



Book of James

Chapter 5

*Theme: Riches are a care; the coming of Christ
is a comfort; the prayer of the righteous is a
power*

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The attack begun in the concluding section of chapter 4 is carried into chapter 5 but with greater concentration and condemnation. The rich are denounced. James appears to have included all rich people, both believers (cf. 1:10) and unbelievers (cf. 2:6). There is no plea for reform, only a grim warning that hoarded wealth brings consternation, ends up in corrosion, and results in condemnation.¹

McGee Introduction: We have come to a remarkable section of the Epistle of James which may seem out of place in this epistle. A cursory reading of these first six verses might give the impression that James is teaching a socialistic doctrine of “soak the rich” or “let’s divide the wealth.” But on the contrary, a careful reading of these verses reveals that James is not teaching any such thing. He was instructing believers as to their attitude and action in a world that was going to the bowwows, a world filled with injustice, where freedom was only a dream. The Roman world of James’ day was not like the modern world in which we live. The life-styles were entirely different. There was no middle class in the days of James. There were the very rich, the filthy rich, and the very poor, the filthy poor. The majority of the Christians of that day came from the very poor and slave classes. They had no great cathedrals on boulevards, and they were not building kingdoms as are many of these great churches which are spending millions of dollars these days. The early church just wasn’t that kind of church.

As we approach this passage of Scripture, we should understand that James is not condemning riches. Riches in themselves are not immoral; they are not moral, either. They are just unmoral or amoral. The Bible actually does not condemn money. A great many people have the viewpoint that there is something dirty about money; they call it “filthy lucre.” Scripture doesn’t say that. What Scripture does say is that “... the love of money is the root of all evil ...” (1 Tim. 6:10). The problem is not in the coin; the problem is in the hearts of men and women. It is the *love* of money that is the root of all evil. James was not condemning people just because they were rich but because of their wrong relationship to their riches. He was concerned with how they got their money and what they were doing with it after they got it.

The Lord Jesus Christ had a great deal to say about money and about riches. He gave three parables which I think will help us to understand what James is saying. In Luke 16:19–31 we have the story (which I think is a true story) of the poor man, Lazarus the beggar, and the rich man. This parable has to do with the way the rich man spent his money. He was really living it up. It is interesting that this beggar, Lazarus, was placed at his gate. Who put him there? I don’t know, but in some way the rich man was responsible for him. And the rich man let the beggar have the crumbs from his table. May I say to you, I would wager that the rich man deducted those crumbs from his income tax! Nevertheless, we are told that the dogs licked the beggar’s sores while the rich man “fared sumptuously.” It was the way this man became rich that in some way made him

¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Jas 4:17). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

responsible for the beggar's condition. Someone will ask, "What makes you think that?" Well, where did the two men go after death? Lazarus went to Abraham's Bosom, and the rich man went to hell. That shows us how God judged the lives of these two men, my friend.

In Luke 12 the Lord Jesus gave a second parable about a rich man. This man is the one who built bigger barns—at least he had plans to build them. However, he never did build the barns because he died. The Lord Jesus Christ never condemned that man for being rich; when He stated it, He just stated it as a fact. To all outward appearances, this man was a good man and an honest citizen. But he hoarded his money. He wanted to live it up in his old age, and he gave no thought to eternity. The Lord Jesus called him a fool. Actually, he was more than covetous; he was selfish. He was hoarding his money for himself, and that, may I say, is a form of idolatry. We are told in the Word of God that covetousness is idolatry; it is the worship of things. But selfishness is when you worship yourself. There is a lot of that going on today; in fact, it is even being taught as a Christian virtue. We are told that we are to have great respect for ourselves and great confidence in ourselves. But the Lord Jesus said, "... without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

There is a third parable concerning riches which the Lord Jesus gave. It is the parable of the unjust steward by which we are taught the wise use of money by Christians. God holds man responsible not only for how he makes his money but also for how he spends it.

There is another question we should consider before we examine the text. Are the rich whom James is condemning here Christians or non-Christians? Are they the godly rich or the godless rich? There is some controversy and difference of opinion among commentators on this question. I personally believe that they are the godless rich, and in that I follow the opinion of one whom I respect a great deal, John Calvin. Thomas Manton writes that it was Calvin's judgment that "these six verses are not so much an admonition as a denunciation, wherein the apostle doth not so much direct them what to do, as foretell what should be done to them, that the godly might be encouraged to the more patience under their oppressions; for that the apostle inferreth plainly."

Why does James turn from talking to the godly and begin talking to the ungodly? The fact of the matter is that he doesn't change. He is still speaking to the godly. How can that be, when he is so obviously speaking to the rich? As he speaks to the ungodly, he is at the same time telling the godly that they live in a godless world, where the godless rich will impose certain hardships upon them and take advantage of them and where they will be at the mercy of these wicked, rich men. The Lord Jesus Christ had already made a general reference to this when He said, "... In the world ye shall have tribulation [trouble]: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

The godly are to be patient in these circumstances, knowing that God will deal with the godless rich in eternity if not here. This is made very clear in verse 6 of this chapter: "Ye have condemned and killed the just"—God condemns these actions of the rich; "and he doth not resist you"—but God permits them, so it seems, to get by with it. However, He will judge them in the end. May I make this rather startling statement. I would rather go to hell a poor man than a rich man. But I thank God that I am not going there, and that is because Christ died for me and I have accepted His gift of eternal life.

David was troubled by the prosperity of the wicked; it bothered him no end. In Psalm 37:35–36 we read, “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.” Earlier in this psalm, David gives the same advice that James gives: “Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thy self because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass” (Ps. 37:7). That is a tremendous statement, and he is speaking of the godless rich. David was troubled by this until he went into the temple and saw that, in time, God would deal with these people.²

It certainly does not take an advanced degree in economics to identify that greed is alive and well in this world. The world-wide economy is based primarily on consumer demand. When consumers are confident in their environment, they purchase products, driving production and creating jobs. When consumer confidence is reduced, the demand for products is reduced, resulting in an economic recession, or a slowing down of the accelerating economic engine. One side-effect of this type of economy is the power that the greedy have to influence it. This century has been marked by a greed-based economy that bought large, built large, and built false confidence on claims of great opportunities. When the hype and greed was exposed, the hyper-inflated market found its proper value, costing investors billions of dollars. We saw a similar pattern at the beginning of both the 19th and 20th centuries. In each of these three periods the economy was driven to a level too high to sustain, and market values came crashing down when it found its true value.

What we are witnessing is greed in action. The greedy have no care for the impact that the consequences of their actions has on others, particularly those who lose their jobs or their property when the market checks. Yet, even when the consequences of unbridled greed are evident, those who are so addicted do not change. People seek great wealth as if it is something of value to be attained, only to find emptiness in a ledger with a lot of numbers, or in a home full of stuff that simply depreciates and gathers dust. Wealth that is obtained at the expense of others, whether directly through fraud or indirectly through a lack of godly stewardship, serves as a testimony against the one who lives such a self-centered life.³

² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Jas 4:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

James 5:1

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

Being rich is not a sin, but it has its unique hazards. One of the biggest, ironically, is selfishness.

Here James is reiterating the statement of the Lord from Luke 6:24.

Luke 6:24. *But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.*

James is sending this message to the worldly and/or unbelieving Jews. For the most part, the poor among the Jews were the ones to receive the gospel. Most of the rich were arrogant, self-sufficient, and actively persecuted the believing Jews. This verse is the first prophesy of the Lord concerning the judgment to come. What is the reason for the necessity of their weeping and wailing? It is not the riches themselves that will surely bring such suffering, but rather the astonishment that will come when they discover their lost state at the final judgment. James is aware of their lost state simply because of their lack of spiritual fruit, expressed in the wickedness of their ways.

Being wealthy in and of itself is not an indication of a lost state. Nor is there any biblical imperative against the proper pursuit of wealth. However, one should be aware of the dangers that come with the attainment of wealth. Wealth can bring a false sense of personal security when one may think they can rely on that wealth rather than upon the LORD. Again, the attainment of wealth can often be accomplished at the expense of others and the expense of contribution to the LORD's work. Some may hold that the attainment of wealth and generosity are mutually exclusive. Note that the rich are more impacted by calamity than the poor. In times of public disaster they complain the loudest. There is actually very little of true value that is found in the attainment of great wealth.⁴

Go to now—Come now. A phrase to call solemn attention.

ye rich—who have neglected the true enjoyment of riches, which consists in doing good. James intends this address to rich Jewish unbelievers, not so much for themselves, as for the saints, that they may bear with patience the violence of the rich (Jam 5:7), knowing that God will speedily avenge them on their oppressors [BENGEL].⁵

miserics that shall come—literally, “that are coming upon you” unexpectedly and swiftly, namely, at the coming of the Lord (Jam 5:7); primarily, at the destruction of Jerusalem; finally, at His visible coming to judge the world.⁶

The Bible does not discourage the acquiring of wealth. Abraham was wealthy man yet he walked with God. Also, Job, David, Josiah, Philemon, Joseph of Arimathea, and Lydia were each rich. The Jews in Canaan owned their own property, worked it, and benefitted

⁴ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

⁵ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Jas 5:1). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁶ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Jas 5:1). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

from the produce. In several of Jesus' parables, He indicated His respect for personal property and private gain. There is nothing in the epistles that contradicts the right of private ownership and profit.

The rights of private property and personal liberty are inseparable. What the Bible does condemn is acquiring wealth by illegal means or for inappropriate purposes. Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah thundered their messages against stolen wealth, abuse of the poor, and selfish luxury. Wealth is a spiritual handicap. Material possession tend to focus one's thoughts and interests on the world only. Money can lead to idolatry; covetousness is idolatry. The problem is not in the currency; it is in the heart. It is the *love* of money that is the root of all evil.⁷

LAN:1-6 James proclaims the worthlessness of riches, not the worthlessness of the rich. Today's money will be worthless when Christ returns, so we should spend our time accumulating the kind of treasures that will be worthwhile in God's eternal kingdom. Money is not the problem; Christian leaders need money to live and to support their families; missionaries need money to help them spread the gospel; churches need money to do their work effectively. It is the *love* of money that leads to evil (1 Tim. 6:10) and causes some people to oppress others in order to get more. This is a warning to all Christians who are tempted to adopt worldly standards rather than God's standards (Romans 12:1-2) as well as an encouragement to all those who are oppressed by the rich. Also read Matthew 6:19-21 to see what Jesus says about riches.⁸

[miseries] *talaiporia*, Greek 5004, *tal-ahee-po-ree'-ah*; from Greek 5005 (*talaiporos*); *wretchedness*, i.e. *calamity* :- misery. Bodily hardships; misery. Here; Romans 3:16. wretched (Romans 7:25; Rev. 3:17)

[shall come upon you] The 1st and last prophecy in James (James 4:5:1-8, unfulfilled). Six predictions concerning evil rich men:

1. Miseries will come upon them (James 5:1)
2. Riches will become corrupted (James 5:2)
3. Garments to become moth-eaten (James 5:2)
4. Gold and silver to canker (James 5:3)
5. The rust or poison of their riches will witness or testify of their many sins (James 5:3)
6. The rust or poison of their riches will eat their flesh as it were fire (James 5:3)⁹

Clarke: Weep and howl for your miseries—St. James seems to refer here, in the spirit of prophecy, to the destruction that was coming upon the Jews, not only in Judea, but in all the provinces where they sojourned. He seems here to assume the very air and character of a prophet; and in the most dignified language and peculiarly expressive and energetic images, foretells the desolations that were coming upon this bad people.¹⁰

⁷ Chuck Missler, Notes on James, kouse.org

⁸ Life Application Notes, Life Application Bible

⁹ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

¹⁰ Adam Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament

Barnes: Ye rich men. Not *all* rich men, but only that class of them who are specified as unjust and oppressive. There is no sin in merely being rich; where sin exists peculiarly among the rich, it arises from the manner in which wealth is acquired, the spirit which it tends to engender in the heart, and the way in which it is used. Luke 6:24 and also 1 Timothy 6:9.¹¹

Barnes: Weep and howl. Gr., "Weep howling." This would be expressive of very deep distress. The language is intensive in a high degree, showing that the calamities which were coming upon them were not only such as would produce tears, but tears accompanied with loud lamentations. In the East, it is customary to give expression to deep sorrow by loud out cries. Compare Isaiah 13:6; 14:31; 15:2; 16:7; Jeremiah 4:8; 47:2; Joel 1:5.

James could see among his readers the tendency to have an undue interest in and preoccupation with wealth. He could have just turned his head, but he cared too much for them and their welfare. So he sounded a warning, and it is a stern warning indeed.¹²

McGee: Is James speaking to the godless rich of his day or of some future day? He is giving a warning to the rich in his day, and it has an application for *any* day and certainly for our day. James wrote this epistle, we believe, somewhere between AD. 45 and 50. Many others now give the date as A.D. 60. Regardless of the date, the destruction of Jerusalem was in the near future, for in A.D. 70 Titus the Roman came and destroyed Jerusalem as it had never been destroyed before. He plowed it under. He hated Christians and he hated Jews, and they both were in that city. Believe me, when he got through, there were no rich Jews left. They had either been killed or had been put in slavery, and all the riches had been destroyed or lost or confiscated. James can make these strong statements in view of what was coming, for the Lord Jesus had predicted this before He ascended back to heaven. He told His disciples, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20). That was fulfilled in A.D. 70.

1–6 These verses continue the thought of 4:13–17; compare Mt 6:19–20. Commentaries which understand this condemnation to be directed at nonbelieving Jews (like 2:6–7) not only feed antisemitism by lending supposed biblical support to the caricature of the miserly and oppressive Jew, but also misunderstand the prophetic task. In the *Tanakh*, Psalm 73 and Isaiah 5:8 are similarly critical of the arrogant rich without excluding them from God's people Israel, and there are other similar passages in the Prophets. This paragraph, which addresses **the rich** directly, must be understood as meant for rich believers, who will read it, not for unbelievers, who won't. (However, its truth applies to them as well.)¹³

¹¹ Barnes' Notes on the New Testament

¹² Ellsworth, R. (2009). *Opening up James* (144). Leominster: Day One Publications.

¹³ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:1). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Sin, Unrighteousness—The rich face ruin. Why? Because wealth is sin? No! Because wealth becomes god, the expected source of security for eternity. Commitment to wealth breeds injustice, causing inhumane and uncaring treatment of the poor for whom God has special concern. To place top priority on wealth is sin. To gain wealth at the expense of other human beings is sin. To trust wealth instead of God is sin. Sinners face the judgment.¹⁴

ESV: 1–6 Warning to the Rich. James turns his attention from businesspeople (4:13–17) to wealthy landowners (5:4) who controlled much of Galilee, and indeed much of the Roman Empire. He denounces them for their materialistic accumulation of wealth, for defrauding their workers, and for their self-indulgent actions that have led to the deaths of innocent, righteous people.

