

Epistle of James XII Stir Up Treasure in Heaven

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I might mention something very interesting that Carl Franklin came up with in his studies in the book of Hebrews. It was probably at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles from the time of the confrontation of the prophets of Baal and Elijah when it ended the drought. They had the ceremony—at the Feast of Tabernacles—of pouring the water around the altar. That makes the pouring the water on the altar and the offering of Elijah even much more impressive. That was at the time of the evening sacrifice, which then shows that the water would be poured on after sunset, so it was really the last day of the Feast.

That means that the drought started on Passover. And because of the Baal worship and the sins of the children of Israel, God began the punishment on the Passover. In studying through that, and in going through the series in James, and then going into the book of Hebrews you think: How are these connected? Well, their connected this way: It's very likely that the problems that were happening in relationship to the book of Hebrews had to do with the Passover; had to do with the 14th vs the 15th Passover, and having to do with the Jews going back to taking animal sacrifices and rejecting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not bring the Kingdom when they wanted Him to bring the Kingdom. So, there are some very enlightening things there in the book of Hebrews.

How does this come in with the book of James? Let me show you. We find something that is very interesting and only happens in three books of the New Testament, and that is when you come to the book of James, the very last verse:

James 5:20 (KJV): "Let him know that he who converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sin." We all know that there's no 'Amen' there. Yet, every other book in the New Testament ends with an 'Amen' except James, Acts and 3rd John.

Comparing what is in the book of Hebrews and the problems in the book of James, and you go back and you understand what James said to Paul, 'Paul, go make these offerings over here at the temple. You see how many thousands were following Christ are still zealous for the Law. So that they will know that you are not saying that the Law itself is sin.'

That's basically the sum of what was being said. However, when you already have the sacrifice

of Christ, and you go back to offering animal sacrifices to replace that sacrifice of Christ, then that can become sin. You're no longer looking to Christ Who's the greater sacrifice, you're looking to the animal sacrifice to do for you what only the sacrifice of Christ can do. Based on that:

1. Could it be that the Epistle of James was sent along with the Epistle to the Hebrews?
2. Why was not the author noted in the book of Hebrews?

They say they don't know who wrote it. However, it is in the style of Luke. Who did a lot of the scribing for Paul? *Luke!* Could the Apostle Paul—who was nearly killed in Jerusalem when they found out that he was there to make these offerings and the Roman guard had to come and save him and protect him from death—ever written a letter to the Jews in Jerusalem and have them even read it if they knew it came from him? *NO! Never, never happen!*

Paul is down in Italy^[corrected] where he's under house arrest protected from the Jews; James is still up in Jerusalem and says, 'Oh, we've got to solve this problem.' I'm sure there's communication between James and Paul, and with Luke right there with him. 'Here's how we'll do it. I will send a letter and then you write one, Paul, but have Luke write and don't put your name on it, and we can send it out to everyone.' We need someone with your technical knowledge of the Old Covenant and the sacrifices to be able to write to the Jews so we can pull them back from rejecting the sacrifice of Christ and going to the animal sacrifices again. It's possible, I don't know, but I just interject that as something to think about.

Hebrews 13:24: "Greet all your leaders, and all the saints. Those from Italy send greetings to you. May God's grace *be* with all of you. Amen" (vs 24-25).

Some Bibles say: 'Written to the Hebrews from Italy, by Timothy.' I don't think they would accept anything from Timothy, and Timothy was half-Greek/half-Jew anyway. Remember the problem they had with circumcision with Timothy. I would have to say it was written at the time of Paul's first imprisonment when Luke and Timothy were with him, and if the book of James was a cover-letter for Hebrews, this might help explain the whole flow of things and why there is so much stress upon the Passover and Atonement and the sacrifice of Christ, and so forth.

James 4:13: “Now listen, those of you who say, ‘Today and tomorrow we will go into such a city, and we will spend a year, and we will conduct business and make a profit.’ You do not even know what *will happen* tomorrow! For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears. Instead, you *ought to* say, ‘If the Lord wills we will live, and we will do this or that.’ But now you boast in your own arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, *if* anyone knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin” (vs 13-17).

