

INTRODUCTION.

IF YOU ARE FOLLOWING THE OUTLINE I GAVE YOU ~ AND I HOPE YOU ARE, ~ ~ ¶¶

▶▶ if you're following the outline then you know ~ we're in the first major section of James, ~ 1:2-27.

▶▶ And ~ as the outline indicates, ~ this section consists of ~ ¶¶

▷▷ a collection of proverbs ~ on a wide range of subjects.

▶▶ Again, ~ the format of this paragraph ~ ¶¶

▷▷ does not have ~ the logical flow of an essay, ~ with a continuous line of argument.

▶▶ As noted ~ we are taking the subjects ~ as James presents them.

RIGHT NOW LET'S ZOOM OUT FOR A SECOND ~ AND REMIND OURSELVES ~ ¶¶

▶▶ of the format of James as a whole.

▶▶ Recall, ~ there is no structural unity in James ~ in the sense ~ of a single line of argument.

▷▷ It can be outlined according to units of proverbs.

↪↪ How we're approaching James. ¶¶ 1/10

IN VS 12, ~ WHICH WE'LL LOOK AT TODAY, ~ JAMES PICKS UP THE THEME OF TRIALS
discussed in verses 2-4 ~ ¶¶

AND DEVELOPS THE THOUGHT FURTHER.

▶▶^{12a} Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, ~ ¶¶

▷▷^{12b} for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, ^{12c} which God has promised to those who love him.

▶▶Details ~ as build to a summary statement.

WE CAN READ VERSE 12a THIS WAY.

▶▶God blesses the man ~ who perseveres under trial. (*For PPT, add 12b & 12c*)

▷▷Man = believer. ⇔⇔ God blesses ~ the believer ~ who perseveres under trial.

IF I UNDERSTAND THIS CORRECTLY, ~ I BELIEVE ~ THAT VERSES 12b AND 12c ~ ¶¶

▶▶are a fuller ~ expression or explanation ~ of verse 12a.

▶▶The phrase ~ has stood the test ~ in verse 12b ~ ¶¶

▷▷is actually another way of saying ~ perseveres under trial.

▶▶Also, ~ verse 12b ~ identifies the blessing ~ that the one who endures trials receives.

▷▷I.e., ~ the crown of life. ¶¶ 2/10

▶▶ Furthermore, ~ the context of the verse indicates ~ that God is the source of the blessing.

▶▶ And in vs 12c ~ James says, ~ this promise ~ of the crown of life for enduring trials ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is a promise from God, ~ which is, ~ of course, ~ 100% reliable.

WE CAN SUMMARIZE THIS ~ TO HELP US UNDERSTAND WHAT JAMES IS GETTING AT.

▶▶^{12a} God blesses the believer ~ who perseveres under trial.

▷▷^{12b} After enduring a trial ~ a believer will receive the crown of life ~ ^{12c} that God has promised to those who love him.

NOW LET'S ELABORATE ON OUR SUMMARY STATEMENT.

VERSE 12a.

^{12a} GOD BLESSES THE BELIEVER WHO PERSEVERES UNDER TRIAL. ^{12b} After enduring a trial, a believer will receive the crown of life ^{12c} that God has promised to those who love him.

▶▶ Same Greek word for trials we saw in verse 2.

▷▷ The Greek word for trials here ~ can refer ~ to internal temptations.

▷▷ The inner temptation ~ is expressed in ~ 1:13 ~ by the vb form of this word.

↪↪ Just as in verse 2, ~ the context makes clear ~ the term is ~ not used ~ in vs. 12 with this sense. ¶¶ 3/10

→→An inner enticement to evil would call for ~ resistance ~ ¶¶

↳↳rather than endurance. ⇔⇔ Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

▷▷As in [verse 2](#), ~ the other primary meaning for the word ~ is used here.

↳↳I.e., ~ the external trials of daily life ~ that believers encounter.

▶▶What's more, ~ trial here points to ~ trial as the characteristic feature ~ ¶¶

▷▷of present human experience.

▷▷Remember what Peter said.

↳↳Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you.

▷▷And Jesus said, ~ You will have suffering in this world.

↳↳Jesus was saying ~ our lives in this world will be characterized by suffering.

GOD BLESSES THE BELIEVER WHO PERSEVERES UNDER TRIAL.

▶▶Perseverance ~ is an ability ~ ¶¶

▷▷to face all kinds of ~ troubles, ~ difficulties, ~ and sufferings ~ with steadfast courage and faithfulness.

▷▷It means more ~ than negative endurance of hardships and trials. ¶¶ 4/10

▷▷It is the heroic act of someone ~ who meets trials with an unbreakable spirit, ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳who remains faithful throughout the trial, ~ ~ who remains steadfast and stands firm ~ under trials.

IN VERSE 12b, ~ JAMES EXPLAINS WHAT THIS BLESSING IS ~ ¶¶

THAT THE VICTORIOUS BELIEVER WILL RECEIVE.

▶▶^{12a} God blesses the believer who perseveres under trial. ^{12b} After enduring a trial ~ the believer will receive the crown of life ^{12c} that God has promised to those who love him.

▶▶In this phrase, ~ the crown of life, ~ the word ~ life ~ is explanatory.

▷▷It mean this "crown" ~ consists of life.

↳↳I.e., ~ the crown is life.