James 5:2

Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.

[riches are corrupted] These riches are corrupted instead of cankered as gold and silver. They refer to crops, flocks, stores of grain, wine, oil, and many changes of clothing in the wardrobes.

[corrupted] Greek: *sepo* (GSN-4595), to make rotten; putrid; to fester or mortify. Only used here.

Barnes: Your riches are corrupted. The word here rendered *corrupted* (σηπω) does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means, to cause to rot, to corrupt, to destroy. The reference here is to their hoarded treasures; and the idea is, that they had accumulated more than they needed for their own use; and that, instead of distributing them to do good to others, or employing them in any useful way, they kept them until they rotted or spoiled. It is to be remembered, that a considerable part of the treasures which a man in the East would lay up, consisted of perishable materials, as garments, grain, oil, etc. Such articles of property were often stored up, expecting that they would furnish a supply for many years, in case of the prevalence of famine or wars. Compare Luke 12:18-19. A suitable provision for the time to come cannot be forbidden; but the reference here is to cases in which great quantities had been laid up, perhaps while the poor were suffering, and which were kept until they became worthless.

Barnes: Your garments are moth-eaten. The same idea substantially is expressed here in another form. As the fashions in the East did not change as they do with us, wealth consisted much in the garments that were laid up for show or for future use. Matthew 6:19. Q. Curtius says that when Alexander the Great was going to take Persepolis, the riches of all Asia were gathered there together, which consisted not only of a great abundance of gold and silver, but also of garments, Lib. vi. c. 5. Horace tells us that when Lucullus the Roman was asked if he could lend a hundred garments for the theatre, he

¹⁴ Disciple's Study Bible

replied that he had five thousand in his house, of which they were welcome to take part or all. Of course, such property would be liable to be moth-eaten; and the idea here is, that they had amassed a great amount of this kind of property which was useless to them, and which they kept until it became destroyed.

Misuse leads to miseries! James could see those miseries coming towards his readers, and he assures them that those miseries are of such a nature that they should even now begin to weep and howl (v. 1).

James leaves no doubt about the nature of these miseries. He sets them in the clear light of day.¹⁵

McGee: In light of the coming of Christ, they are warned that all the riches of the world will come to naught. This obviously would not impress a godless rich person in that day any more than it would today; however, the rich man knew that the future was uncertain for him, just as many realize that today. There is always a danger of a panic, a crash, a drought, or a depression. That has been the order of the day since men started to mint money.

There will always be good years, and there will always be bad years. Some of us can remember the depression of the early 1930s when millionaires by the score leaped out of the windows of skyscrapers, and many rich found that they became paupers overnight. Some former millionaires sold apples at street corners, and gilt-edged stocks and bonds in safety deposit boxes were not worth the paper they were written on.¹⁶

ESV: 2–3 Riches, garments, and gold sum up the sumptuous, materialistic lifestyle of these landowners. These things will not only be lost forever but will be **evidence** at their final trial before God and will feed the very flames of the lake of **fire**, where they will spend eternity (Rev. 20:11–15).

The misery that is experienced by the rich will rise from the very things they value. Property values depreciate. Stock and investment values fall. They will have, at the end of this life, lost those things that they consider of greatest value. What is being stated here is literally that those things of value will be revealed as valueless.

Much of spiritual maturity is realized by what one considers of greatest importance. Those who are lost, or those who are spiritually immature place great value in the things of this world: power, influence, and possessions. They are often driven by pride and arrogance, demanding their own way within their social circles, and willing to step on others in order to obtain it. One who is spiritually mature understands and appreciates the folly of such a temporal and destructive attitude and instead places great importance upon the maintenance of positive and affirming relationships with the LORD and with others. The primary difference in these two views is that the first relies on those things that will be left behind in this life, and the latter develops relationships that will continue for eternity.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ellsworth, R. (2009). *Opening up James* (144). Leominster: Day One Publications.

¹⁶ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹⁷ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

James 5:3

Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

There is nothing sinful about saving. (2 Cor 12:14; 1 Tim 5:8; Mat 25:27) But it is wrong to store up wealth when you owe money to others. They were selfishly guarding it for their own security and pleasure. It becomes hoarding when they keep others from benefitting from it. (1 Cor 4:2)

[cankered] Greek: *katioo* (GSN-2728), rusted over. Only used here.

[rust] Greek: *ios* (GSN-2447), rust (James 5:3) and poison (James 3:8; Romans 3:13). Your putrified stores, your moth-eaten garments, and your tarnished coins are proof of your covetousness and your love of money. See Luke 12:15.

[eat your flesh as it were fire] This pictures the corroding or rusting of hoarded money as testifying so strongly against the wicked it will burn like flesh diseased with canker.

[Ye have heaped treasure together] Seven sins of wicked rich men (Dake):

1. Heaping together treasures on earth (James 5:3; Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:15-21)
2. Defrauding laborers (James 5:4; Leviticus 19:13; Deut. 24:14-15; Jeremiah 22:13; Malachi 3:5)
3. Living in pleasure at the expense of those defrauded (James 5:5; Matthew 23:14)
4. Living in wantonness or sensual appetites to the uttermost (James 5:5; Romans 13:13; 1 Tim. 5:11; 2 Peter 2:18)
5. Nourishing the heart, or living in luxury and pride (James 5:5)
6. Condemning the just, or perverting the judgment of the poor (James 5:6; James 2:1-10)
7. Killing the just to multiply their own riches (James 5:6; 1 Kings 21)

Clarke: Your gold and silver is cankered—Instead of helping the poor, and thus honoring God with your substance, ye have, through the principle of covetousness, kept all to yourselves.

Fourteen End-Time Expressions (Dake):

1. Latter times—last years ending this age before the Millennium (1 Tim. 4:1)
2. Latter years—Armageddon and the end of this age (Ezekiel 38:8,16)
3. Latter days—the future tribulation (Numbers 24:14; Deut. 4:30; Deut. 31:29; Jeremiah 23:20; Jeremiah 30:24; Jeremiah 48:47; Jeremiah 49:39; Daniel 2:28; Daniel 10:14)
4. Latter day—Millennium (Job 19:25)
5. Latter days—Millennium (Hosea 3:5)
6. Last days—end of this age preceding the Millennium (Daniel 8:19; 2 Tim. 3:1; James 5:3; 2 Peter 3:3; Jude 1:18)

7. Last day—the rapture, at least seven years before the Millennium and second advent (John 6:39,40,44,54; John 11:24.)
8. Last days—the tribulation period or last seven years of this age (Acts 2:16-21)
9. Last days—first coming (Hebrews 1:1-2)
10. Last times—first coming (1 Peter 1:20)
11. Last time—apostolic times and the whole church age (1 John 2:18)
12. Last time—second coming (1 Peter 1:5)
13. Last days—Millennium (Genesis 49:1; Isaiah 2:1; Micah 4:1)
14. Last day—end of the Millennium (John 12:48; cp. Rev. 20:7-15)

Clarke: The rust of them shall be a witness against you—Your putrefied stores, your moth-eaten garments, and your tarnished coin, are so many proofs that it was not for want of property that you assisted not the poor, but through a principle of avarice; loving money, not for the sake of what it could procure, but for its own sake, which is the genuine principle of the miser. This was the very character given to this people by our Lord himself; he called them *φιλαργυροι*, lovers of money. Against this despicable and abominable disposition, the whole of the 12th chapter of St. Luke is levelled; but it was their easily besetting sin, and is so to the present day.

Clarke: Shall eat your flesh as it were fire—This is a very bold and sublime figure. He represents the rust of their coin as becoming a canker that should produce gangrenes and phagedenous ulcers in their flesh, till it should be eaten away from their bones.

Barnes: Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. The day of judgment; the dosing scenes of this world. You have been heaping up treasure; but it will be treasure of a different kind from what you have supposed. It is treasure not laid up for ostentation, or luxury, or use in future life, but treasure the true worth of which will be seen at the judgment-day. So Paul speaks of "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Romans 2:5. There are many who suppose they are accumulating property that may be of use to them, or that may secure them the reputation of possessing great wealth, who are in fact accumulating a most fearful treasure against the day of final retribution. Every man who is rich should examine himself closely to see whether there is anything in the manner in which he has gained his property, or in which he now holds it, that will expose him to the wrath of God in the last day. That on which he so much prides himself may yet bring down on him the vengeance of heaven; and in the day of judgment he may curse his own madness and folly in wasting his probation in efforts to amass property.

Riches rot, and fine **clothes** may be chewed up by **moths**. The story is not from "rags to riches" but from "riches to rags." **Gold and silver** are the most sought-after metals and have long been considered the material standards for the world. Though they do not rust, they do become **corroded**. Gold can darken and silver tarnishes. **Their corrosion** (*ios*, or "poison," as in 3:8 and Rom. 3:13) is a testimony to the rich man's folly and will consume his **flesh like fire**. As metals lose their luster, the poison of greed eats up

people. The corrosion of **wealth** is testimony to this sickness of the wealthy. Hoarding for **the last days** only gives more fuel for the fire that will consume the lost.¹⁸

McGee: James says, “Do you know how your silver and gold are going to rust? It is because *you* are going to decay.” This is the judgment that comes upon the godless rich like the men in two of the parables which Christ gave. Death came to both of them, and death certainly separates a rich man from his money. It is said that when one of the Vanderbilts was dying, the family was waiting in an outer room. When the lawyer and the doctor came out, one of the more outspoken members of the family stepped up to the lawyer and asked, “How much did he leave?” The lawyer replied, “He left it all. He didn’t take any of it with him.” May I say to you, that is the way that it rusts, my friend. A gentleman was being shown through the magnificent grounds of a rich nobleman’s estate, and he said to the owner, “Well, my lord, all this and heaven would be noble; but this and hell would be terrible.”

James is condemning the godless rich for hoarding their money. Gold and silver *do* rust. It’s boom today and bust tomorrow. When a man makes a million, he is not satisfied with that. He wants to make *two* million. It’s like drinking sea water—the more you drink, the thirstier you get. The rich keep on making millions, but it doesn’t make them any happier.

We had here in America two men who were billionaires whose lives are an example of the futility of riches. Both of them were remarkable men who built great financial empires. Howard Hughes was one of them, but in his last days, from all we can learn, he was a recluse and a sick man. He could not have been happy in those years. All that money just didn’t seem to do him very much good. The other man, J. Paul Getty, was reported in the press to have made this statement: “I’d give all my wealth for just one happy marriage.” How tragic!

God gave wealth not to be hoarded but to be dispensed. The rich man in Christ’s parable planned to build bigger barns in which to store his goods and his fruits. But you can eat only so much; you can drink only so much, and you can wear only one suit at a time. After the first million dollars, when you start gathering more millions, they are just like a pile of rocks. You cannot eat them; there is nothing you can do with them. That is the reason our Lord called that man a fool. Instead of filling his own barn, he should have gone and filled someone else’s barn.

I know a Christian farmer who lives in the fruit belt of California. He told me that the organization of farmers to which he belonged asked him to dump some of his fruit crop in order to keep the prices up. He said that tons of fruit had been destroyed. There were a lot of folk who could have used and enjoyed that fruit. James says that wealth is to be dispensed and not hoarded.

Let me pass on to you two little stories which have come my way. A certain young person very impatiently said, “I’m living now, and I mean to have a good time. The hereafter isn’t here yet!” A very wise companion replied, “No—only the first part of it; but I shouldn’t wonder if the ‘here’ had a good deal to do with shaping the ‘after.’”

There was an irreligious farmer who gloried in the fact that he was an agnostic. He wrote a letter to a local newspaper, saying, “Sir, I have been trying an experiment with a

¹⁸ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Jas 5:2–3). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

field of mine. I plowed it on Sunday. I planted it on Sunday. I cultivated it on Sunday. I reaped it on Sunday. I hauled it into my barn on Sunday. And now, Mr. Editor, what is the result? I have more bushels to the acre in that field than any of my neighbors have had this October.” The editor wasn’t a religious man himself, but he published the letter and then wrote below it: “God does not always settle His accounts in October.” God has eternity ahead of Him, my friend.¹⁹

This is the *acharit-hayamim* (“the end of days”), and you have been storing up wealth! Yechiel Lichtenstein remarks,

“This is an ironical way of writing, ‘You have heaped treasure for a time when it will deteriorate.’ So it will be in the end of days (*ketz-hayamim*). [In contrast,] Ya’akov says that his hope is ... that the Lord will speedily return—as in v. 8, ‘the Lord’s return is near.’ ”²⁰

Spurgeon: Goods ill gotten and greedily hoarded have heaven's curse upon them. Such treasure is only accumulated wrath. Who would wish to increase a heap which shall cause his own flesh to burn?

The rich think that they heap up treasures against their last days. The shiny gold coins that we may so value belonged to someone else before we held them, and will belong to someone else when we have left this world. This does not imply that it is inappropriate to invest in retirement programs. It would be unwise to place ourselves in an intentional dependency on others when God has given us the means to be better stewards of what He has provided for us. Planning and preparing for latter years is certainly appropriate. The inference here is not so much as an effort of planning and preparation as it is an effort of hoarding at the expense of others and at the expense of God’s kingdom work. Many may think that they are simply planning and preparing, but also argue that they cannot financially afford to demonstrate proper stewardship through the tithe. It is also these who are condemned by James’ indictment.

If that big retirement account is your priority, and if its collection has come at the expense of proper generosity and stewardship, it will expose you in the last days. You won't be able to hide it, but rather, it will have displaced God as the true priority in your life.²¹

James 5:4

Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

(Mt 20:1-16 describes the system of the day) Cf. Deut 24:14-15; Lev 19:13; Prov 3:27, 28; Jer 22:13.

¹⁹ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

²⁰ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:3). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

²¹ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

[kept back] Greek tense indicates that the laborers *will never get their salaries*.

Deuteronomy 24: 15-16 ¹⁴ Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant *that is* poor and needy, *whether he be* of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that *are* in thy land within thy gates: ¹⁵ At his day thou shalt give *him* his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he *is* poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee. ¹⁶ The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin. ²²

Thou shalt not steal. This not only prohibits socialism, it insists that we should pay our bills.

