age is not explained. The "**παρουσία parousia**" of the Lord is spoken of as the final event before the millennial reign. The words of Jesus in Matthew 24 are pertaining to Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week when the Lord will come and gather all the saints who are remained on the earth and will establish his Kingdom.

Later in the apostolic program, the mystery of the church, the church age, the removal of the church age saints before the day of the Lord, and the final coming of the Lord are revealed through Paul.

In Paul's revelation, the "**παρουσία parousia**" of the Lord is not a single event but an event that is broken up into two parts. The first is the translation of the church (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:20-24,51-52). This understanding of being transformed at His coming is what we call the rapture of the church, then we will have the tribulation, then the final "**παρουσία parousia**" of the Lord where He returns to earth to rule and reign forever. But in Matthew, James, 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, and 1<sup>st</sup> John, the "**παρουσία parousia**" of the Lord is a single event and the rapture is not fully known.

It is the implication that the "**παρουσία parousia**" of the Lord is dealing with the establishment of the Kingdom that must be understood because the next "why" is found in verse 9.

*"So that you may not be judged...behold the Judge is standing at the door."*

The verb *judged* is "**κρίνω krinō**" and means to distinguish, select, criticize, find fault with, or have justice administered to. The context determines the good or bad nature of this "judgement." In this context, the one who is holding something against his brother will be "**κρίνω krinō**." This does not mean he will be sent to hell. The most basic meaning is justice will be administered to this person.

What is important is the context of this passage according to the theme. The theme is the "**παρουσία parousia**" of the Lord. According to what they know, this is when Jesus will establish His Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. With that establishment, all the rules of the Kingdom kick in.

Here is one rule: Matthew 5:21-22 – "...shall be guilty to be burned up with the garbage." This is not talking about eternal justice or eternal punishment, for Jesus took all our punishment on the cross. He was judged for us. But the new government will be harsh to those who show no mercy.

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*The Judge is standing at the door* is a euphemism for Jesus who will administer rewards based upon good performance but will also rule with an iron fist in the Kingdom of heaven.

What we need to understand is that the warning passages in James are based on this new coming administration. What James did not see is the administration of grace under the banner of the church. Therefore, he does not talk in those terms.

The final reason why we are to be patient is because of the examples of those before us, those whom we hold in high regard. The two examples given are the prophets and Job.

First, let us make some general observations about the prophets of old: Acts 7:51-52; Hebrews 11:13, 16, 32-40, 12:1-3. The Hebrew Scriptures are not just historical accounts but are written and preserved for our example so that we follow in the footsteps of faith and take encouragement if we are suffering.

Next is Job. Most of us know the account of Job (this is New Testament verification of the Book of Job). Job was a man who continually acted righteously and with integrity. God permitted Job to be tested by allowing Satan to take away all that Job had, his family, his wealth, and his relationship with his wife. Yet Job said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

Now turn to Job 42:10-17. Again, this is an example to those reading this letter. This is merely a temporary example. What more do you think will occur in the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth? This is what they are waiting for. It is the mercy, generosity, and the justice of the Lord when He returns.

What is being described is different than what we are looking forward to, but the principle remains. We look forward to the Judgment Seat of Christ (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:9-10 – The *Bema*) where there is no condemnation only evaluation of each believer for reward.

To those who remain at His foot on the ground "**παρουσία** *parousia*" they will either enter into the kingdom as humans (no translation) or be destroyed. This is not an eternal decision but an entering.

With the principle of being patient and not holding a grudge understood and the reasons why according to James, we can now move onto the how. Is this easy? Is this a simple command? No, it is not, and James does not pretend that it is. He says to strengthen your heart. The word "**στηρίζω** *stērizō*" means to secure, establish, to set firmly in the proper place (Romans 1:11; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 3:2; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:12).

The means to be able to withstand mistreatment or to do what is right in spite of what seems logical is rooted in the Word of God, the doctrines, and the truth of the example of Jesus and His apostles. They were not expected to just self-will themselves through the hardships of this world.