

The Judgment Coming Upon Wealthy Non-Believers; ~ 5:1-6.

James first declares the fact of coming judgment upon them.

▶▶¹ Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you.

In vv 2-6, ~ James then lists the crimes ~ against which this judgment ~ will be meted out.

▶▶ These crimes are 4 in #.

▶▶^{1st}, ~ guilty of hoarding, ~ 2-3.

▷▷² Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³ Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days.

↪↪ I.e., ~ You have hoarded wealth in/during the last days.

▶▶^{2nd}, ~ guilty of defrauding their workers.

▷▷⁴ Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

▶▶^{3rd}, ~ guilty of extravagance.

▷▷⁵ You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

▶▶ And ^{4th}, ~ guilty of oppression, ~ vs 6.

▷▷ You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you. 1/14

Based On Jewishness Of James And His Similarity To The OT Prophets, ~ ¶¶

James, ~ In 5:1-6, ~ is speaking to people who were not present, ~ for the benefit of those who were.

▶▶IOW, ~ in form ~ James' announcement of judgment is addressed to wealthy unbelievers.

▷▷But James, ~ no doubt, ~ was well aware ~ ¶¶

↳↳that his words would probably reach ~ but few of those being addressed.

▶▶James' focus ~ was actually on believers.

▷▷Wrote this ¶ ~ for our benefit.

Do A Brief Review Of James' Primary And 3 Secondary Purposes.

Primary.

▶▶To instill correct thinking & right behavior in us regarding the wealthy rich.

▷▷Talk about what that is and implications as we go through details.

& 3 Secondary purposes.

▶▶Encourage & comfort believers.

▶▶Not to envy the wealthy.

▶▶And not to avenge ourselves. 2/14

Now it's extremely important to remember ~ James not condemning wealth in & of itself.

▶▶ The evils they are guilty of ~ establish their ungodly character.

▷▷ He is not denouncing rich people generally.

▶▶ James should not be charged with the unscriptural view ~ that wealth in itself is sinful.

▶▶ But he well knew ~ that its accumulation ~ was often associated with evil practices.

▷▷ Note Paul's instructions to Timothy for believers in [1 Tim. 6:9-10](#)

Last Time Did An Overview And Set A Foundation For This Mini-Essay.

Today, ~ we begin look at the details.

▶▶ Sp. 1-3, ~ statement of judgment & 1st crime for which judged.

James First Declares The Fact Of Coming Judgment Upon Wealthy Unbelievers.

¹ Come now, you rich, weep and howl ~ [why weep & howl] ~ for/because of ~ the miseries that are coming upon you.

Come now ~ attention getter.

▶▶ Now listen ~ or ~ Look here.

▶▶ Not so much an attention getter for rich unbelievers. 3/14

▶▶ Attention getter for us.

▷▷ Encouragement & comfort.

▷▷ Following Jesus is worth it.

▷▷ Very similar to Asaph's testimony when he went into the sanctuary (Ps. 73).

The miseries that are coming upon you ~ looks forward ~ 77

▶▶ to what will happen to the wealthy rich on the day of judgment.

▶▶ Again, ~ not wealth they're condemned for.

Weep and howl ~ not a call to repentance.

▶▶ And it's not as a summons for them ~ to see the foolishness of their position.

▶▶ The verb *weep* ~ is the same word used in 4:9 ~ 77

⇒⇒ where it is used in connection with the thought of genuine repentance.

▶▶ But it's not used here for that.

▶▶ Rather, ~ It is a proclamation of damnation.

The word ~ *howl* ~ is to be taken as defining the imperative ~ *weep*.

▶▶ Howling is the manner in which the weeping is to be done. 4/14

▶▶ Howl means ~ to cry out with a loud voice.

▶▶ They are ~ to weep with howls of mourning.

Howl ~ is used only here in the NT.

▶▶ In the LXX ~ it was often used by the prophets ~ in the sense of ~ 77

▷▷ loud crying ~ or howling in grief or distress.

▶▶ It describes the reaction of wicked people ~ to the horror of impending divine judgment.

▷▷ E.g., ~ when Isaiah declares judgment on Babylon.

↪↪ Is. 13:6, ~ Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come!

▷▷ And his declaration of judgment on Moab.

↪↪ Is. 15:3, ~ In the streets they wear sackcloth; on the housetops and in the squares everyone wails and melts in tears.

▶▶ This background makes clear ~ that the misery that is coming upon the wealthy rich ~ 77

▷▷ refers not ~ to earthly, temporal suffering.