[**Lord of sabaoth**] This term is often used in the Old Testament of God who is Lord of hosts, or Lord of armies, who has infinite power to rule the nations and punish the wicked (1 Samuel 1:3,11; 1 Samuel 4:4; 1 Samuel 15:2; etc.).

the Lord of sabaoth—here only in the New Testament. In Ro 9:29 it is a quotation. It is suited to the Jewish tone of the Epistle. It reminds the rich who think the poor have no protector, that the Lord of the whole hosts in heaven and earth is the guardian and avenger of the latter. He is identical with the “coming Lord” Jesus (Jam 5:7).²³

Clarke: The hire of the laborers—The law, Leviticus 19:13, had ordered: The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning, every day’s labor being paid for as soon as ended. This is more clearly stated in another law, Deuteronomy 24:15: At his day thou shalt give him his hire; neither shall the sun go down upon it;—lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee. And that God particularly resented this defrauding of the hireling we see from Malachi 3:5: I will come near to you in judgment, and will be a swift witness against those who oppress the hireling in his wages. And on these laws and threatenings is built what we read in Synopsis Sohar, p. 100, l. 45: “When a poor man does any work in a house, the vapor proceeding from him, through the severity of his work, ascends towards heaven. Wo to his employer if he delay to pay him his wages.” To this James seems particularly to allude, when he says: The cries of them who have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts; and the rabbins say, “The vapor arising from the sweat of the hard-worked laborer ascends up before God.” Both images are sufficiently expressive.

Clarke: The Lord of sabaoth—St. James often conceives in Hebrew though he writes in Greek. It is well known that Yehovah tsebaoth, Lord of hosts, or Lord of armies, is a frequent appellation of God in the Old Testament; and signifies his uncontrollable power,

²² *The Holy Bible : King James Version*. 1995 (electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version.) (Dt 24:14–16). Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

²³ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Jas 5:4). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

and the infinitely numerous means he has for governing the world, and defending his followers, and punishing the wicked.

The Old Testament consistently condemns fraudulent treatment of workers (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14–15; Prov. 3:27–28). But some were ignoring those commands.

The rich would certainly not have been hurt by paying the wages. They had plenty from which to pay! But the workers, who lived from day to day and from hand to mouth, were hurt tremendously by not getting paid.

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

The second is the cry of the workers themselves. It is the cry of anguish, as they sit down with their families to eat a crust of bread or nothing at all when they could have been eating a decent meal.

These cries do not go unnoticed. They are heard by ‘the Lord of Sabaoth’ (v. 4). The Bible uses many names for God. He is such a glorious being that no one name can do justice to him. The name James uses here means ‘Lord of hosts’. It tells us that God is surrounded by hosts of angelic beings, and that he is greater than all of them. He is their Lord.

The God who is greater than all the hosts of heaven is certainly great enough to mete out justice to the cruel fat cats who inflict such pain and misery on their workers!²⁴

McGee: James condemns the godless rich not only for hoarding money but for making it in a dishonest way. They have robbed the poor to get rich. In the parable, the rich man let fall some crumbs for the beggar. What a message is in that! That beggar had been placed at the rich man’s gate because the rich man was responsible for him.

In Proverbs 22:7 it says, “The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.” God condemns the godless man who makes his money in a dishonest way, especially when it is by putting down the children of God. God may do nothing now, but He is going to judge in the future. If men are making their riches by stepping on the hands of those beneath them, then God will judge that. This should serve as a word of warning to the rich man, to great corporations and labor unions, and also to great church organizations. God will judge the way men make their money and the way they spend it.²⁵

ESV: the cries of the harvesters. These landowners have cheated their field workers and harvesters to support their own lavish lifestyle, and now the cries of the defrauded have **reached the ears** of the final Judge, who will soon act in response. **The Lord of hosts**, or “Lord of heaven’s armies,” pictures God as a warrior going into battle against his enemies (1 Sam. 17:45; Rev. 17:14; 19:14).

James shows here one of the ways the stored up riches are going to be a witness against the rich in the last days. Exposed here is a lack of honesty and stewardship motivated by

²⁴ Ellsworth, R. (2009). *Opening up James* (147–148). Leominster: Day One Publications.

²⁵ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:4). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

greed and contempt for God. Earlier in the book James addressed this same problem when speaking to the persecuted. Now he is exposing the folly of greed. However, the indictment also reaches to those who deny payment to God's work. When we consider harvesters, we may also include those who harvest souls, both in foreign, domestic, and local ministries. Self-centered greed also replaces the generous spirit that God would have us demonstrate towards the work of His laborers. When pastors, missionaries, and others who have committed themselves to the fields of the kingdom find themselves in need, that need cries out against those who fail to support them.

Shown here also is an abuse of power. What is the response of the laborers who have been cheated? The title of the Lord used here, *Kerion Sabaoth*, is from the Old Testament and was used when the people of God were defenseless and needed protection. Those who are abused by the rich have no recourse, and their defender is God, and God alone. People would probably not knowingly place themselves in a position where the LORD is called upon to defend others against them. The LORD is an awesome adversary who will come to the aid of those who cry out to Him.²⁶

James 5:5

Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

All wealth is owned by the Lord (Ps 50:10). He permits us to be stewards of His wealth for His glory. Are you investing for the long term or for the short term?

Luxury also reaches a point of diminishing returns. The Quaker says, "Tell me what thou dost need, and I will tell thee how to get along without it."

Jesus said, "Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." (Luke 12:15).

Luxury and self-indulgence has a way of ruining *character*. Money is not sinful; it is neutral. But "*Love of money is the root of all evil.*" (1 Tim 6:10).

"Thou shalt not covet" is the only commandment that deals with *motivation* rather than visible practice. It is a sin of the heart.

Abraham was a rich man but maintained his faith and character. When his nephew Lot became rich, it ruined his character and ultimately ruined his life. "If your riches increase, set not your heart upon them" (Ps 62:10). "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold" (Prov 22:1).

Riches are always accompanied by uncertainties. The only certainty is that of God's judgment (v.5:9, below).

²⁶ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

They were misusing their wealth: [The Rich Man and Lazarus: Luke 16:19-31.]

[pleasure] Greek: *truphao* (GSN-5171), to live softly or delicately; fare sumptuously; live in luxury; to be effeminate; to be licentious; to revel. Only here, but the noun *truphe* (GSN-5172) occurs in Luke 7:25; 2 Peter 2:13.

[wanton] Greek: *spatalao* (GSN-4684), to live riotously and in pleasure (James 5:5; 1 Tim. 5:6).

[nourished] Greek: *trepho* (GSN-5142). Translated nourish (James 5:5; Acts 12:20; Rev. 12:14); feed (Matthew 6:26; Matthew 25:37; Luke 12:24; Rev. 12:6); and bring up (Luke 4:16). Here it has the idea of feasting and surfeiting as men do at the time of the slaughter of many sacrifices at religious feasts.

Barnes: Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth. One of the things to which the rich are peculiarly addicted. Their wealth is supposed to be of value, because it furnishes them the means of doing it. Compare Luke 12:19; 16:19. The word translated "lived in pleasure," (*τρυφῶω*,) occurs only here in the New Testament. It means, to live delicately, luxuriously, at ease. There is not in the word essentially the idea of *vicious* indulgence, but that which characterizes those who live for enjoyment. They lived in ease and affluence on the avails of the labours of others; they indulged in what gratified the taste, and pleased the ear and the eye, while those who contributed the means of this were groaning under oppression. A life of mere indolence and ease, of delicacy and luxury, is nowhere countenanced in the Bible; and even where unconnected with oppression and wrong to others, such a mode of living is regarded as inconsistent with the purpose for which God made man, and placed him on the earth. See Luke 12:19-20. Every man has high and solemn duties to perform, and there is enough to be done on earth to give employment to every human being, and to fill up every hour in a profitable and useful way.

Barnes: Ye have nourished your hearts. Or, yourselves-the word *hearts* here being equivalent to *themselves*. The meaning is, that they appeared to have been *fattening* themselves, like stall-fed beasts, for the day of slaughter. As cattle are carefully fed, and are fattened *with a view* to their being slaughtered, so they seemed to have been fattened for the slaughter that was to come on them-the day of vengeance. Thus many now live. They do no work; they contribute nothing to the good of society; they are mere consumers-*fruges consumere nati*; and, like stall-fed cattle, they seem to live only with reference to the day of slaughter, and to the recompense which awaits them after death.

Here James is talking about people who use their wealth to pamper themselves. Needs are on every hand, needs that could be easily alleviated by some generosity. But these people are oblivious to the needs. Thinking only of themselves and their comfort, they go on buying and buying.

James has a devastating word for all such. They are fattening themselves for God's judgement. As a calf eats and eats without realizing that it is fattening itself for the day of

slaughter, so the pampered gorge themselves without realizing that there is ‘a day of slaughter’ coming (v. 5).²⁷

fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. Like the cattle in their fields, the rich gorge themselves on luxuries and fail to realize that they are headed for the final slaughter (see Isa. 30:25; Jer. 12:3; Rev. 19:17–21).

Another of the effects of wanton greed is the lifestyle that such a poorly-gained treasure promotes. What happens when someone comes into a large sum of money? What temptations are evident? These are those who have great resources when those around them face calamity. Rather than demonstrate generosity in such times, they use their comfort to insulate themselves against the needy. Such a position further drives the needy into a state of greater stress and need.

One who is both wealthy and righteous recognizes the needs of those in the community and rises up to help in times of distress. Such an individual is used of God in such times of calamity, and though some material wealth may be sacrificed in such times, the individual receives the blessing of knowing that God has used them for His purposes rather than for their own. Furthermore, God works in the lives of the faithful, and promises to bless those who use their resources for God’s kingdom work.²⁸

James 5:6

Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.

“He that hath the gold rules.” Wealth, power, and control of “due process” are the issue (Cf. James 2:6).

Deut 17:8-13;

Judges were not be greedy: Ex 18:21;
not partial to the rich: Lev 19:15;
not to tolerate perjury: Deut 19:16-21;

Bribery was condemned: Isa 33:15; Micah 3:11; 7:3. Amos condemned the judges who took bribes and “fixed” cases: Amos 5:12, 15.

In less than a decade after James wrote this letter, Jerusalem fell to the Romans and all this accumulated wealth was taken. [The turbulence on our present horizon could strike a parallel...] This raises another aspect of the entire discussion. As any careful analyst knows, one of the factors in any strategic financial decision is the “*Opportunity Cost*,” the opportunity of an alternative allocation to the one being considered.

Eph 5:16 speaks of “redeeming the time”—“buying up the opportunity” is the literal translation. We must work while it is “day”; for the night is coming (John 9:4).

²⁷ Ellsworth, R. (2009). *Opening up James* (148). Leominster: Day One Publications.

²⁸ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

[“Schindler’s Regret” - how much more he could have accomplished if he fully realized the broader perspective...]

It is good to have the things that money can buy, *provided* you also have the things that money cannot buy. What good is a \$1,000,000 house if there is no home? Or a million-dollar diamond ring if there is no love? [Are we buying things we don’t need, with money we don’t have, to impress people we don’t even like?]

What we keep, we lose. What we give to God, we keep, with interest added.

A famous preacher, known for his long sermons, asked to give an annual charity appeal, and was admonished to not let it go too long. He read his text from Prov 19:17: “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.” He then gave this brief sermon: “If you like the terms, then put down your money.”

LAN: Innocent men were defenseless persons, probably poor laborers. Poor people who could not pay their debts were thrown in prison or forced to sell all their possessions. At times, they were even forced to sell their family members into slavery. With no opportunity to work off their debts, poor people often died of starvation. God called this murder. Hoarding money, exploiting employees, and living self-indulgently will not escape God’s notice.

he doth not resist you—The very patience of the Just one is abused by the wicked as an incentive to boldness in violent persecution, as if they may do as they please with impunity. God doth “resist the proud” (Jam 4:6); but Jesus as man, “as a sheep is dumb before the shearers, so He opened not His mouth”: so His people are meek under persecution. The day will come when God will resist (literally, “set Himself in array against”) His foes and theirs.²⁹

McGee: “Ye have condemned and killed the just.” When we look about us at our own government and the other governments of the world, it would seem that there is a power structure which manipulates government and which manipulates the economy. We hear a great deal about the freedom of the press, but that freedom is a freedom to brainwash people to their way of thinking. Although we are supposed to have freedom of speech and of religion, on the most powerful radio stations in any city in this country, you cannot buy time on weekdays for the teaching of the Word of God. That is true no matter how much money you might have to pay for it.

“And he doth not resist you.” The rich seem to be getting by with it today, and the sinner is getting by with it. That disturbed David at first. He said, “They spread themselves like a green bay tree and do not cease from flourishing.” If I do something wrong, I get punished for it. God takes me to the woodshed, but the king of Babylon just

²⁹ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Jas 5:6). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

keeps on going and nothing stops him. Actually, that is God's judgment on the wicked. He is not judging them now, but the end to which they come is very terrible. Riches have never brought happiness to mankind at all.

There is a lesson here for the rich man who is a Christian. How big is your bank account? If Jesus should come right now, would you be willing to let Him look into your safety deposit box? He is going to do that someday. How are you making use of your riches?

Proverbs 30:8 says, "... give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." I am thankful that I am neither rich nor poor, because if I were rich, I would forget God, and if I were poor, I might steal. I thank God that I can go down the middle of the road today in the middle class.³⁰

ESV: Righteous (Gk. *dikaios*) **person** may have a double meaning: both "one of God's forgiven people" and "a person who is innocent" of the death sentence that the wealthy have handed him. **He does not resist.** The righteous person does not avenge himself (Matt. 5:38–42).

Another sin of the rich, caused by the same self-centered motivations of greed, are the persecution of others simply due to the power over others such riches can enable. Here we see that the power gained from wealth was used to persecute the righteous even to the point of death. Furthermore, those who were persecuted did not even stand in the way of the rich man. When one comes to rely on their own resources rather than upon the resources of God, one stands no taller than their own stature. All of their riches are immersed in the same sinfulness that so characterizes the human spirit. The result of such a self-defined life is a spirit of cruelty and contempt.

However, when one places their property under the authority of the LORD and seeks the Holy Spirit's guidance in utilizing it in this life, a great dynamic is realized. Rather than limiting our resources by our own stature, giving our resources to God places them at a point where they are limited only by His stature. Our possessions take on a greater power than we ever imagined when they are laid at the throne of grace. Rather than being empowered by our own skills and desires, our possessions become empowered by His purposes of grace.

Keeping and hoarding our wealth for ourselves is a task fraught only with pitfalls of our own sinfulness. However, dedicating our possessions completely to the LORD brings a dynamic to them that is attainable in no other way. James has seen this principle in action in the life of the early church, and he warned the faithful Jews not to fall into the error that ensnares so many of their community. Not much has changed over the years. People are still sinful and self-centered. Consequently, James' instruction is as relevant today as it was in the first century. Let each of us reflect upon how we relate to our possessions, observe how we may be using them in a self-serving manner, consider how we support God's kingdom work with them, and seek ways to dedicate them entirely to the LORD.³¹

³⁰ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³¹ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

When we spend some time in the letter of James to the early church, we cannot help but come away with the realization that this church is dealing with a lot of troubling issues that largely stem from the persecution that they are receiving from others in their community. Though James' letter is intended for all of the churches, his experience is largely drawn from the events surrounding the life of the church in Jerusalem, arguably the most persecuted of any of the early Christian fellowships.

