

Continue Mini-Essay On The Judgment Coming Upon Wealthy Non-Believers; ~ 5:1-6.

(Outline) 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. 1/12

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.

And We Noted A Primary And 3 Secondary Purposes For This ¶.

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. 2/12

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.

Today.

The 2nd crime ~ against which this judgment ~ will be meted out.

▶▶ Defrauding workers.

▶▶ Vs 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.

James Introduces This 2nd Crime ~ With The Exclamation ~ Behold ~ In Vs 4a.

Grk wd for ~ Behold ~ is an attention getter.

▶▶ It's a call ~ to closer consideration and contemplation.

▶▶ James wants us ~ to carefully and thoroughly think through ~ what he's about to say next.

And i.e., ~ 1st, ~ our heavenly Father is not ignorant of or uncaring ~ when we are cheated or oppressed by unbelievers. 3/12

▶▶ He might not act right away.

▶▶ One of the reasons being ~ that he is giving them a chance to repent.

▶▶ And that is where they make their mistake.

▶▶ They actually think they're getting away with something. ⇨⇨ & it emboldens them.

▷▷ Eccles. 8:11, ~ Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.

▶▶ But in reality, ~ they're not getting away with anything.

▷▷ Ps. 94:7-11, (NIV) ~ They say, "The Lord does not see; the God of Jacob takes no notice."

↪↪ Then the psalmist gives them a dose of reality.

→→ Take notice, you senseless ones among the people; you fools, when will you become wise? Does he who fashioned the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see? Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge? The Lord knows all human plans; he knows that they are futile.

▷▷ And Ps. 50:21, ~ These things you have done, and I have been silent; you thought that I was one like yourself. But now I rebuke you and lay the charge before you.

And 2nd, ~ James wants us to carefully and thoroughly think through ~ that God is able to and will act on our behalf.

▶▶ James alludes to this when he calls God ~ the Lord of hosts.

▶▶ This should give us ~ great comfort ~ and also encouragement to persevere. 4/12

Specifically in vs 4 ~ James is talking about believers being cheated out of earned wages.

▶▶ But this applies across the board ~ when it comes to us being opposed or persecuted by unbelievers.

▶▶ This vs reinforces Pau's exhortation in [Rom. 12:19](#), ~ NIV.

▷▷ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," ⁿ says the Lord.

▶▶ Also underlines [Prov. 20:22](#), (NIV).

▷▷ Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the Lord, and he will avenge you.

In 4b, ~ James Sates 2nd The Crime.

The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud.

▶▶ They fraudulently withheld the wages that were rightfully owed ~ to those who harvested their fields.

▶▶ Perhaps on the basis of some unwarranted technicality.

▶▶ Or, ~ perhaps just out right lying.

▷▷ I.e., ~ promising a day's wage ~ without any intention of actually paying them.

They had done the work.

▶▶ And they deserved their wages. ⇔⇔ The laborer deserves his wages. 5/12

It's important to understand ~ that James does not condemn the employer-employee relationship itself.

▶▶ The Bible supports and gives instructions for that relationship.

▶▶ What James does condemn ~ is the exploitation of the employees by the employer.

▶▶ Paul gives explicit instructions to Christian employers in Col. 4:1.

▷▷ Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

▶▶ And Peter says this to Christian employees. ~ 1 Pet. 2:18.

▷▷ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.

Here ~ laborers, ~ as generally in the New Testament, ~ denotes agricultural employees.

▶▶ They were workers ~ who were dependent on their daily earning ~ to meet their material needs.

The poverty of hired laborers ~ is reflected in the Bible.

▶▶ And there are humane regulations protecting their rights.

▶▶ Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard ~ is told against this general background.

▷▷ It reflected the proper practice of paying workers daily (Matt 20:1-16). 6/12

In the OT, ~ the importance of paying laborers at the end of the day's work is emphasized.

▶▶E.g., ~ Lev 19:13b (NIV).

▷▷Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.

▶▶And Deut. 24:14-15 (NIV).

▷▷Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

▶▶Also, ~ employers who exploit their workers are often rebuked.

▷▷E.g., ~ Jer. 22:13.

↪↪Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages.

The purpose of the regulations ~ was to protect the rights of the poor laborers.

▶▶As noted, ~ they needed the wage to meet the immediate needs of their families every day.

▷▷There was no way to feed the family the next day without it.

▶▶There is an additional reason why immediate payment was to the advantage of the workers. 7/12

▷▷ If the payment was not made immediately, ~ it became easy for employers to defraud the workers.