James 5:1: “Come now, *you* rich men, weep! Howl over the miseries that *are* coming upon *you*! Your riches have rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and *your* silver have been eaten away, and their corrosion will be a testimony against you, and will consume your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth for *the* last days. Listen! The wages of the workmen who harvested your fields, which have been withheld by you, are crying out; and the cries of those who reaped have entered into the ears of *the* Lord of hosts” (vs 1-4).

The ‘Lord of hosts’ refers to in the Old Testament the Lord of ‘sabaoth’—host or leader of the armies. It’s interesting he’s saying ‘entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts.’ In other words the armies of God are going to come against you.

Verse 5: “You have lived in luxury upon the earth, and *you* have lived in self-gratification; you have nourished your hearts as in *the* day of slaughter. You have condemned *and* you have killed the righteous, *and* he does not resist you” (vs 5-6).

Now, one thing as we look at this section we just read. He does not address them as ‘brethren.’ Notice v 7: “Therefore, brethren...” Changes the whole subject.

Let’s go back and look at these and why would the Apostle James have anything to do with business or merchandising in the book of James. You read that and you think: Why is he saying this?

Let’s understand about merchandising. Who were some of the earliest and most successful and traveling businessmen even here in America? *The Jews!* In their little covered wagons going out and selling pots and pans and this and that and the other thing. It’s the same thing. They would load up their caravans and go into the city and they would buy and sell and make money. It was a very common thing for them to do.

James 4:13: “Now listen, those of you who say, ‘Today and tomorrow we will go into such a city, and we will spend a year, and **we will conduct business and make a profit.**’” What he’s talking about here is not being against profit. It’s not saying that now we’re all going to be communists.

What kind of profit do you suppose that he would be talking about here? Not necessarily spiritual profit, but ultimately you want to have spiritual profit, that’s right, that’s true. What kind of profit were they looking to do? *They were looking to have physical profit!* That’s the ultimate conclusion, spiritual profit; but he’s talking about the wrong kind of profit. And what have so many of the Jewish businessmen been accused of? *The wrong kind of profit!* He dealing with a Jewish problem. ‘We’re going to go out and we’re going to skin these Gentiles.’ That’s what it is!

The main, important problem that he’s talking about is *not including God in the planning of your physical life!* I look at that and I say, ‘O boy, there’s a dagger in my heart.’ How many times have I done things that have gone wrong where I didn’t pray about it when I should have and say, ‘O God, bless me in this effort and help me to see what I’m doing, whether it’s right or wrong.’ Instead of getting strung out here and then find out when you’re down the road, Ut oh, I didn’t include God in this and now it’s not going right.’ That’s what he’s saying here. You don’t know what tomorrow is going to be.

Let’s look at a couple of things concerning planning with and without God. Let’s look at the *wrong kind* of merchandising. This is the kind of merchandising that Satan has inspired and does. We’re seeing it happen right here today—that same kind of spirit. What kind of merchandising does Satan like to do? What can we think of today, where there is merchandising of products that are done in such a way that take advantage of the worker? Not necessarily unions. There are bad unions; there are some unions that are needful, worse than that.

How many remember what happened in Guam. In Guam there are Chinese nationals from the mainland where the companies have come to Guam and they bought property and they have their factories there for whatever they do—making clothes or parts or whatever. What is Guam? *A U.S. possession!* What can you claim if you make something in Guam? *Made in the good ole USA!* Tax free duty! They brought in workers from the mainland of China and what did they do? They had them in this exclusive area to work, which was a slave camp! They paid them like \$20 a month! In addition to having slave labor in the prisons in China.

Then they turned around and say, ‘We’re going to sell this at a good, cheap price. That’s the kind of manufacturing and merchandising that is based upon sin. A fair wage for fair labor, for good work, for a fair profit is right. We will see that God even encourages us to do that. But, here is Satan’s

activity, we won't go through the whole account of Lucifer and being kicked out.