The stress of persecution can cause the church membership to respond in a variety of ways, and we have seen from this letter that those ways included conflict within the body. James wrote to encourage the church to recognize the true source of the conflict and to continue to conduct themselves with love towards one another and to express their faith through good works, not just among themselves but also to others in the community.

Likewise, the Christian church of the 21st century faces similar challenges. The church is widely criticized and challenged by a culture with a similar epicurean humanism that considers any expression of faith to be unenlightened and ignorant. The church finds itself blocked by anti-faith movements at every venue of public expression. The American constitution simply states that the government will make no law to limit the expression of religion where that expression causes no harm. However, our population is ignorant enough of that constitutional amendment to buy into an assumed "separation of church and state" philosophy that was never intended. Armed with this philosophy, anti-faith groups systematically resist the work of the Christian church.

Like the early church, even the church itself is guilty of persecution as denominations deny one another, condemn one another's practices, and consider themselves somehow better, resulting in a fractured church that is now a mosaic of independent groups.

How long is conflict from without and from within going to keep the church embattled? Once can probably safely state that the conflict will remain as long as satan is the prince of this world, a period that will last until the second coming of the LORD. If the church is to remain so persecuted, how should it respond to this cultural climate?³²

James 5:7

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

The Epistle of "Yakov to the Twelve Tribes of Israel" is about spiritual maturity. And that is, essentially, about patience (1:1-5).

The secret of strategic patience is to keep focused on the imminence of His Second Coming. Some Greek scholars believe that "long-suffering" refers to patience with respect to persons; and "endurance" refers to patience with respect to circumstances.

David was troubled by the prosperity of the wicked: Psalm 37:35-36. In this same Psalm, he also gave the same advice that James gave: "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for

³² http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass” (Ps 37:7).

LAN:7-8 The farmer must wait patiently for his crops to grow; he cannot hurry the process. But he does not take the summer off and hope that all goes well in the fields. There is much work to do to ensure a good harvest. In the same way, we must wait patiently for Christ’s return. We cannot make him come back any sooner. But while we wait, there is much work that we can do to advance God’s kingdom. Both the farmer and the Christian must live by faith, looking toward the future reward for their labors. Don’t live as if Christ will never come. Work faithfully to build his kingdom—the King *will* come when the time is right.

The Christian can be likened to a “Spiritual farmer,” sensitive to the seasons, sowing the seed and watering, sensitive to the soil, etc.

[coming of the Lord] This refers to the rapture (not the second coming) when the Lord will come in the air to receive the saints to Himself (James 5:7-8; John 14:1-3; Luke 21:34-36; 1 Cor. 15:23,51-58; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Ephes. 5:27; Phil. 3:11,20-21; 1 Thes. 2:19; 1 Thes. 3:13; 1 Thes. 4:13-17; 1 Thes. 5:9,23; 2 Thes. 2:1,7-8; Col. 3:4; 1 John 2:28; 1 John 3:2; 1 Peter 5:4).³³

[early and latter rain] The early and latter rains in Palestine, the early rain at seedtime and the latter rain at harvest time (Deut. 11:14), are used here to picture the fruit of the harvest of souls. The early spiritual rain fell at the founding of the church (Acts 2:1-16) and the latter rain will be poured out at the end of this age when the complete harvest of this church age will be gathered (Acts 2:16-21; cp. Hosea 6:3; Zech. 10:1).

Clarke: The husbandman waiteth—The seed of your deliverance is already sown, and by and by the harvest of your salvation will take place. God’s counsels will ripen in due time.

Clarke: The early and latter rain—The rain of seed time; and the rain of ripening before harvest: the first fell in Judea, about the beginning of November, after the seed was sown; and the second towards the end of April, when the ears were filling, and this prepared for a full harvest. Without these two rains, the earth would have been unfruitful. These God had promised: I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil, Deuteronomy 11:14. But for these they were not only to wait patiently, but also to pray, Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so shall the Lord make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field; Zechariah 10:1.

Barnes: Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth. The farmer waits patiently for the grain to grow. It requires time to mature the crop, and he does not become impatient. The idea seems to be, that we should wait for things to

³³ Dake Study Notes, Dake’s Study Bible

develop themselves in their proper season, and should not be impatient before that season arrives. In due time we may expect the harvest to be ripened. We cannot hasten it. We cannot control the rain, the sun, the seasons; and the farmer therefore patiently waits until in the regular course of events he has a harvest. So we cannot control and hasten the events which are in God's own keeping; and we should patiently wait for the developments of his will, and the arrangements of his providence, by which we may obtain what we desire.

James knew that his readers needed two kinds of patience. As we have noted frequently, these people were facing persecution because of their faith. Therefore, they needed that kind of patience that enabled them to put up with their hardships without retaliating. They needed patience in their suffering.

They also needed the kind of patience that would enable them lovingly to endure trying and exasperating conduct on the part of their fellow-believers. This is the reason James tells them not to 'grumble' against one another (v. 9).

We need the same kinds of patience. When trials and difficulties come our way, it is very easy for us to question God, to doubt his goodness and to complain about his dealings with us.

And we always need patience in our dealings with one another. We are all very flawed, and we can very easily vex our brothers and sisters in Christ. We need to realize when we do so that we are not giving a good witness to those around us.

James was not content merely to call for patience. He also gave his readers some powerful incentives for seeking it.³⁴

Chuck Smith: Now it is interesting to me that so many places in the scripture we are exhorted towards patience, as far as the return of Jesus Christ is concerned. Peter, exhorts towards patience for much the same reason, that the long suffering of God is the salvation of the lost. Here exhortation to patience because the Lord is waiting for the precious fruit of harvest.

If the Lord had come ten years ago where would a lot of you been tonight? Five years ago where would a lot of you been? So the Lord is waiting for the latter rain, that is the final harvest of souls. And I believe that we are beginning to see a tremendous harvest of souls through out the world that I do believe is the foreshadowing of the return of Jesus Christ. I think that the Lord is giving the final opportunity to man. We've come just about the end of the rope and God has thrown out for the final time the opportunity of people to get right with God, and I think that it will soon be over. But have patience establish your hearts. The Lord, the husbandman is waiting for the precious fruit of harvest.³⁵

ESV: The righteous are to wait **until the coming of the Lord** (see 1 Thess. 4:15), when he will right all wrongs. **The early and the late rains** describe the Palestinian climate, in which the autumn rains occur just after sowing and the spring rains just before harvest (Jer. 5:24; Joel 2:23). Even though three-fourths of Palestine's rain fell from December to February, these two rains were the most critical.

³⁴ Ellsworth, R. (2009). *Opening up James* (151–152). Leominster: Day One Publications.

³⁵ Chuck Smith, Pastor, Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, CA

ESV: Patience in Suffering. The attention turns from rich to poor, from the evil oppressors to the righteous oppressed, from presumption to patience. Rather than fighting back, they are called to patient endurance and to trust in God to vindicate them.

These words are addressed to the saints who may be experiencing the injustice of those just spoken to, thus providing some encouragement to God's afflicted people. Three admonishments are given:

1. Be patient,
2. establish your hearts, and,
3. grudge not one against the other.

Be patient. Bear your continuing afflictions without murmuring. How long are we to be so patient? The Greek word that is rendered patient is "*makrothumeo*," a continuing tense verb that refers to the patient endurance of an on-going stress. It is an agricultural term that can refer to the patience that a farmer expresses when he waits upon the sown seed to grow to fruition when growth is challenged by drought, blight, and other damaging forces. Consequently, the example given has to do with the farmer who waits on the fruit of the earth.

How does this metaphor correlate to bearing affliction within the body of the church? Growth in faith is not unlike growth in the fields. Seeds of truth are planted in the hearts of the church fellowship and is subject to resistance from many worldly influences. Labor is involved in the planting and the nurturing of the spiritual seed, just as it is required of the physical seed, including cultivating and weeding through continuing Bible study and discipleship. Nourishment for growth, whether physical or spiritual comes only from God.

Makrothumeo is an active patience that is characterized by more than a simple yielding to the current stress, but rather one that looks forward and beyond the affliction with the hope of the final harvest. For the Christian that harvest includes the promised blessings of God, including an eternal relationship with Him. That promise makes the labor worth it all, just as the physical harvest is worth the farmer's labor.³⁶

James 5:8

Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

The secret to patience is that the harvest is worth waiting for. (Gal 6:9; Mark 4:28-29).

[Rapture & Death: simultaneous from the viewpoint of the Throne?]

Barnes: For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Compare Revelation 22:10,12,20; 1 Corinthians 15:51. It is clear, I think, from this place, that the apostle expected that that which he understood by "the coming of the Lord" was soon to occur; for it was to be that by which *they* would obtain deliverance from the trials which they then endured. See James 5:7. Whether it means that he was soon to come to judgment, or to bring to an end the Jewish policy and to set up his kingdom on the earth, or that they would soon be

³⁶ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

removed by death, cannot be determined from the mere use of the language. The most natural interpretation of the passage, and one which will accord well with the time when the epistle was written, is, that the predicted time of the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24) was at hand; that there were already indications that that would soon occur; and that there was a prevalent expectation among Christians that that event would be a release from many trials of persecution, and would be followed by the setting up of the Redeemer's kingdom. Perhaps many expected that the judgment would occur at that time, and that the Saviour would set up a personal reign on the earth. But the expectation of others might have been merely-what is indeed all that is necessarily implied in the predictions on the subject-that there would be after that a rapid and extensive spread of the principles of the Christian religion in the world. The destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple would contribute to that by bringing to an end the whole system of Jewish types and sacrifices; by convincing Christians that there was not to be one central rallying-point, thus destroying their lingering prejudices in favour of the Jewish mode of worship; and by scattering them abroad through the world to propagate the new religion. The epistle was written, it is supposed, some ten or twelve years before the destruction of Jerusalem,

Establish your hearts. The Greek text uses the word, *ste-ri'-zo*, to stand fast, or to turn resolutely in a certain direction. An established heart is one that is not easily swayed by falsehood, but rather stands firm on the Word of God without wavering. Decisions are not made capriciously, but rather with a deep sense of God's purpose and plan in one's life. An established heart has its focus fixed firmly on God and heaven despite all of the distractions, sufferings, and temptations of this world.

The prosperity of the wicked has always resulted in the affliction of the righteous and poor. It is possible that some to whom James wrote were more accurately described by verses 1-6. Their hearts must also be established.

The Coming is Near. Hope is a powerful weapon against circumstances that would encourage despair. It is evident that the apostles thought that Jesus' return was imminent, likely taking place in their lifetimes. Consequently, they always taught that Jesus' return is coming soon. Whether Jesus does come back in our lifetime, or we meet Him at the end of our lifetime, the hope is still the same. We can know that we will not be defeated by that which would attack us in this world. If we lived as though Jesus' return is imminent, we might react differently to the circumstances of this world, probably placing them into a more spiritually mature perspective. The importance of this life's issues would be better illuminated by God's plan and purpose, and we might not consider them of such great significance when compared with that purpose. We can live every day as though Jesus' return is imminent, and if we did, we would have less need for enduring patience.³⁷

³⁷ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

James 5:9

Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Impatience with people betrays an impatience with God. If we start using our sickles on each other we may miss the harvest!

It would be very embarrassing if the Lord should come while you are sitting in judgment on someone else. You would suddenly find yourself in His presence with Him judging you. What James is really saying here is, “Set your house in order. Get your affairs straightened out before He comes, because He is going to straighten them out if you don’t.” This is very important for believers to realize.³⁸

[Grudge] Greek: *stenazo* (GSN-4727), groan (Romans 8:23). Here it means to murmur.

Clarke: Lest ye be condemned—By giving way to a spirit of this kind, you will get under the condemnation of the wicked.

Clarke: The judge standeth before the door—His eye is upon every thing that is wrong in you, and every wrong that is done to you; and he is now entering into judgment with your oppressors.

The exact idea here is, not that of *grudging* in the sense of dissatisfaction with what others possess, or of being envious; it is that of being fretful and impatient-or, to use a common word which more exactly expresses the sense, that of *grumbling*.

LAN: When things go wrong, we tend to grumble against and blame others for our miseries (see the second note on •Genesis 3:11-13). Blaming others is easier than owning our share of the responsibility, but it can be both destructive and sinful. Before you judge others for their shortcomings, remember that Christ the Judge will come to evaluate each of us (Matthew 7:1-5; Matthew 25:31-46). He will not let us get away with shifting the blame to others.

Spurgeon: Wrongs will so soon be righted that we may well bear with them a little longer.

ESV: Do not grumble sums up the divisive complaining behind 3:1–4:12. It can be particularly painful in times of suffering when people explode in frustration and turn upon each other.

³⁸ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Grudge not against one another. The Greek word, *sten-ad'-zo* means to sigh, to murmur, or to create strife. One common response to persecution is to strike back at any target within sight, and that target is often those who are closest to us. When we are under stress, it is often a very difficult task to refrain from lashing out at those around us. We may be reminded of Paul's counsel that the enemy of the faithful is never people, but rather the influence of the evil one: the one true enemy.^[2] However, the emotions of the moment blind us to that truth and we tend to commit sin ourselves when we take the battle to the wrong enemy.

Fretfulness and discontent expose us to the just judgment of God, and we bring more calamities upon ourselves by our murmuring, our distrustful, envious groans and grudging against one another, than we may be aware of.

How can we respond to persecutions in a way that do not cause us to attack one another?

- Realize that fellow Christians are never the enemy: satan is the enemy. Rally together to confront the true enemy: satan and sin.
- Seek to establish the true source of the affliction, and bring that affliction together to the LORD in prayer.
- Rather than share in a spirit of defeat, stand firm together on the promise of God's victory over sin and death.
- Minister one to another as some are more defeated by stress than others.

Certainly, this list goes on. There are many positive responses that we can employ to negative circumstances. James reminds us that some spiritual wisdom needs to be engaged so that we will not practice a negative response to stressful events.³⁹

James 5:10

Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Jesus also used the prophets as an example of victory over persecution (Mt 5:10-12).

We are promised persecution (2 Tim 3:12). Our Lord was obedient and it led to the cross.

Elijah announced to wicked King Ahab that there would be a drought for 3 ½ years. Elijah himself had to suffer the same drought.

They not only suffered at the hands of the nonbelievers, but at the hands of professed believers!

Jeremiah was arrested as a traitor and thrown into an abandoned well to die. Ezekiel and Daniel also had their share of hardships, but God delivered them.

The NT presents the persecution of the prophets as proverbial (11X): Matthew 5:12; 21:35, 36; 22:6; 23:29-37; Luke 13:33; Acts 7:51, 52; Romans 11:3; 1 Thess 2:15; **Heb 11:32-38**; Rev 16:6; 18:24.