▷▷ That's because ~ poor workers dared not demand justice ~ for fear that doing so ~ 77

↳ ↳ may deprive them of the opportunity to work.

▶▶ Prompt payment was very important for the worker.

Also, ~ note that ~ according to the biblical model, ~ 77

▶▶ profits and benefits to employers ~ beyond their own basic livelihood ~ 77

▷▷ were secondary ~ to the necessary wages of persons who labored for them.

▶▶ Paul's exhortation in [Phil. 2:4 \(CSB\)](#) ~ reflects this model for the Christian life in general.

▷▷ (CSB), ~ Everyone should look out ~ not only for his own interests, ~ but also for the interests of others.

In Vv 4c & 4d, ~ James Depicts The Seriousness Of The Matter In Terms Of Two Cries Going Up To God.

The first ~ is the cry of the unpaid wages.

▶▶ James pictures them sitting there in the bank and crying out to God, ~ 77

▷▷ because they have not been sent ~ to those to whom they should have gone.

The second ~ is the cry of the workers themselves. 8/12

▶▶ It is the cry of anguish, ~ as they sit down with their families ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to eat a crust of bread or nothing at all.

▶▶ When, ~ instead, ~ they could have been eating a decent meal.

Unpack these 2 cries.

1st, ~ the cry of the defrauded wages, ~ 4c.

▶▶ Just like their hoarded wealth will be evidence against them on judgment day, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ so to ~ will be the wages they defrauded their workers of.

▶▶ James personifies the defrauded wages ~ as witnesses ~ ¶¶

▷▷ continually crying out to the Lord against the wicked rich.

▶▶ This expression recalls God's response to the first act of injustice in [Gen. 4:10](#).

▷▷ And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.

▷▷ Abel's personified blood cried out to God for justice.

▷▷ The picture emphasized God's awareness of injustice.

▷▷ It would not go unpunished. 9/12

▶▶ Likewise, ~ the personified defrauded wages continually cry out for justice.

▶▶ This picture also emphasizes God's awareness of injustice.

▷▷ And this will not go unpunished.

▶▶ No injustice escapes God's notice.

▷▷ And all injustices will be corrected.

▷▷ Lk. 18:7-8a (NIV).

↳↳ (NIV) And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly.

▷▷ Additionally, ~ in 2 Thess., ~ Paul assures us ~ that God considers it just ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to repay with affliction those who afflict us when Jesus returns.

2nd cry ~ is the cry of the workers.

▶▶ 4d, ~ And the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.

▶▶ The phrase ~ the cries have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is a human way of saying ~ that God has heard the cries, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and the intended sense is that ~ he will listen and respond to his people. 10/12

▶▶ The image is of God ~ as the great warrior ~ 77

▷▷ and ~ as the powerful commander of his armies, leading them in defense of his people.

▶▶ This name for God occurs 23x in Malachi.

▷▷ It stresses that the poor and the helpless have on their side ~ the Lord of hosts, ~ 77

↳↳ who can ~ destroy the tyranny of the oppressors ~ and punish their iniquities.

▷▷ E.g., ~ Mal. 3:5, ~ Then I will draw near to you for judgment. ~ I will be a swift witness ~ 77

↳↳ against the sorcerers, ~ against the adulterers, ~ against those who swear falsely, ~ against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, ~ 77

→→ against those who thrust aside the sojourner, ~ and do not fear me, ~ says the Lord of hosts.

▶▶ This is the name David invoked when he stood before Goliath and cried, ~ 77

▷▷ You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head (1 Sam. 17:45b-46).

▶▶ The Lord of hosts ~ is God, ~ our God. Rom. 8:31-39

▶▶ James assures us ~ that God does see and hear our precarious situations, ~ 77

▷▷ that he cares, ~ and that he will bring justice for us. 11/12

▶▶ We need not fear.

▷▷ But, ~ we must wait patiently for his righteous intervention.

↪↪ Ps. 27:14, ~ Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

And As We Are Waiting For The Lord To Act, ~ 77

We must always remember these promises from him ~ as we go through life.

▶▶ Heb. 13:5b, ~ I will never leave you nor forsake you.

▶▶ Is. 41:10, 13.

▷▷ Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand . . . For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."

▶▶ And Is. 43:2-3a.

▷▷² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ^{3a} For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

▷▷ 3a is the guarantee ~ that the protection promised in *verse 2* ~ will happen. 12/12