Ezekiel 28:17: "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty..." We are talking about lifted up hearts here in business. 'We're going to this, we're going to do that, we're going to do the other thing.' If you trust in your own beauty, you're what? *Vain!* You're trusting in what? *Yourself!* That's exactly what he's talking about here with this kind of merchandising, *you're trusting in yourself.*

So the final analysis is even in what we consider the mundane part of our life, we need God's blessing in it.

"...you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness. I will cast you to the ground; I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you. By the multitude of your iniquities, by the unrighteousness of your trade... [merchandising] ...you have profaned your sanctuaries; therefore I brought forth a fire from your midst; it shall devour you, and I will bring you to ashes upon the earth, before the eyes of all who see you" (vs 17-18).

Let's go and see the fulfillment of the crashing of the wrong merchandising system in the world. It's called Babylon the Great. What was Babylon noted for? What was Sodom noted for? *Wealth, beauty, goods and services, art and craft, and all of this!* Is this not the epitome of the businessmen in the world, making their profit and extorting it upon our back and our lives and our being? *Yes!* Or they sell you something that doesn't work, or is inferior? *Here it is, Rev. 18!* It's talking about Babylon the Great and all the things that are going on there.

Revelation 18:7: "To the degree that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, give to her as much torment and sorrow. For she says in her heart, 'I sit a queen enthroned, and am not a widow; and in no way shall I experience sorrow.' For this very reason, her plagues shall come in one day..." (vs 7-8). Isn't that what James says? You don't know what tomorrow's going to bring; you don't know.

"...death and sorrow and famine; and she shall be burned with fire; for the Lord God, Who executes judgment upon her, *is powerful!*"

That ties right in with Ezek. 28. You can read some of the other accounts there about the trading and the merchandising and the ships of Tarsus and the gold of Ophir. All of those things all tie in with it. What are they doing right now? General Motors, oh poor Gen. Motors, they've got to close down. No, they deliberately planned it. They deliberately did not improve their product. They deliberately did not improve their plants. They

deliberately took advantage of the workers. Now they are just forced to go to Mexico where they have near slave labor. They can pay them \$2/hour, where in America— with all the benefits—it cost them \$50/hour. Same thing!

Now, all of these families dependent upon this are now put out of work. Why? Because of greed, because of sin; all of these planned things to take advantage of people so they can make a profit. Listen, Gen. Motors can afford to lose \$4-billion in a year. They just let it accumulate so they would have an excuse to do what they want to do. Could they not have improved their cars ten years ago? *Certainly!* Just all part of this big Babylonian system. By the way, did you know that most of the Ford Escort motors that are the same ones that are in Mazda? Made by the Mazda Corp., which Ford Motor Co. owns 40% of the stock.

That's why this is here, v 9: "Then the kings of the earth who have committed fornication with her and have lived luxuriously will weep and lament for her..." Sounds like the congress, they got caught in the 'rubber-gate scam.' They're all bewailing and moaning. 'Yes, some of us have been thrown into jail for bouncing a check, but oh, I've only done this 800 times,' says Bob Davis of Michigan, 'please forgive me!' Or Barbara Boxer: 'I am for fiscal responsibility and no debt.' What happens? It crashed in on her!

"...weep and lament for her..." (v 9). How about the one man who wrote a bad check and the police came and arrested him, handcuffed him, took him off and he spent three years in jail for a \$695 check. Yet, the grossness of the congressmen back there writing checks in the six-figures! It's going to happen worse for Babylon. What has Babylon done to all the nations of the world? *Got them all in debt! Government debt! Government spending!* Then we have to tax the people, so now we need a Federal Reserve. Every nation in the world has a central bank, all owned by the international bankers, who are all controlled by the big elite of the world, who all then are controlled by Satan the devil! That's the way it is, and isn't it going to be so easy when *the mark of the beast* comes.