³⁹ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

[an example of suffering affliction, and of patience (Dake)] Seven examples of suffering and patience:

1. Joseph (Genesis 37:8-36; Genesis 39:1-41:44)
2. Moses (Numbers 12:1; Numbers 16:2-4; etc.)
3. David (1 Samuel 18:1-26:25; 2 Samuel 15)
4. Elijah (1 Kings 17:1-19:18)
5. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 11:21; Jeremiah 37:15)
6. Job (Job 5:11; Job 1-2)
7. Many others (Hebrews 11:32-40)⁴⁰

Clarke: Take—the prophets—The prophets who had spoken to their forefathers by the authority of God, were persecuted by the very people to whom they delivered the Divine message; but they suffered affliction and persecution with patience, commending their cause to him who judgeth righteously; therefore, imitate their example.

Most Old Testament prophets faced great opposition for their preaching; some faced death. Jewish tradition had amplified accounts of their martyrdom even further, hence no one would dispute James's claim. Virtuous examples were an important part of ancient argumentation (Stoic philosophers often used like-minded sages as models of endurance).⁴¹

We are encouraged to be patient by the example of the Old Testament prophets. The prophets of God who received God's greatest honor and favor usually found themselves treated quite differently by their community. This is not unlike the state of the faithful in this wicked world today. When we look at how the sin-filled world treated the prophets we should not be surprised that that same wicked world treats modern-day prophets in a similar manner. James has pointed out that even those within the church are joining the world in their persecution of the faithful. Certainly this was true during the lives of the Old Testament prophets also.

Did the prophets find peace and resolution in their lifetimes? Most of the prophets lived out their lives in persecution and because they would not compromise their testimony in the presence of the wickedness of the community, they were often tortured and killed by wicked leadership. We may be reminded of the brutal imprisonment of Jeremiah by the Jerusalem leadership during the Babylonian occupation prior to the city's destruction.

Though we may experience various forms of persecution from both within and without the walls of the church, most of the faithful will not experience torture and imprisonment. However, there are even today some locations around the world where people of Christian faith are systematically tortured, imprisoned, and killed. Consequently, when persecution is experienced, one can remember that the necessity for the endurance of that persecution is a common affliction of the faithful.

⁴⁰ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

⁴¹ Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Jas 5:10). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Rather than focus on the affliction, the Old Testament prophets focused upon the LORD and held true to their message without lashing out at others. They endured persecution, sometimes unto death, without committing the sin of hurting others. Their love for the LORD and their love for the faithful was only strengthened by persecution because they understood its true source and depended upon the LORD for their deliverance. James points out that the experience of these is instructive to all of us as we respond to the vagaries of this wicked world.⁴²

James 5:11

Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Why do some of those who proclaim the Lord endure difficult trials? So that their lives might back up their messages... Enduring counts. Many obscure heroes will receive their rewards: He will bring His reward with Him (Rev 22:12).

[We need to spend more time with our Bible to draw these insights...] Job also had his “friends.” With friends like these, one hardly needs enemies! [I wonder if these friends published newsletters or had web sites?] The friends were wrong; God had no cause against Job (Job 2:3). God rebuked the friends for telling lies about Job (Job 42:7). Faith is not believing despite the evidence; it is obeying in spite of the consequences. God never wastes the sufferings of His saints. Job met God in a deeper way (Job 42:1-6).

An impatient Christian is a powerful weapon in Satan’s hands. Moses’ impatience robbed him of his trip to the Holy Land; Abraham’s impatience led to the birth of Ishmael; Peter’s impatience almost made him a murderer. Answer: “My grace is sufficient for thee” 2 Cor 12:7-9. You are not a robot caught in the jaws of fate. You are a loved child of God as part of His profound and wonderful plan. Trust Him.

[end of the Lord] In the case of so many today who use Job as an excuse for being sick and bodily afflicted, there is never any “end of the Lord.” Job’s trial lasted only a few months, and he was fighting for deliverance all that time.

Clarke: We count them happy which endure—According to that saying of our blessed Lord, Blessed are ye when men shall persecute and revile you—for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Matthew 5:11, 12, etc.

Clarke: Ye have heard of the patience of Job—Stripped of all his worldly possessions, deprived at a stroke of all his children, tortured in body with sore disease, tempted by the devil, harassed by his wife, and calumniated by his friends, he nevertheless held fast his integrity, resigned himself to the Divine dispensations, and charged not God foolishly.

⁴² http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

Clarke: And have seen the end of the Lord—The issue to which God brought all his afflictions and trials, giving him children, increasing his property, lengthening out his life, and multiplying to him every kind of spiritual and secular good. This was God’s end with respect to him; but the devil’s end was to drive him to despair, and to cause him to blaspheme his Maker. This mention of Job shows him to have been a real person; for a fictitious person would not have been produced as an example of any virtue so highly important as that of patience and perseverance. The end of the Lord is a Hebraism for the issue to which God brings any thing or business.

Barnes: Ye have heard of the patience of Job. As one of the most illustrious instances of patient sufferers. See Job 1:21. The book of Job was written, among other reasons, to show that true religion would *bear* any form of trial to which it could be subjected. See Job 1:9-11; Job 2:5-6.

Evil and Suffering, Endurance—Disciples need patience to persevere in the face of suffering. Christian endurance is not our instinctive response but a learned way of life. Studying the examples of heroes of perseverance like Job and the prophets can help us be patient as we wait for God to show His mercy to us.⁴³

Last Things, Return Promises—The coming of the Lord will mean vindication for the faithful. Righteousness will be rewarded, and evil punished. The prospect of that coming offers motivation for patience, in the sense of steadfastness or endurance. On the other hand, the coming of the Lord will mean judgment for some. Those who oppress others are known by the Lord Almighty (vv. 1-6). Not only these, but even the faithful who fail to remain strong can expect judgment.⁴⁴

Chuck Smith: God is full of pity. And in the Psalm, 103 the Lord is full of pity. "For He knows our frame that we are but dust" ([Psalm 103:14](#)). God, when He looks at you, doesn't expect to see a superman, or a super saint. He knows you're dust anyhow. That's why He's so merciful, because He knows your frame. That is why we are not so merciful so many times on ourselves, because we think we are more than dust. "Well I'm a rock, I'm strong, I'm able, you know I can do it." And then we get fractured, and we get discouraged and disappointed and we think that God is all upset with us. No, no, no. He's not upset. He's merciful. He knew all the time you were but dust. It was you that made the mistake, you that over estimated your capabilities, not God. You didn't disappoint Him. He knew all the time. It was important that you know what He knows and so He lets you fall on your face. The Lord is full of pity and tender mercy.

God provides a hope in the future to every believer. When one endures the conflicts of this world for the sake of God’s kingdom, there is a unique reward, whether it be experienced in this world as a deeply felt peace and joy, or experienced in heaven as a promised “crown.” What does James mean when he states that those who endure without compromising their faith are counted as “happy?” Certainly, there is little to produce

⁴³ Disciple’s Study Bible

⁴⁴ Disciple’s Study Bible

happiness in the experience of conflict, persecution, and stress. However, when that conflict, persecution, and stress comes directly from one's faithfulness, the knowledge of that enduring faithfulness can bring a deep joy that is attained no other way. Paul often testified to the joy that he experienced in the knowledge of his own endurance. James includes the example of Job's experience of faithfulness, loss, and restoration. We are given the privilege of witnessing the end of the story of Job's life. We will not see our own until we meet the end of our lives. The LORD responds to our patient obedience with mercy. Consequently we have an advocate and paraclete in the LORD who is with us through the tough times, particularly when they are made tough because of abuse that we receive by others as a direct result of our faithfulness to God.

James clearly teaches that the faithful will experience various forms of persecution by this wicked world, and by those of the faith who succumb to it. If one does not show some battle scars, one is not taking part in the battle, and does not know the measure of peace and joy that James refers to. However, those who are in the battle share the scars of persecution from both within the body of believers and from without. James teaches that our response to that persecution can be one that is spiritually mature and godly, one that strengthens us and better prepares us to faithfully serve the LORD throughout our days.⁴⁵

James 5:12

But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

Honesty is becoming a scarce commodity. Perjury under solemn oath is epidemic. In our courts, in our sacred vows of marriage, in the assertions of our highest offices... "Their tongues practice deceit" (Rom 3:13). Breaking vows was forbidden: Lev 19:12; Num 30:2; Deut 23:21. Cf. Job 1:21-22; Mt 5:34-37. When Peter poured out oaths in the courtyard (Mt 26:71), he was giving evidence that his character was still in need of transformation. There are appropriate solemn oaths in the Scripture: Jesus, before Caiaphas (Mt 26:63, 64a); Paul calls God as his witness (2 Cor 1:23; Rom 1:9, 10a). Thus, permitted but not encouraged...

Every word will be accounted for: Mt 12:36, 37.

[swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay] Jews and Arabs were notorious for swearing or taking oaths by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, the temple, the altar, and the different members of the body. Even simple affirmatives were always accompanied with an oath. It was this wicked practice that caused James to give this command.

[condemnation] Greek: *hupokrisis* (GSN-5272), hypocrisy (Galatians 2:13). The idea is that those who were in the habit of making oaths also believed that they could make them with the mouth while the heart cancelled them. Oaths were made with mental

⁴⁵ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

reservations to annul them, regardless of how solemn they were. This was all done in hypocrisy and fostered searing of the conscience as to what was said. One soon became a confirmed hypocrite in such matters.

Clarke: Above all things—swear not—What relation this exhortation can have to the subject in question, I confess I cannot see. It may not have been designed to stand in any connection, but to be a separate piece of advice, as in the several cases which immediately follow. That the Jews were notoriously guilty of common swearing is allowed on all hands; and that swearing by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, the temple, the altar, different parts of the body, was not considered by them as binding oaths, has been sufficiently proved. Rabbi Akiba taught that “a man might swear with his lips, and annul it in his heart; and then the oath was not binding.” See the notes on Matthew 5:33, etc., where the subject is considered in great detail.

Clarke: Let your yea be yea, etc.—Do not pretend to say yea with your lips, and annul it in your heart; let the yea or the nay which you express be bona fide such. Do not imagine that any mental reservation can cancel any such expressions of obligation in the sight of God.

Chuck Smith: Now a man often times, if he is a liar, is constantly swearing that he is telling the truth. And that is why I am often suspicious of the person that is constantly affirming, "Oh, this is the God's honest truth man." I become very suspicious when they are constantly affirming that what they tell you is true. If it is true, than you don't need to constantly affirm it. And James is actually saying don't swear. "I'll do it, I'll do it, I promise I'll do it, you know. Swear by Heaven, I'll be there." No, no, no. Just let your yes be a yes, and let your no be a no. Jesus said the same thing in the Sermon on the Mount. Be a man or a person of your word. If you say yes, mean yes, and if you say no, mean no. And don't be the kind of a person that you have to swear to cause someone to believe you are telling the truth.

ESV: It is not entirely clear how **do not swear** is connected to vv. 7–11. **Above all** may indicate that this begins a three-part conclusion to the letter (vv. 12, 13–18, 19–20). Yet it could also refer back to the sins of the tongue and hence the grumbling of v. 9. Oaths were allowed in Israel, but the person was required to fulfill them, especially because they so often involved invoking the name of God (see Lev. 19:12; Jer. 5:2). James's prohibition of oaths builds on Jesus' prohibition in Matt. 5:33–37, and the point in both cases is that one's word should be enough. Still, this does not mean all oaths (e.g., official oaths) are prohibited (cf. Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Phil. 1:8). (See Jesus' prohibition of oaths in Matt. 23:16–22.)

James, in this letter to the early church, laid down some tough arguments for the damage that was being done to the early church by speech that lacked the implementation of the wisdom of God. Like, Paul, James does not leave us with an unanswered criticism, but rather, provides a detailed solution for those who are willing to change.

First, James addresses the practice of the swearing of oaths. He introduces this by saying "But above all...". Consequently, he considers this of grave importance. This

verse is often misapplied as a command to abstain from coarse or foul words, words that are objectionable to the culture as a whole. There is much to defend any command of such abstinence, supported by sound biblical doctrine. Certainly, the Holy Spirit does not lead one to be an offense to another. Offensive behavior demonstrates a lack of agape love towards the one offended. However, this is not the application of this particular passage.

Another example of improper speech is the “taking of the LORD’s name in vain,” literally the refusal to recognize God for who He really is. If one refuses to accept the LORD for who He truly is, and takes that rejection to the grave, that individual will be eternally lost. Again, though this is an appropriate teaching, this is not the application of this particular passage.

Cursing and taking the LORD’s name in vain are both examples of improper speech. James dealt with some of the context of this argument in chapter three. Here, James describes yet a third, and very important, example of improper speech, a practice that has significant consequences.

This passage refers to stating oaths by the authority of a second source, for example “I swear on my mother’s name”, “In God’s name I swear,” “I swear on the Bible,” etc. This practice was common in both the Greek and Jewish communities where people would swear by the reputation of their ancestors, or upon the names of their pagan gods. James expressly forbids this practice, and when one stops to consider what it really means to swear on the authority of another, the prohibition makes good sense. The true nature of this type of oath is to pawn the reputation of some certain, more powerful, more respected, or greater thing for the defense of some lesser thing. Such action leads to the literal swearing by the creature as if he were God; and so advancing himself into the place and authority of God. That is, to swear by the authority of another is to claim for one’s self the other’s authority. The error of this practice is illustrated when one breaks an oath so stated, because the nature of the oath itself implies that the power of the other is what keeps the oath sacred. James instructs that the borrowing of another’s authority is not necessary. Your “yes” and “no” should be confirmed by your own integrity, an integrity that is maintained because of your faith in God.

Does this forbid oaths, such as a public oath of office that necessitates a hand on a Bible and the words, “so help me, God”? Such oaths are simply understood to a workable verbal form of a written signature. This way, when one is formally “under oath” they may be held legally accountable for their statements in the same way that they would be held accountable to the contents of a written document. Consequently, this teaching can easily place a Christian into an ethical dilemma when one is forced by the protocol of some agency, such as the military, or the courts, to state such an oath. One answer to this dilemma might be found within the context of Jesus’ command to “render to Caesar that which is Caesar’s.” Christians are to respect the laws of their respective governments, and the taking of such oaths is a component of that law. Furthermore, we are reminded that the Bible is not a book of law to the Christian, since God looks upon the individual’s heart-felt understanding of God’s word as led of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, how one responds to this dilemma is a matter of personal choice. Some may find the practice offensive and choose to resist the swearing of an oath in open court. Others may find honor in stating their firm intent, such as the oath to defend the constitution that is required of military and federal officials.

Engaging in a protracted argument concerning the participation in legal oaths may require taking James' statement to the extreme. James is simply stating here that the word of a Christian should be reliable, honest, and stand on his/her own merit, a merit that is found in a reputation of one who is fully submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. One who demonstrates such godly integrity has no need to borrow from the authority of another.⁴⁶

Review

Like a farmer, we await a spiritual harvest, for fruit that will glorify God;
Like the prophets, we should look for opportunities to witness, share His truth.
Like Job, we wait for the Lord to fulfill His loving purpose, knowing that He will never cause His children suffer so needlessly.