THE QUES ARISES HERE ~ AS TO WHETHER THIS LIFE, ~ to which James refers, ~ ¶¶

▶▶is ~ a present benefit ~ or ~ a future one.

▶▶Either view is possible.

▶▶But the life in question ~ must not be confused ~ ¶¶

▷▷with the free gift of eternal life through Jesus.

↳↳As Paul says in Rom, ~ For the wages of sin is death, ~ but the free gift of God ~ is eternal life ~ through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¶¶ 5/10

▶▶ After about a week of wrestling with the options, ~ I came to the conclusion ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that the life here refers ~ to a present benefit ~ when we endure trials.

▶▶ Arguments for future reward ~ raised too many questions for me.

▶▶ Helped me: ⇒⇒ Comparative translation

SO IT SEEMS MUCH MORE LIKELY ~ THAT JAMES HAS IN MIND ~ ¶¶

▶▶ the way God enriches our present experience of life, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ when trials have been successfully endured.

▶▶ This interpretation ~ takes on a high probability ~ when we recall James's later statement ~ in 5:11 (NIV).

▷▷ (NIV) ~ As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

↪↪ See Job 42:10-17.

▶▶ This interpretation ~ also takes on a high probability ~ when we look at our own lives.

▷▷ After my trial last year, ~ spiritually enriched

THEREFORE, ~ IT SEEMS QUITE LIKELY ~ THAT IT IS ~ THE ENRICHMENT ~ ¶¶

▶▶ of our present experience of life ~ that James has in mind here. ¶¶ 6/10

▶▶ But always remember, ~ this enrichment ~ will always be spiritual in nature, ~ 77

▷▷ and possibly sometimes, ~ but don't count on it, ~ material in nature.

LIFE WILL BE ~ RICHER, ~ DEEPER, ~ AND FULLER FOR US, ~ 77

▶▶ if we are among those who, ~ like Job, ~ reach the end of our various trials victoriously.

▶▶ Indeed, ~ every time we successfully endure a period of trouble, ~ the crown of life ~ 77

▷▷ will be awarded to us anew.

↪↪ I.e., ~ our lives will be even more enriched by God.

IN VERSE 12c, ~ JAMES NOTES THAT THIS CROWN OF LIFE IS A PROMISE FROM GOD.

^{12a} God blesses the believer who perseveres under trial. ^{12b} After enduring a trial, the believer will receive the crown of life ^{12c} THAT GOD HAS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.

▶▶ The Greek text literally reads, ~ and, ~ as we'll see, ~ this is significant, ~ 77

▷▷ which he promised to the ones loving him.

↪↪ IOW, ~ ongoing love for God.

→→ We'll come back to this in a few minutes.

▶▶ "the ones loving" ~ functions as a synonym ~ for all genuine believers. 77 7/10

▷▷ This shows ~ that God does not promise this crown of life ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to some elite few who ~ strive harder ~ or succeed better ~ than the rest.

BUT THIS ALSO ~ RAISES A SERIOUS QUESTION ~ ¶¶

▶▶ whether those ~ whose love for God ~ does not ~ permeate their lives ~ ¶¶

▷▷ ought casually to consider themselves Christians.

▶▶ Loving God ~ should characterize a believer's ~ entire life.

▶▶ The tense of ~ *the ones loving* ~ indicates ~ ongoing action.

▶▶ James ~ is not thinking of ~ a momentary ~ or superficial ~ profession of faith, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but rather ~ a prolonged way of life.

GETTING BACK TO VERSE 12c, ~ GOD'S UTTER TRUSTWORTHINESS ~ GUARANTEES ~ ¶¶

▶▶ his faithfulness ~ to what he promised.

▶▶ My ..., ~ our Lord will not renege on ~ any ~ of his promises.

▶▶ After we've endured, ~ we will not find ~ a broken promise ~ ¶¶

▷▷ or someone who means well but cannot deliver.

▶▶ God's promises are guaranteed. ¶¶ 8/10

▶▶ The Greek word James uses for "promises" means ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to announce with certainty ~ as to what one will do.

▶▶ And God has ~ the integrity and the power ~ to back it up.

▶▶ So let this promise ~ be an incentive to us ~ to persevere under ~ even the most difficult trials.

WE SHOULD NOT LEAVE THIS SUBJECT ~ WITHOUT MENTIONING THE FOLLOWING.

BELIEVERS NEVER FACE TRIALS ALONE.

▶▶ Our Savior ~ is right beside and helping us.

▶▶ God: ~ I will never leave you nor forsake you.

▶▶ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. NIV

▷▷ The rod and staff ~ are the shepherd's equipment ~ to protect the sheep in such situations.

▷▷ David was comforted, ~ and we should be as well, ~ by the Lord's presence and protection.

▷▷ Believers are never ~ in situations the Lord is not aware of, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ for, ~ again, ~ He never leaves or forsakes His people. ¶¶ 9/10

▶▶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."

▷▷God's right hand ~ is "righteous" ~~ in that it reflects his reliable character, ~ 77

↪↪and by it ~ he powerfully and tenderly ~ leads his people through any danger.

▶▶Is. 43:2-3a, ~ 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.

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

SO MY . . ., ~ LET US ENDURE THE TRIALS THAT COME OUR WAY, ~ 77

▶▶So that ~ we may ~ see God's power and protection at work ~ 77

▷▷and have our lives greatly enriched by him. 10/10