That's how *the beast* is going to be able to come in power and this Babylon the Great is going to grip the whole world, because all nations are indebted. They can't get out of it! Then we have this obscene congress and this obscene President. That's all a part of the Babylonian system. Are they enslaved? *Yes!* Is the nation enslaved? *Yes!*

"...and lament for her when they see the smoke of her burning. They will stand far off for fear of her torment, saying, "Woe, woe, the great

city Babylon, the mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.” And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, because no one will buy their merchandise anymore” (vs 9-11). *Hooray! A sudden end to the whole thing!* You’ve got to destroy the whole system! You can’t repair this system! That’s why it’s going to have to be destroyed!

Verse 12: “*The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and every article of ivory, and every article of rare wood, and brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour...*” (vs 12-13). This sounds like World Imports. You walk in there and you can smell all these things when you walk in.

“...and wheat, and cattle, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and *the* souls of men. For the ripe fruits that your soul desires will depart from you, and all the rich things and the bright things will depart from you, and you will not find them any more. The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, will stand far off because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning” (vs 13-15). What a fulfillment of James 4-5.

Verse 16: “And saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, which *was* clothed with fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great wealth has been destroyed.’ And every shipmaster, and all traveling in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, will stand far off. And they will cry out as they watch the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What *city is* like this great city?’ And they will throw dust on their heads, and cry out, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, by which all who had ships in the sea were made wealthy through *the* abundance of her costly things! For in one hour she has been destroyed.’ Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you Holy apostles and prophets; for God has executed judgment upon her for your sakes” (vs 16-20).

Note Matt. 6—there are two very important things that relates about today and tomorrow.

- v 11: Pray every day ‘give us this day our daily bread’
- v 24: ‘no man can serve God and mammon’

Then he says ‘consider the lily of the field and all that sort of thing.

Matthew 13:22—talks about one of the most difficult things that people have to understand and

discern:

- How would you feel if you had \$10,000 cash in your purse or billfold vs how you would feel if you didn’t have a single penny? *You would feel secure and insecure!*
- What is that security?

That security is a *false* feeling. Just imagine how quickly the difference between security and insecurity would be if after you had the \$10,000 and you felt great and marvelous and you’re going to do this and that and the other thing, and then you run down to the bank and they give you the bad news: all of this is counterfeit! Where did you get it? *Immediate insecurity!* Especially if they come and lay the handcuffs on you.

Matthew 13:22: “And the one who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches...” That’s the big thing about profit and money and riches. You have a deceitful security because of what it represents in your hands to do things for you. So therefore, that’s why James is saying: don’t go say you’re going to make a profit, you’re going to do this, you’re going to do that, you’re going to do the other thing, because you don’t even know what tomorrow’s going to bring. That’s not to say we’re not to plan. That’s not to say we’re not to have right fiscal responsibility.

This is always something that is true, Luke 16:8: “And the lord praised the unrighteous steward, because he had acted prudently. For the children of this world are more prudent in their own generation than the children of light.” *In business affairs!*

I’ve seen this so true; happen over and over again! How many businesses that people who are in the Church fail? Not because they don’t try; not necessarily because it’s their fault. *They are just not wise in the way of merchandising in this world!* The biggest difficulty that people will have is that in order to run a business honestly you can’t run it in the world.

Then he goes on and says, v 9: “And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness...” Not that you’re going to partake in evil things, but because you may need a job or you may need something don’t cut off everybody in the world totally. There’s at least some value to you that’s going to come of it.

“...so that, when you fail, they may receive you into the **age-lasting** dwellings” (v 9). Not everlasting, but ‘age’ lasting, from the time of Christ until He returns, which then affects your life as long as you live.

Some people will say: How are these people, who are crooked, living in the world of merchandising going to make it into heaven? 'How are they going to get me into heaven?' is what a Protestant would say. That's not what it means. "...age-lasting dwellings"—in other words for your own living you'll be able, from people in the world, make enough money to survive even in tough times. That's what it's talking about here.