“Be patient, for the coming of the Lord draweth night.” (v.8)

A person with a reputation for exaggeration or lying often can't get anyone to believe him on his word alone. Christians should never become like that. Always be honest so that others will believe your simple yes or no. By avoiding lies, half-truths, and omissions of the truth, you will become known as a trustworthy person.

A fitting climax to James' letter is his emphasis on prayer. The greatest assistance any believer can offer another is faithful prayer. Prayer is clear evidence of care. Prayer is the “hotline” to the One who can provide for any need no matter how complex or impossible it may seem. To share in prayer, a believer must have a sensitivity to someone's needs, engage in diligent supplication for those needs, and recognize the significance of those needs.⁴⁷

This verse echoes the words of Jesus in Matt 5:33-37. When the verse is read against the context of all Scripture, it is clear that James is not forbidding the taking of a solemn oath. Jesus and James are stressing the need for integrity in speech, and the sinfulness of carelessly or flippantly using God's name or a sacred object to guarantee truthful speech.⁴⁸

James 5:13

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Afflicted means “suffering in difficult circumstances.” We should not grumble (5:9). Prayer can give us the grace we need to endure troubles and use them to Glorify God. God can transform troubles into triumphs. He can turn weakness into strength (2 Cor 12:7-10; James 4:6).

[Jesus prayed (3X) in Gethsemane that the cup might be removed, but it was not...]

⁴⁶http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

⁴⁷ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Jas 5:12). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴⁸ Believer's Study Bible

The *mature* Christian knows that God is able to give “songs in the night” (Job 35:10). He did this for Paul and Silas when they were suffering in that Philippian jail (Acts 16:25).

The believer’s praise should be intelligent (1 Cor 14:15) and not just mouthing words. (Cf. “7-11” music: seven words repeated 11 times.) It should come from the heart (Eph 5:19) and motivated by the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18), and based on the Word of God (Col 3:16).

[Is any among you afflicted? ... Is any merry? ... Is any sick among you?]

These are questions 22-24 in James and are also the last ones in James.

[afflicted] Greek: *kakopatheo* (GSN-2553), endure hardness (2 Tim. 2:3); suffer trouble (2 Tim. 2:9); endure afflictions (2 Tim. 4:5); and to be afflicted (James 5:13). This has reference to any trouble other than sickness.

Clarke: Is any among you afflicted? let him pray—The Jews taught that the meaning of the ordinance, Leviticus 13:45, which required the leper to cry, Unclean! unclean! was, “that thus making known his calamity, the people might be led to offer up prayers to God in his behalf,” Sota, page 685, ed. Wagens. They taught also, that when any sickness or affliction entered a family, they should go to the wise men, and implore their prayers. Bava bathra, fol. 116, 1.

In Nedarim, fol. 40, 1, we have this relation: “Rabba, as often as he fell sick, forbade his domestics to mention it for the first day; if he did not then begin to get well, he told his family to go and publish it in the highways, that they who hated him might rejoice, and they that loved him might intercede with God for him.”

Barnes: Let him sing psalms. That is, if any one is happy; if he is in health, and is prospered; if he has his friends around him, and there is nothing to produce anxiety; if he has the free exercise of conscience and enjoys religion, it is proper to express that in notes of praise. Compare Ephesians 5:19-20. On the meaning of the word here rendered “sing psalms,” Ephesians 5:9, where it is rendered *making melody*. It does not mean to sing *psalms* in contradistinction from singing *hymns*, but the reference is to any songs of praise. Praise is appropriate to such a state of mind. The heart naturally gives utterance to its emotions in songs of thanksgiving. The sentiment in this verse is well expressed in the beautiful stanza,

In every joy that crowns my days,
In every pain I bear,
My heart shall find delight in praise,
Or seek relief in prayer.

Mrs. Williams.

James says that the afflicted are to pray and the merry are to sing psalms. Sometimes a song leader will get up in a service and say, “Now everybody sit up and smile.” I used to have a song leader like that in a church I pastored years ago. I told him, “Don’t you know that in this congregation there are people who are really burdened? As I look out there, I

see one man who is a doctor and who has been busy all week taking care of patients. I also see a lady who is a buyer in a department store. She is weary and tired. And you ask them to sit up smile!” No, you don’t have to sit up and smile. The afflicted are to pray. The merry are to sing psalms. Some people go to church and then try to work up some enthusiasm. We ought to have the great passion and enthusiasm in our hearts even before we go to church, but we do not need to put on a false front.⁴⁹

James continues with examples of ways of adding godly speech to our vocabulary. As we experience our pilgrimage from salvation to the gates of Heaven, we are subject to a road full of hilltops and valleys. The way we respond to these experiences illustrates much about our maturity in the Lord.

Responding to the mountaintops...

What would be a natural way to respond to the hilltop experiences which result from successes, gains, blessings, etc.? We are quite capable, without the power of the Holy Spirit to demonstrate pride, self-congratulations, self-satisfaction, complacency, expectation of continuation, and heightened dependence upon ourselves.

What would be the Godly way to respond to hilltop experiences? The Holy Spirit leads us to demonstrate praise and thanksgiving, stewardship, and generosity.

Responding to the valleys...

What would be a natural way to respond to the valley experiences which result from failure, loss, etc.? We are quite capable, without the power of the Holy Spirit to respond with condemnation of others, rejection of responsibility, depression, anger, bitterness, low self-esteem, and lashing out.

What would be a Godly way to respond to the valleys? The Holy Spirit leads us to humility, prayer, thanksgiving, faith, and confidence in God's provision and your value in his sight, and recognition of the value of the valleys in our lives.

The Greek word that is rendered “psalms” refers literally to the act of singing. According to historical writings of Pliny, Justin Martyr and Tertullian, it is evident that the early Christians were accustomed to the singing of hymns taken from both scripture and private composition. Literally, the singing of psalms could be rendered as a gospel ordinance. In either case, hilltop or valley, we should respond in a manner which is in service to the Lord's kingdom.⁵⁰

Clarke: Is any merry? let him sing psalms—These are all general but very useful directions. It is natural for a man to sing when he is cheerful and happy. Now no subject can be more noble than that which is Divine: and as God alone is the author of all that good which makes a man happy, then his praise should be the subject of the song of him who is merry. But where persons rejoice in iniquity, and not in the truth, God and sacred things can never be the subject of their song.

⁴⁹ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:13). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵⁰ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

James 5:14

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

This is the only such prescription in all of Scripture. There are two Greek words translated “anoint”:

Cri,w, *Chrio*, used in the religious sense; from this we also get the word, *Christos*, the Anointed One. It is used only five times in the NT, and refers to the anointing of Christ by the Father with the Holy Spirit.

The other, avlei,fw, *aleipho*, here, the Greek word is a medicinal term (Mt 6:17, to prepare oneself); it could be translated “massaging.”

Here, it seems, James is assuming its application as a medicine.

There are no blanket formulas: we’re dealing with the sovereignty of God.[It is a cruel hoax to teach that none of us are ever to be sick. Those who claim that God heals in every case, and that it is not His will for His children to be sick, are denying both Scripture and experience. Paul had to leave Trophimus sick in Miletus (2 Tim 4:20); Epaphroditus was “ill and almost died” (Phil 2:27); Paul prayed three times for his own healing (2 Cor 12:7-10) but had to endure it until he died.]

Note also that it is not a single person, but the *body of elders* (pl) who seek God’s will and pray...

[**sick**] Greek: *astheneo* (GSN-770), weak, feeble, sick (Phil. 2:16-27).

[**let him call for the elders**] Two things the sick are to do (James 5:14-15):

1. Call the elders of the church
2. Confess sin if it has been committed

Spurgeon: Use the means and pray. Medicine and supplication should go together. We send for the doctor and his draughts, why not send for the elders and their prayers?

[**elders**] Greek: *presbuteros* (GSN-4245) (Acts 14:23).

[**let them pray over him**] (**Dake**) Four things elders are to do for the sick:

1. Pray over them (James 5:14)
2. Anoint the sick with oil (James 5:14)
3. Invoke the name of the Lord (James 5:14)
4. Pray the prayer of faith (James 5:15)

[**anointing**] Greek: *aleipho* (GSN-218). Always translated anoint (James 5:14; Matthew 6:17; Mark 6:13; Mark 16:1; Luke 7:38,46; John 11:2; John 12:3).

^f[**oil**] No doubt pure olive oil is meant, as it was customary among Jews to carry such oil with them in all their journeys, to anoint their bodies and heal their wounds and bruises (Luke 10:34). This anointing was merely symbolic of the healing of God by

the Holy Spirit (Mark 6:13). It doesn't mean that olive oil was a cure for all kinds of diseases. The oil itself did not heal, for one would not have to pray and invoke the name of Jesus Christ merely to anoint with oil, nor would it have to be done by the elders of the church.

Discipleship, Sick—Christians have no exemption from the natural laws of God's universe. We do get sick. We do have a mission to heal the sick. James described the use of oil, a medical remedy in his day as well as a symbol of God's powerful presence. Christians should pray for the sick and use all resources available to effect healing. Ultimately we must leave the healing to God. Faith in God should not be lost if the sick person is not healed. Prayer never is a device by which God can be manipulated into doing my will. Faithful disciples accept God's answer to prayer whatever it may be. We do know from personal experience the great power prayer has in our ministry to the sick.⁵¹

Clarke: Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders—This was also a Jewish maxim. Rabbi Simeon, in *Sepher Hachaiyim*, said: "What should a man do who goes to visit the sick? Ans. He who studies to restore the health of the body, should first lay the foundation in the health of the soul. The wise men have said, No healing is equal to that which comes from the word of God and prayer. Rabbi Phineas, the son of Chamma, hath said, 'When sickness or disease enters into a man's family, let him apply to a wise man, who will implore mercy in his behalf.'" See Schoettgen.

St. James very properly sends all such to the elders of the Church, who had power with God through the great Mediator, that they might pray for them.

LAN: 14-15 James is referring to someone who is incapacitated physically. In Scripture, oil was both a medicine (see the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37) and a symbol of the Spirit of God (as used in anointing kings, see 1 Samuel 16:1-13). Thus oil can represent both the medical and the spiritual spheres of life. Christians should not separate the physical and the spiritual—Jesus Christ is Lord over both the body and the spirit.

The elders are to respond to the request of the sick person in two ways. First, they are to pray. Second, they are to anoint the sick person with oil.

We understand the importance of prayer. Healing comes only from God. So we must go to the source of it if we would have it.

The anointing with oil is the part that creates controversy. Are we to take this oil to be medicinal in nature? The good Samaritan, we recall, treated the wounded man with oil and wine—the former to sooth and the latter to cleanse (Luke 10:34). If this is the correct understanding, James was telling sick people to ask for prayer and go to the doctor.

Or are we, as some suggest, to understand the oil as a symbol or emblem of divine grace? If this is correct, James was telling the sick to ask for prayer and to trust the Lord.

It is probably safe to say, as Alec Motyer does, that the sick and the elders would have both the spiritual and the medicinal in mind as they went through this process.⁵²

⁵¹ Dixciple's Study Bible

⁵² Ellsworth, R. (2009). *Opening up James* (160). Leominster: Day One Publications.

LAN: 14-15 People in the church are not alone. Members of Christ’s body should be able to count on others for support and prayer, especially when they are sick or suffering. The elders should be on call to respond to the illness of any member, and the church should stay alert to pray for the needs of all its members.

let him call for the elders—not some *one* of the elders, as Roman Catholics interpret it, to justify their usage in *extreme unction*. The prayers of the elders over the sick would be much the same as though the whole Church which they represent should pray [BENGEL].⁵³

This passage has led to many erroneous teachings. The central theme of the passage is prayer. It is through the prayer of believers that divine aid and blessing are invoked. Oil was widely believed to have a medicinal value in biblical times (cf. Isa 1:6; Luke 10:34) and is here used in this sense. The text is stating that the prayer of faith will heal and that medical means are to be used. God does occasionally, however, directly heal those who are ill. The believer has a right to ask for healing from the Lord, who revealed Himself to His people in Ex 15:26 as *Yahweh-Ropheka* (Heb., “For I am the Lord who heals you”). God heals and often employs means in the process (cf. Isa 38:21; Mark 6:12, 13; 1 Tim 5:23). One excellent illustration of the activity of God in regard to sickness occurs in Acts 28, when Paul and Luke the physician are shipwrecked in Malta. The father of Publius was very ill, and Paul “went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him” (Acts 28:8). The word used here to describe the miraculous healing by Paul is *iaomai* (Gk.). The others on the island who were sick were also brought to be healed (Acts 28:9). The word used to describe their healing is from *therapeuo* (Gk.) and, together with the plural pronoun in Acts 28:10 (“they also honored us”), clearly indicates that medicine was practiced on them by Luke. God does heal with and without means. In fact, if there is healing, God does the healing. It may not be in God’s will for healing to occur in a particular case. Believers are instructed to pray for healing, but they are also instructed to seek God’s will (1 John 5:14) and are taught by Christ’s example to pray, “nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). Note also 2 Cor 2:7-10, in which Paul earnestly prays for healing that does not occur, and 2 Tim 4:20, note, in which Paul’s valued friend and helper, Trophimus, remains sick at Miletus. Yet Paul did not heal him.⁵⁴

When a believer contracts an illness, he or she must take the initiative and contact the elders of the church.

We should note that James is not talking here about a case of the sniffles. According to Curtis Vaughan, the Greek word translated ‘sick’ refers to a sickness that incapacitates a person for work. The Puritan Thomas Manton says, ‘The elders must not be sent for

⁵³ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Jas 5:14). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁵⁴ Believer’s Study Bible

upon every light occasion, as soon as the head or foot acheth ... but in such grievous diseases wherein there is danger and great pain.’

We should also note that the elders are those who exercise pastoral oversight and spiritual leadership within the church. Many churches tend to invest these things in one man, but the New Testament ideal is a plurality of elders (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:4, 6; 20:17; 21:18; Titus 1:5).⁵⁵

The Lord heals the sick among his people, according to this passage, in response to **the prayer offered with trust**. Healing was one of Yeshua’s three main ministries (Mt 4:23–24), and he promised that his followers would do yet greater works than he did (Yn 14:12). In addition, the Holy Spirit, whom he has sent to his followers (Yn 15:26), grants to some gifts of healing (1C 12:9, 30).