▶▶ Rather, ~ it refers ~ to the condemnation and punishment ~ that God will mete out to them, ~ 77

▷▷ and to all unbelievers ~ on the day of judgment. 5/14

In fact, ~ all who reject God's gracious offer through the gospel of Jesus Christ ~ stand condemned already.

▶▶ Jn. 3:18, ~ Whoever believes in him is not condemned ~ [no condemnation], ~~ but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

▶▶ One's eternal destiny is determined on earth, ~ not in heaven.

▶▶ Anyone who believes in Jesus ~ is not judged or condemned in the future judgment.

▶▶ Anyone who does not believe ~ has been judged already, ~ here and now.

▶▶ The future judgment confirms ~ but does not determine ~ one's eternal destiny.

While the rich are called to weep and howl, ~ we, ~ as noted, ~ are not called to gloat.

▶▶ Lk. 6:27-29 (NIV), ~ But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them.

▶▶ They have no idea of the terror that awaits them.

▷▷ But we do.

▷▷ Need to weep for them. ⇔⇔ & pray they turn to Jesus before it's too late.

In Vv 2-6, ~ James Then Lists 4 Crimes ~ Against Which This Judgment ~ Will Be Meted Out.

1st, ~ Hoarding, Vv 2-3. ⇔⇔ Other 3 next time. 6/14

² Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ^{3a} Your gold and silver have corroded, ^{3b} and their corrosion will be evidence against you ^{3c} and will eat your flesh like fire. ^{3d} You have laid up treasure in the last days.

▶▶ Break this down.

Vv 2-3a.

▶▶ ² Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ^{3a} Your gold and silver have corroded.

This is not something that was happening or had already happened to these people's wealth.

▶▶ James is most likely speaking figuratively.

▶▶ We know this ~ by what he says about gold and silver.

▷▷ Your gold and silver have corroded.

▷▷ Corroded means ~ completely rusted through and worthless.

▷▷ But gold & silver actually don't rust.

↳↳ Gold ~ is the most nonreactive of all metals ~ and cannot be eaten or rusted away.

↳↳ Silver too ~ is remarkably durable. ⇔⇔ Although can become tarnished.

▶▶ In speaking figuratively, ~ James is emphasizing ~ 77

▷▷ the temporary nature and actual worthlessness ~ of mat'l wealth. 7/14

1st, ~ the temporary nature of wealth.

▶▶ Mat'l wealth is for this life only.

▷▷ 1 Tim. 6:7, ~ for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.

▷▷ Job 1:21a (CSB), ~ Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life.

▷▷ Eccles. 5:15 (NIV), ~ Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands.

▶▶ Material things belong only to this world.

▷▷ Things have no lasting value ~ and provide no eternal advantage.

▷▷ Human contact with the material world ~ begins at birth ~ and terminates at death.

▶▶ But Christian hope ~ takes the believer beyond the material limit ~ to a boundless eternity.

▷▷ Logically, then, for us, ~ believers, ~ eternal values must shape our view of earthly things.

▶▶ John notes the same truth using diff wds.

▷▷ 1 Jn. 2:17.

↪↪ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. 8/14

▷▷ The world's appearance of permanence is deceptive.

▷▷ History ~ is not an endless cycle ~ but is speeding toward a conclusion willed by God.

▷▷ Believers must not be fooled by the false appearance of this world.

▶▶ Overall, ~ for believers, ~ James' words here reinforce Jesus' words in [Matt. 6:19-21](#).

▷▷ Jesus concludes ~ that what people treasure ~ becomes the guiding principle for their whole life.

▷▷ Heart ~ is the whole being, ~ referring to the inner person, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ the seat of understanding, knowledge, and will.

▷▷ So it means ~ we give total loyalty ~ to that which is of ultimate significance to us.

▷▷ Jesus is asking ~ whether worldly wealth ~ or the things of God ~ will rule our lives.

▶▶ Obviously, ~ in the case of these wealthy unbelievers that James is describing ~ ¶¶

▷▷ their wealth is of ultimate significance to them.

▷▷ And it rules their lives.

▷▷ Believers must avoid this.

↳↳ We must store our wealth above, ~ where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. 9/14

2nd, ~ again speaking figuratively in vv 2-3a, ~ James is also emphasizing ~ ¶¶

▶▶ the actual worthlessness of mat'l wealth.

▶▶ I.e., ~ worthlessness as far as people's spiritual hope and blessings are concerned.