Verse 10: "The one who *is* faithful in *the things that are* least is also faithful in much; and the one who *is* unrighteous in *the things that are* least is also unrighteous in much." Can you believe it! The week I'm giving this sermon is the week that Congress got caught! That is amazing!

Verse 11: "Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true *riches*? And if you have not been faithful in that which *is* another's, who will give to you your own?... [that sounds like the Congressional Bank] ...No servant is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and he will love the other; or he will hold to *the* one and will despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.' Now the Pharisees, who were also covetous, heard all these things; and they ridiculed Him. And He [Jesus] said to them, 'You are those who justify themselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination before God'" (vs 11-15). Notice how James' writing concerning these things are right smack on the dot.

Now, let's look at some proper business things we're to do, Luke 19, the parable of the talents and the pounds. This is an interesting one here, too. Here is an example to show that even a tax collector—whom we all do not care for—can be doing what is right. This is Zaccheus.

Luke 19:8: "Then Zaccheus stood *and* said to the Lord, 'Behold, the half of my possessions, Lord, I give to the poor...'" What was he doing with his wealth? He was doing what was right! That's also what James was talking about; he said the 'workers you've deprived of, etc.

"...and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I return fourfold" (v 8). That's follows along with the Biblical principle: If a man steal sheep and it be found in his hand alive, he shall restore fourfold. If they be dead, he shall restore fivefold. So, he's following a Biblical principle here.

Verse 9: "And Jesus said to him, 'Today, salvation has come to this house, inasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.' Now, as they were listening to these things, He went on to

speak a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they thought that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. Therefore, He said, 'A certain nobleman set out to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and to return. And after calling ten of his servants, he gave to them ten pounds, and said to them, "**Trade until I come back**"'" (vs 9-13). That is work, do with it, increase it.

Verse 14: "But his citizens hated him and sent an ambassador after him, saying, 'We are not willing to have this man reign over us.' And it came to pass that when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he directed that those servants to whom he had given the money be called to him, in order that he might know what each one had gained **by trading**" (vs 14-15).

- right trading
- right merchandising
- right business principles involved

Verse 16: "And the first one came up, saying, 'Lord, your pound has produced ten pounds.' Then he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' And the second one came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made five pounds.' Then he also said to this one, 'And you be over five cities.' But another came, saying, 'Lord, behold your pound, which I kept laid up in a handkerchief. For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man. You take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow.' Then he said to him, 'Out of your *own* mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant! You knew that I am a harsh man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow'" (vs 16-22).

Why? *Because if you put God into the equation, He can bless you in those things that you can't see*, which appears that God is an austere man when you try and go out and do it on your own. Or it appears that nothing is going to happen from what you're doing when you go out and do it on your own. If you haven't asked God to bless it, how can God bless it?

{Rev. 3:1-9, referring to the Church at Sardis, which is nearly dead.} Here's the minimum:

Verse 23: "Then why didn't you deposit my money in the bank, so that at my coming I might have received it with interest?"

So, the principle of a nominal or reasonable amount of interest is okay. Usury refers to that which gets into the 18, 20, 30—and even some of the records from Babylon shows 40-percent—interest per year. Some of the clay tablets where they're merchandizing of Babylon—*40% interest!* I

wonder if those were the Mafia records of old Babylon—who knows! Makes you wonder!

- this was a minimum
- this shows a right principle
- this shows things done in a right way

Verse 24: “And he said to those who were standing by, ‘Take the pound from him, and give *it* to the one who has ten pounds.’ (And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten pounds.’)... [Is God a Communist? Does everybody get equal treatment? *No! No!*] ...For I tell you that to everyone who has, *more* shall be given; but the one who does not have, even what he has shall be taken from him. Moreover, bring my enemies, those who were not willing *for* me to reign over them, and slay *them* here before me” (vs 24- 27).

There are several other places which also tells us about what God is going to do in situations like that: ‘The last shall be first and the first shall be last.’ It’s going to be upon an individual effort and upon God’s blessing, and only through His grace that we’re all going to make it into the Kingdom of God anyway!