Rub olive oil on him. Anointing with oil is not merely a ceremony. In biblical times, olive oil was medicine (Isaiah 1:6, Lk 10:34), and being anointed with oil was considered physically pleasant (Psalms 23:5, 133:2–3).⁵⁶

ESV: 13–14 There is another ABA pattern in these verses (cf. note on 3:1–4:12). James begins with those **suffering** (A), then addresses the **cheerful** (B), and concludes with those who are **sick** (A). He alludes back to 1:2, where the one under trial was to “count it all joy.” Though “sick” (Gk. *astheneō*) can also mean “to be weak” (even spiritually weak, as in Rom. 14:1), when used (as it is here) without any qualifiers, it usually refers to physical sickness. **Elders** were pastors and overseers (cf. Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Pet. 5:1–2), known for wisdom and maturity, who functioned as leaders in the churches. This provides evidence for a plurality of elders in all the churches to which James was writing, for he simply assumes a sick person could call for “the elders of the church.” Some think that **anointing ... with oil** was medicinal or sacramental (as in Roman Catholic extreme unction at death), but it is best seen as a symbol representing the healing power of the Holy Spirit to come upon the sick person (cf. the use of “anointing” for symbolic consecration to God’s use and service, both in the OT [Ex. 28:41] and in the NT [Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; 2 Cor. 1:21; Heb. 1:9]). **In the name of the Lord** means it is God, not the oil, that heals.

James next addresses the way to respond to times of sickness. What would be the natural way to respond to sickness? We might respond by placing blame, experiencing depression, lashing out at God with statements such as “Why did you let this happen?”, search for quick remedy, dependence on others, self pity, or other negative behaviors. As James writes, he is dealing with a culture that responded to sickness in an even more negative manner. Virtually nothing was known about the causes of sickness of disease, so with the absence of medical science, people understood sickness as a punishment for their sins. Consequently, they blamed and despised one another when any form of sickness was evident. Our penchant for despising one another for sickness has ebbed over the centuries, but has not been entirely eliminated. There are still some who will

⁵⁵ Ellsworth, R. (2009). *Opening up James* (159–160). Leominster: Day One Publications.

⁵⁶ Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:14). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

place blame on one another for sickness, particularly those illnesses that seem to be the result of life choices.

James provides some Godly responses to sickness. The first is to notify the elders of the church. The Greek form of the word that is rendered *elder* refers to those older and mature members who will respond to the need in a godly manner, in love, and in prayer. Note that the necessity of personal prayer is already identified in the previous verse. By notifying the elders, they can serve God by praying for you and enjoining others to pray also, so that their own ministry can be exercised, and that the afflicted may further understand the real source of healing.

Why do you suppose James advises the practice of anointing with oil? Anointing with oil does not in itself provide healing except for a few rare instances. To better understand the ritual of anointing we might draw from Israel's history the anointing its kings. The ritual of anointing is intended to symbolize one as being separated out for God's total purpose, placing the individual completely into the Lord's hands. Note that modern usage is often variant with the scriptural purpose. It is not meant for the cleansing or ridding of sin as is used in the extreme unction of last rights. Anointing with oil serves as a reminder of who the LORD of healing truly is as we submit ourselves entirely to Him and pray to Him for the healing that only He provides.⁵⁷

James 5:15

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

“Prayer of faith” is a prayer offered *when we know the will of God*. This appears to be a case where the sickness is the result of *continuing* in sin (Cf. 1 Cor 11:30). We never sin alone. It always affects others—in fact, the whole church.

[the prayer of faith shall save the sick] This is what heals the sick in such cases. When the prayer of faith is prayed and the name of Jesus Christ invoked, the Lord shall raise up the sick and forgive him if he has sinned. This power to heal is promised to every believer, not only the elders of the church (Matthew 17:20; Matthew 21:22; Mark 9:23; Mark 11:22-24; Mark 16:15-20; John 14:12-15; John 15:7,16; John 16:23-26).⁵⁸

[the Lord shall raise him up] This is true divine healing.

[if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him] Healing and forgiveness go hand in hand (Matthew 9:5; Matthew 13:15; Acts 3:16; Acts 4:12; Acts 28:27).

Clarke: And the prayer of faith; shall save the sick—That is, God will often make these the means of a sick man's recovery; but there often are cases where faith and prayer are both ineffectual, because God sees it will be prejudicial to the patient's salvation to be restored; and therefore all faith and prayer on such occasions should be exerted on this

⁵⁷ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

⁵⁸ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

ground: “If it be most for thy glory, and the eternal good of this man’s soul, let him be restored; if otherwise, Lord, pardon, purify him, and take him to thy glory.”

Clarke: And if he have committed sins—So as to have occasioned his present malady, they shall be forgiven him; for being the cause of the affliction it is natural to conclude that, if the effect be to cease, the cause must be removed. We find that in the miraculous restoration to health, under the powerful hand of Christ, the sin of the party is generally said to be forgiven, and this also before the miracle was wrought on the body: hence there was a maxim among the Jews, and it seems to be founded in common sense and reason, that God never restores a man miraculously to health till he has pardoned his sins; because it would be incongruous for God to exert his miraculous power in saving a body, the soul of which was in a state of condemnation to eternal death, because of the crimes it had committed against its Maker and Judge. Here then it is GOD that remits the sin, not in reference to the unction, but in reference to the cure of the body, which he is miraculously to effect.

LAN: “The prayer offered in faith” does not refer to the faith of the sick person, but to the faith of the people praying. God heals, faith doesn’t, and all prayers are subject to God’s will. But our prayers are part of God’s healing process. That is why God often waits for our prayers of faith before intervening to heal a person.

Chuck Smith: It is interesting that there seems to be a correlation here between sickness and sin at least in the deliverance of sickness and in the forgiveness of sins. And it is interesting how many sicknesses can be related to sin in a very direct way. And yet on the other hand, let me say that I think that it is a very dangerous error to try to relate all sickness to sin. And you are then putting yourself in the position of a judge and you're judging wrongly many times, saying, "well they've got it coming to them." And I think that is cruel and dangerous to say that all sickness is the result of sin in a person's life. Not at all.

ESV: the prayer of faith. Not the faith of the sick person but the faith of those praying. In this instance, James mentions no requirement for the sick person to exercise faith, only that he call for the elders. Christians who are ill often find personal prayer difficult. **Will save** perhaps carries a double meaning here: (1) the sick person will be physically healed (one meaning of Gk. *sōzō*), and/or (2) the sick person may also experience spiritual salvation (another meaning of Gk. *sōzō*), or growth in the blessings of salvation (**sins ... forgiven**). As seen throughout the Gospels, Jesus healed both physically and spiritually, and the same double connotation may be present here as well. James is not teaching that all illnesses will be healed if people would simply call on the elders, or try to make themselves have enough faith, or pray with enough conviction. Healing, when it does come, is always a gift from God, who is sovereign over all circumstances, including sickness and health. It does not follow, therefore, that lack of faith on the part of the sick person is the reason that the sick person may not be healed. (On the gifts of faith and of healing, see note on 1 Cor. 12:9.) Some interpreters suggest that James is referring to the promise of the resurrection rather than physical healing. **If**, in the phrase “if he has

committed sins,” implies that not all sickness is connected to specific sins, though James seems to expect that some sickness is (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30).

Note here that the healing source is prayer and not the anointing with oil. Furthermore, that prayer should be offered up in faith that ultimately recognizes and desires the fulfillment of God's will, not our own.

Did miraculous healing end with the apostolic age? All healing is ultimately miraculous, from the tiny scratch to the devastation of the body due to illness and trauma. Is this verse a medical credit card which can be used to assure healing in all instances of our desire? We do not know God's complete and ultimate purpose for our lives. We know only that we do not want to be afflicted. God has a purpose behind all of our experience, and calls upon us to place our trust in Him alone.^[2]

Some notes about modern "Faith Healing": Many will take these two verses out of the context of God's holy and true attributes, and use them to justify the practice of healing-on-demand. Some problems encountered with this philosophy include:

- **Healing-on-demand rejects God's ultimate purpose for the afflicted,**
- **healing-on-demand treats God as our servant who will obey our commands.**

If faith-healing practices were useful as practiced by these why do any faith healers experience sickness? How would any faithful man die? Total faith healing leads to earthly immortality. We Christians would have to jump in front of trains to die, and that might not even work. Often the demand of healing amounts to no more than the testing of God, and results in no more than the evaluation of the supposed lack of faith in those who are not "miraculously" healed.

Often our affliction is a direct consequence of our sin or the sin of others. For example, we may abuse our bodies through smoking, overindulgence, sloth, or a variety of other means. A prayer in faith recognizes this sin as sin. It then seeks and receives forgiveness for that sin, but God requires repentance. That repentance alone can be used of God to provide healing from a wide variety of life-choice induced illnesses.⁵⁹

James 5:16

Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

This seems to confirm that the case in view was one who was under church discipline (1 Cor 5).

Eusebius called James “Old Camel Knees” because he spent so much time in prayer.

[Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed] Twofold secret of bodily healing:

1. Confess your faults one to another
2. Pray one for another, that you may be healed (Matthew 18:19; Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24)

⁵⁹ http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

[**faults**] Greek: *paraptoma* (GSN-3900), a falling aside when one should have stood upright; a transgression; a moral fall (Romans 11:11).

[**effectual**] Greek: *energeo* (GSN-1754) (note, [□] 1 Thes. 2:13). It could read, "a prayer of a just man wrought in him by divine energy."

Clarke: Confess your faults one to another—This is a good general direction to Christians who endeavor to maintain among themselves the communion of saints. This social confession tends much to humble the soul, and to make it watchful. We naturally wish that our friends in general, and our religious friends in particular, should think well of us; and when we confess to them offenses which, without this confession, they could never have known, we feel humbled, are kept from self-applause, and induced to watch unto prayer, that we may not increase our offenses before God, or be obliged any more to undergo the painful humiliation of acknowledging our weakness, fickleness, or infidelity to our religious brethren.

It is not said, Confess your faults to the ELDERS that they may forgive them, or prescribe penance in order to forgive them. No; the members of the Church were to confess their faults to each other; therefore auricular confession to a priest, such as is prescribed by the Romish Church, has no foundation in this passage. Indeed, had it any foundation here it would prove more than they wish, for it would require the priest to confess his sins to the people, as well as the people to confess theirs to the priest.

Clarke: And pray one for another—There is no instance in auricular confession where the penitent and the priest pray together for pardon; but here the people are commanded to pray for each other that they may be healed.

LAN: Christ has made it possible for us to go directly to God for forgiveness. But confessing our sins to each other still has an important place in the life of the church. (1) If we have sinned against an individual, we must ask him or her to forgive us. (2) If our sin has affected the church, we must confess it publicly. (3) If we need loving support as we struggle with a sin, we should confess that sin to those who are able to provide that support. (4) If, after confessing a private sin to God, we still don't feel his forgiveness, we may wish to confess that sin to a fellow believer and hear him or her assure us of God's pardon. In Christ's kingdom, every believer is a priest to other believers (1 Peter 2:9).

one to another—not to the priest, as Rome insists. The Church of England *recommends* in certain cases. Rome *compels* confession in all cases. Confession is desirable in the case of (1) *wrong* done to a neighbor; (2) when under a troubled conscience we ask *counsel* of a godly minister or friend as to how we may obtain God's forgiveness and strength to sin no more, or when we desire their intercessory prayers for us ("Pray for one another"): "Confession may be made to anyone who can pray" [BENGEL]; (3) *open* confession of sin before the Church and the world, in token of penitence. Not *auricular* confession.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Jas 5:16). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

McGee: “And the prayer of faith shall save the sick.” I believe you are to call on God’s people to pray for you when you are sick.

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” We are to confess our *sins* to God but our faults one to another. If I have injured you, then I ought to confess that to you. But I will not confess my sins to you, and I do not want you confessing your sins to me. You are to confess that to the Lord. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). I cannot forgive sins; neither can any clergyman forgive sins—only God can do that.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James was a great man of prayer. He was called “Old Camel Knees” because, having spent so much time on his knees in prayer, his knees were calloused. He speaks now of another great man of prayer, Elijah (*Elias* is the Greek form of *Elijah*)—⁶¹

ESV: confess your sins to one another. Sometimes confession in the community is needed before healing can take place, since sin may be the cause of the illness (cf. 1 Cor. 11:29–30). **Pray for one another** is directed to all the readers of James’s letter and indicates that he did not expect prayer for healing to be limited to the elders (James 5:14). The **righteous** will have **great power** in prayer, as God grants their requests.

James encourages us to share with each other our needs, our afflictions, and even the confession of our sins. Why is it so helpful to be able to share our faults with one another? Certainly, by so doing we are sharing a very important need with one another so that we can help one another to overcome the conflict in our lives through love, support, and prayer. That is God’s purpose for us as we help one another as we stumble through some of life’s experiences.

Why is it typically so difficult for us to confess our sins one to another? The truth is simply that we often do not have enough trust in one another because of the limited expression of agape love in our relationships. If our relationships are characterized by judging, condemning and criticizing one another, one can only expect judgment, condemnation and criticism, leaving us without the love and support that we need when we need it the most. Christians often tend to require others to live up to a set of rules, and limit their relationships based upon those rules. Any time we place conditions on our love of one another we are exercising only a worldly phileo love, and not the unconditional agape love that God requires.

A second common impediment to sharing is found when people repeat to others statements that are made in confidence. Trust is destroyed by such behavior. When we cannot trust an individual to keep in confidence that which we share in confidence we cannot feel confident in “confessing our faults” one to another. It is not possible to effectively share our faults with one another so that we can pray for and support one another in an environment that lacks trust.

How do we earn the trust in one another that is necessary to be able to minister to one another in the manner that James advises? Earning trust will only come when we put away our self-centered ways and truly love one another. Through such love we can put

⁶¹ McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed.) (Jas 5:16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

away our critical spirit, and stand firm on the integrity that only God can provide for us when we depend wholly on Him. Then, our prayers for one another will be truly sincere. Note that the 13th verse directs Christians to pray for themselves; the 14th verse directs Christians to seek for the prayers of ministers or leaders; and the 16th directs Christians to pray one for another. There is little doubt of the priority that James places on the power of prayer. The sincere prayer of a righteous man is empowered by the Holy Spirit, a power greater than any other in the universe. Therefore, it is evident that a form of righteousness is paramount. No man can be righteous on his own, but rather is made righteous only by the mercy of God through Christ in his true desire for that which is of God, and a true disdain for that which is not.⁶²

James 5:17

Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

(“Elias” is the Greek form of Elijah).

[Where is the text for this? (1 Kings 17 - 18). The 3 ½ years are given by Jesus and James (here) in the NT! Cf. Luke 4:25. {Gentile election?}]

“Prayed earnestly” = “he prayed in prayer.” Many people do not pray in the prayers; they just mouth religious words and hearts are not in them.