▶▶ IOW, ~ when it comes to what matters most, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ our eternal soul and spiritual blessings, ~ material wealth is worthless.

▶▶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

▶▶ Regarding unbelievers, ~ Zeph. 1:18, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the Lord. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

▶▶ In life, ~ bought influence, ~ manipulated justice system, ~ etc.

▷▷ But when it comes to standing before God's throne of judgment, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ all the wealth they've accumulated and hoarded ~ means nothing.

→→ Fool's errand. (No chance of being successful or beneficial)

▶▶ The only hope of deliverance from the Lord's wrath ~ is through the precious blood of Christ.

We believers need to start viewing mat'l wealth as the Bible presents it. 10/14

▶▶ Temporary and worthless when it comes to what matters most.

▷▷ Col. 3:1-4

In 3b, ~ James notes that their temporary and worthless hoarded wealth ~ ¶¶

▶▶ will be evidence against them on judgment day.

▶▶ Their accumulation & hoarding of wealth is evidence ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that their wealth was of ultimate significance to them ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and that they gave their total loyalty to it.

▶▶ It also testifies that they were greedy & selfish.

▶▶ Their hoarded wealth further demonstrates ~ that they did not share with those in need.

▷▷ Totally unlike the believers in the early church.

▷▷ Acts 2:44-45, ~ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

▶▶ And there's even more evidence against them.

▷▷ The fact that their wealth is of ultimate significance to them ~ shows them ~ to be guilty of idolatry.

▷▷ Their wealth was their god. 11/14

▷▷ Whatever claims that loyalty which belongs to God alone ~ is an idol.

▷▷ Is. 42:8, ~ I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

▷▷ And their hoarded wealth ~ certainly claimed that loyalty.

Rather than helping them on the day of wrath, ~ their hoarded wealth ~ 77

▶▶ will eat their flesh like fire, ~ 3c.

▷▷ I.e., ~ their hoarded wealth will actually feed the very flames of the lake of fire, ~ 77

↪↪ where they will spend eternity.

But it does not have to be that way.

▶▶ Talked before ~ but really need to constantly stress this.

▶▶ God has done all he can ~ to save people from his wrath. ~ Jn. 3:16-17.

▶▶ Gospel means good news. ⇔⇔ Not bad news.

▷▷ It's the good news ~ of God's redemption of sinful humanity ~ 77

▷▷ through the life, death, and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ.

▶▶ God would much rather people face His mercy, ~ love, ~ and grace ~ than His wrath. 12/14

Scripture makes this abundantly clear.

▶▶ Through Ezekiel, ~ God says, ~~ I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live (33:11).

▶▶ In 1 Tim. Paul writes, ~ that God "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

▶▶ Please understand. ⇨⇨ Not saying

▶▶ But having said this, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that God would rather people face his mercy, ~ love, ~ & grace ~ than His wrath, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ it is also true that when those who have rejected Jesus die, ~ they will face God's wrath.

▷▷ God has no choice

Then James states the folly of their hoarding, ~ 3d, ~~ You have laid up treasure in/during the last days.

▶▶ The last days, ~ or end times, ~ denotes the last age of human history.

The last days ~ began on Pentecost ~ and will end when Jesus returns.

▶▶ Wealthy hoarders ~ are oblivious to the momentous days in which they're living.

▷▷ They hoard ~ as if they would live and the world would go on forever.

▷▷ They're piling up riches ~ in a world that is coming to an end. 13/14

▷▷ They don't understand ~ that the last days have already begun ~ 77

↳↳ and that Jesus' 2nd coming could be at any moment.

▷▷ They are like the Babylonians, ~ 77

↳↳ feasting and reveling in willful ignorance that disaster was about to strike their city (Dan. 5:1-31).

▶▶ Again, ~ not wealth but hoarding being condemned.

▶▶ And what about us, ~ my ⇔⇔ *Where is our treasure?*

▷▷ Are we laying it up on earth ~ so that we might live in comfort, ~ planning for a long life here?

▷▷ Or do we focus more on amassing treasure in heaven with God, ~ 77

↳↳ being merely grateful for the blessings he has given us here and now?

▶▶ And do we truly understand ~ that Jesus' 2nd coming could be at any moment?

▷▷ *You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

▷▷ Since he will come at an unexpected time, ~ we should be ready at all times for him to return.

And What A Day Of Rejoicing That Will Be.

When we all see Jesus, We'll sing and shout the victory! 14/14