[**Elias**] Elijah. His case is given to show that all men are alike in constitution and to encourage others to pray even for miracles (James 5:17-18; 1 Kings 17:1; 1 Kings 18:1,41-46).

prayed earnestly—literally, “prayed with prayer”: Hebraism for *prayed intensely*. Compare Lu 22:15, “With desire I have desired,” that is, earnestly desired. ALFORD is wrong in saying, Elias’ prayer that it might not rain “is not even hinted at in the Old Testament history.” In 1Ki 17:1 it is plainly implied, “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, *before whom I stand*, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but *according to my word*.” His prophecy of the fact was according to a divine intimation given to him in answer to prayer. In jealousy for God’s honor (1Ki 19:10), and being of one mind with God in his abhorrence of apostasy, he prayed that the national idolatry should be punished with a national judgment, drought; and on Israel’s profession of repentance he prayed for the removal of the visitation, as is implied in 1Ki 18:39–42; compare Lu 4:25.⁶³

⁶² http://www.biblicaltheology.com/jam/59_00_00.html

⁶³ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Jas 5:17). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Chuck Smith: Elijah was just like you. A man of like passions just like us. We usually read of these people in the Bible: Elijah, Elisha and Joshua and Moses and Paul and Peter. We usually think of them in a category that is sort of up here and I am down here. And we sort of think of the things that they did as completely unattainable by the common ordinary person. But Elijah was a man of like passions just like you, no different from you.

James 5:18

And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

After the famed confrontation with the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel, the nation still needed rain. He prayed and sent his servant seven times until a little cloud appeared and the rain came (1 Kings 18:41-45). Persistence is essential.

Cf. Rev 11:6; (v.3: 1260 days = 3 ½ years) [Fire from heaven: Luke 9:54]
God says what He means and means what He says!

Clarke: And he prayed again—This second prayer is not mentioned in the history in express words, but as in 1 Kings 18:42, it is said, He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees; that was probably the time of the second praying, namely, that rain might come, as this was the proper posture of prayer.

LAN: 16-18 The Christian's most powerful resource is communion with God through prayer. The results are often greater than we thought were possible. Some people see prayer as a last resort to be tried when all else fails. This approach is backward. Prayer should come first. Because God's power is infinitely greater than ours, it only makes sense to rely on it—especially because God encourages us to do so.

McGee: Can you imagine that? Elijah was a weatherman for three and a half years, and for three and a half years he held back the rain! It did not come until he prayed. You are the same kind of person Elijah was. Elijah wasn't a superman; he was "a man subject to like passions as we are." But he was a man who prayed with passion, and that is the kind of praying we need today.

ESV: Elijah illustrates how a **man with a nature like ours** could have the powerful prayer life of "a righteous person." The drought recorded in 1 Kings 17–18 was punishment on King Ahab and Israel for idolatry, and the **three years and six months** is probably derived from "in the third year" (1 Kings 18:1) as symbolic of judgment (half of seven; see Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:5).

James 5:19

Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

(“Err”, wander: Greek, plana,w, *planao*, from which we get the word “planet,” a heavenly wanderer.)

If Peter has been praying instead of sleeping, he might not have denied Him three times.

Evangelism, Results—Two marvelous results occur when one turns to God. First, that person is saved from death. Secondly, a multitude of sins are covered by the blood of Christ. In this light, to present the truth of our Lord to those who would turn from God is a vital and essential task.

[Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth] (Dake) Seven facts about backsliders:

1. It is possible for brethren or Christians to err from the truth and become unconverted (James 5:19; note, *Luke 22:32).
2. An erring Christian can be converted again (James 5:19-20; note, *Luke 22:32).
3. An erring Christian becomes a sinner again, if he sins (James 5:20; Romans 6:14-23).
4. An erring Christian incurs the death penalty again when he sins (James 5:20; Ezekiel 18:24; Romans 8:12-13; Galatians 5:19-21).
5. If the erring Christian is saved from his error, his soul will be saved again from death (James 5:20; 1 John 1:9; 1 John 5:16; Rev. 2:5).
6. If he repents and is saved again from death, his sins will be forgiven and hidden (James 5:20; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 2:5).
7. If he does not repent, he will be lost and will have to pay the penalty for sin (James 5:20; Romans 6:14-23; Romans 8:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:12; Ezekiel 18:24; *Hebrews 6:4-6, notes; *Hebrews 10:26-29, notes; *2 Peter 2:20-21).

The righteous saints must be vigilant in spotting anyone who **wanders from the truth**, namely, by not living in accord with the word of truth (1:18) as enunciated in this letter. Right belief is exhibited in right living (1:19–27).

James 5:20

Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Do believers need to be converted? Jesus said to Peter, “When thou are converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

It is important that we seek to win the saved!

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Mt 18:15). “Gained” means “won.” (Same as “get gain” in James 4:13).

Love shall cover a multitude of sins: James and Peter (1 Pet 4:8) applied this principle from Proverbs 10:12.

While the application here is to saving the straying brother, how much more does the lost sinner need to be brought to the Savior.

“Seeking the lost” is a frequent picture. In Luke 15, Jesus pictures the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.

In Zech 3:2 and Jude 23, the soul-winner is pictured as fireman pulling brands out of the burning. It may require the risks of love to snatch people from the fires of judgment.

LAN: 19-20 Clearly this person who has wandered from the truth is a believer who has fallen into sin—one who is no longer living a life consistent with his or her beliefs. Christians disagree over whether or not it is possible for people to lose their salvation, but all agree that those who move away from their faith are in serious trouble and need to repent. James urges Christians to help backsliders return to God. By taking the initiative, praying for the person, and acting in love, we can meet the person where he or she is and bring him or her back to God and his forgiveness.

LAN: The book of James emphasizes faith in action. Right living is the evidence and result of faith. The church must serve with compassion, speak lovingly and truthfully, live in obedience to God’s commands, and love one another. The body of believers ought to be an example of heaven on earth, drawing people to Christ through love for God and each other. If we truly believe God’s Word, we will *live* it day by day. God’s Word is not merely something we read or think about, but something we do. Belief, faith, and trust must have hands and feet—ours!

McGee: “Converteth the sinner from the error of his way.” Some expositors believe that this refers to a child of God who has gone astray. However, I believe it refers to an unsaved person who has not yet come to the truth.

“Shall hide a multitude of sins.” When he comes to a saving knowledge of Christ, his sins—though they be multitudinous—will be covered by the blood of Christ. The wonder of justification by faith is that once God has pardoned our sins, they are gone forever—removed from us as far as the east is from the west.

This is a wonderful conclusion for this very practical Epistle of James.

The one who “wanders from the truth” is either (1) a professing, though not genuine, Christian who is in danger of spiritual death, or (2) a brother in Christ who has fallen into sin and is in danger of the most severe discipline of the heavenly Father by the loss of physical life. Both realities are taught in Scripture and the interpretive step is not an easy one, though the content of the passage would seem to favor the first option. In v. 20, the wanderer is called “a sinner,” not a brother, and it is his “soul” which he is in danger of losing. “Soul” in this passage has the meaning of “life,” and more particularly, his “eternal life” that will forever continue in either heaven or hell. James may again be

echoing the words of the Lord Jesus, who said in Matt 16:26, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”⁶⁴

The Prayer of Faith. Speaking mainly of prayer, James restates some of the letter's key themes, including trials (cf. 1:2–4) and misuse of the tongue. The ultimate way to “tame” one's tongue (cf. 3:8) is to “pray for one another” (5:16).

ESV: Concluding Admonition. The style of James is abrupt, and there is no concluding greeting as in most NT letters. Instead, James calls the community to action in helping those who have fallen into the ethical sins dealt with in the book. Therefore, this closing section acts as a summary of various sins and their solutions.

Chuck Smith: And now Father, even as James has exhorted us, help us that we might be doers of the Word and not hearers only. And as we have heard these exhortations from Your Word tonight, and as we were listening Your Holy Spirit spoke to our hearts about different areas, to some of us about our tongues, to others about envying and strife, to others about the lust, to others about the friendship with the world and the desire for worldly things. Lord, even as Your Spirit has spoken to our hearts tonight, let us give heed to the Word and be doers of the Word. Help us, Lord, that we might indeed love one another, pray one for another, encourage and strengthen one another, use our tongues to bless and to strengthen each other and to encourage each other that we might indeed be the children of God and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. In Jesus name, Amen.

[healed] (Dake)

Thirty-five Facts about Sickness and Healing

1. Health was natural and eternal before the fall (Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2:17).
2. Both death and sickness originated with sin and are now being propagated by Satan (Romans 5:12-21; Job 2:6-7; Luke 13:16; John 10:10; Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8).
3. The first prophecy and promise of redemption included healing (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24).
4. The first recorded bodily affliction came through wrongdoing (Genesis 20:1-18).
5. The first recorded healing was by the prayer of a prophet (Genesis 20:7-17).
6. God made covenants with His people to heal them (Exodus 15:26; Exodus 23:23; Leviticus 26; Deut. 28; Matthew 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24; James 5:14).
7. God has always kept His covenants and has healed multitudes by spiritual means (Psalm 103:3; Psalm 105:37; Psalm 107:20; Acts 10:38).
8. Spiritual means to heal is all that God promised and commanded (Exodus 15:25; Psalm 91; Isaiah 58; Matthew 8:17; Matthew 13:15; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24).
9. Spiritual means were used in the wilderness by Israel (Exodus 15:26; Numbers 11:1-3; Numbers 12:13-16; Numbers 21:1-9; John 3:14).

⁶⁴ Believer's Study Bible

10. Healing was promised on condition of obedience (Leviticus 26; Deut. 28; Exodus 15:26; Psalm 91; Isaiah 58; James 5:14-15).
11. God permits Satan to afflict sinners and even His own people when they go astray, to bring them to repentance (Job 33:12-30; Psalm 38; Psalm 103:3; Numbers 12:13-16; Numbers 21:9; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:6-11; Galatians 6:7-8).
12. God always healed when lessons were learned and men repented (Genesis 20:7,17; Numbers 11:2; Numbers 12:13-16; Numbers 21:1-9; Job 33:12-30; Job 42:1-12; Psalm 103:3; James 5:14-15).
13. Health as well as healing was promised when men met certain conditions (Exodus 15:26; Leviticus 26; Deut. 28; Psalm 91; Proverbs 3:1-8; Proverbs 12:18; Proverbs 13:3; Proverbs 15:4; Proverbs 18:8,21; Isaiah 58; James 5:14; 1 Peter 3:10-11; 3 John 1:2).
14. Christ came to redeem from both sin and sickness (Isaiah 53; Isaiah 61:1-2; Matthew 8:17; Matthew 9:5; Galatians 3:13; Romans 8:11; Acts 10:38; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 3:8).
15. Healing is in fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 35; Isaiah 53; Isaiah 61:1-2; Matthew 8:17; Acts 10:38; 1 Peter 2:24; Matthew 13:15).
16. Jesus proved His Sonship by healing all men (Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 11:3-6; Luke 4:16-21; Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8).
17. Every disciple called and sent by Christ was given power to heal (Matthew 10:1-8; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 10:1-21; Acts 1:8).
18. Jesus commanded His disciples to become filled with power to heal before they went out (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8).
19. All disciples throughout this age are commanded to observe the same commands Christ gave the first disciples (Matthew 28:20; Acts 1:4-8; Mark 16:15-20).
20. Early disciples did confirm the Word by healing (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 2:43; Acts 3:1-12; Acts 5:2-16; Acts 6:8; Acts 8:7-13; Acts 11:19-22; Acts 14:3,27; Acts 15:4,12; Acts 19:11-12; Acts 28:9; Romans 15:18-19,29; 1 Cor. 16:10; Phil. 1:7; 1 Thes. 2:13; Hebrews 2:3-4).
21. The Holy Spirit was sent into the world to carry on the healing ministry (Acts 1:1-8; Acts 2:33; 1 Cor. 12; Hebrews 2:3-4).
22. Jesus promised every believer, not only ministers, power to do the works that He did (Matthew 17:20; Matthew 21:22; Mark 9:23; Mark 11:22-24; Mark 16:15-20; John 14:12-15; John 15:7,16; John 16:23-26; Acts 1:4-8).
23. Gifts of healing and other gifts are promised as the spiritual equipment of the church (1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; Romans 1:11; Romans 12:6-8; Romans 15:18-19,29; Hebrews 2:3-4).
24. Healing is part of the work of the church (Matthew 10:1-8; Luke 10:1-21; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:1-8; 1 Cor. 12; James 5:14-16).
25. Healing is provided as part of Christ's atonement (Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; Matthew 13:14-15; John 3:14; John 10:10; Romans 1:16; Romans 8:11; 1 Cor. 11:23-32; Galatians 3:13; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24; 3 John 1:2; cp. Exodus 15:26; Psalm 91; Psalm 103:3).
26. Healing is part of the children's bread and their promised right by virtue of redemption (Matthew 7:7-11; Matthew 15:22-28; Matthew 17:20; Matthew 21:22;

- Mark 9:23; Mark 11:22-24; Luke 13:16; John 3:14-16; John 14:12-15; John 15:7,16; John 16:23-26; 1 John 3:8,20-22; 1 John 5:14-15; 3 John 1:2).
27. Healing is one of the signs of the gospel to follow believers (Mark 16:15-20).
 28. Healing was not only for the Old Testament days (Exodus 15:26; Psalm 91; Psalm 103:3) and for the Millennium (Isaiah 30:26; Isaiah 33:24; Isaiah 35:1-10). It is also for this age, or the gospel is faulty and the new covenant worse than the old one (Matthew 8:17; Matthew 21:22; Mark 9:23; Mark 11:22-24; Mark 16:15-20; John 14:12-15; John 15:7,16; 2 Cor. 3:6-15; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; Hebrews 2:3-4).
 29. Healing proves that God's promises are true (2 Cor. 1:20; see above point).
 30. Healing is part of salvation, for the Hebrew and Greek words for "salvation" all imply the ideas of forgiveness, healing, health, and full deliverance from the curse (Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24).
 31. Healing can naturally be expected as part of the infinite care of God over His children (Matthew 6:10; Matthew 7:7-11; Matthew 17:20; Matthew 21:22; Mark 9:23; Mark 11:22-24; Luke 11:1-13; Luke 18:1-18; John 14:12-15; John 15:7,16; John 16:23-26; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:4-8; James 5:14-16).
 32. Healing is on the same basis as forgiveness of sins—prayer and faith (Matthew 9:1-7; Matthew 13:15; Matthew 21:22; Acts 28:27; James 1:4-8; James 5:14-16; Hebrews 11:6).
 33. Healing proves the resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:33; Acts 3:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 8:11).
 34. God has provided all necessary means of healing and complete defeat of satanic powers (2 Cor. 10:4-5; Ephes. 6:10-18; Mark 16:15-20; John 14:12-15; James 4:7; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 5:7-9).
 35. Healing is always the will of God for His people who may: "ask what ye will" (John 15:7); "whatsoever" (Matthew 21:22; John 14:12-15; John 15:16); "anything" (John 14:14); "what things soever ye desire" (Mark 11:22-24); and "much more" than earthly parents would or could give their children (Matthew 7:7-11).

Thus, it is clear in Scripture that physical healing is provided for in the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament is based upon better promises than the Old Testament (Hebrews 8:6).