Let’s see some Proverbs that show us the right way and the wrong way to conduct business. Of course, the book of Proverbs has an awful lot in it that has to do with how to conduct life on a day-to-day basis and, of course, there’s quite a bit to do about business and what kind of business and how to conduct your business. Here’s a great principle that we have, and this is something that we’re going to see that is absolutely true:

Proverbs 10:2: “Treasures of wickedness profit nothing... [That goes along exactly with what James is showing.] ...but righteousness delivers from death.”

(go to the next track)

Verse 3: “The LORD will not allow the soul of the righteous to famish...” That goes along with what David said, that he has never seen the righteous go hungry. They have founded a lot of these programs for the poor that if they get them turned to Christ—even in the way that the churches of this world have it—and they start ordering their lives aright, according to the Ten Commandments—they start doing the things that are right—within three years, even those in the middle of the ghettos, are out of poverty. So, it is true, God will not allow the soul of the righteous to famish.

“...but He thwarts the desire of the wicked” (v 3). It doesn’t matter how much that they gain. It doesn’t matter how much that they gather. It’s going to be cast away.

Here’s another lesson about how to conduct our work, our business, our lives, and so forth, v 4: “He who deals with a lazy hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” Very basic principle in everything that is done: There is no such thing as creativity without work, without perspiration first.

Another thing that’s important that I think is wrong with the educational society of this world today. They have the totally wrong philosophy toward creativity. The philosophy is let the children do anything they want to and let them be creative. That is wrong, because what they end being is chaotic.

- creativity needs discipline
- creativity needs direction
- creativity needs goals
- creativity needs accomplishment

So, therefore, what is really the thing to be done to prepare someone for being creative is that they must learn the basics: *rote memorization!* Then when they have all of the basic information, then when they have all of these things, then they can become creative in putting them together in new and interesting and better and different ways. That comes by having a diligent hand.

Verse 5: “He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son, but he who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame. Blessings *are* upon the head of the just, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked” (vs 5-6).

Proverbs 11:1—here’s something that we also know and is also true: “False balances *are* an abomination to the LORD, but a perfect weight *is* His delight.” They have it now that they can still weigh the thumb of the meat man in the meat package by saying that because of different contents and moisture, you can have 15 oz in a package and still label it 16 oz. Even the laws are worked out that way.

Verse 4: “Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.” This is absolutely true! Let’s apply this to the Laodicean Church who think that they have the riches and that’s going to get them through. But the day of wrath comes and it doesn’t get them through. Therefore, they have to really scurry around and do the things they need to do and so forth.

Here is something that we all ought to know. We need to crank this into our thoughts and our planning. This is not to say that we are not to plan. That’s not the implication here. The planning then has to be that we plan according to God’s will. And within our own particular lives and the things that

we do in our work, our employment and our job and our business and our home, God allows us a lot of different things that we can do, which are all within the realm of the will of God, because they're according to the commandments of God.

James 4:14: "You do not even know what *will happen* tomorrow!..." None of us do! Absolutely none of us know exactly what's going to happen tomorrow, but that doesn't mean you don't set the alarm to get up in the morning to get ready to go to work and then leave and go to work and arrive at work on time—whatever the situation may be. He's saying to those who say, 'Let's get our caravan and let's go for a year and let's conduct business, let's trade, let's make a profit and all of this referring to the illegal gain, to the ill-gotten gain, to the deceitful gain.

He's saying, 'Look, you don't even know what's going to happen tomorrow: "...For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor... [Your life is a vapor! It's here today, it's gone tomorrow!] ...vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears. Instead, you *ought* to say, 'If the Lord wills we will live, and we will do this or that'" (vs 14-15).

We're going to compare these two as we go through—between those who are so arrogant and proud that they think that they can totally plan tomorrow, totally know the future, totally work everything out vs those who understand that their lives are just a vapor and it could be gone tomorrow. If we seek the will of the Lord, then we're going to have the blessing of the Lord just like we found here in the Proverbs concerning conducting our business, conducting our lives, conducting our work—and all of those things all apply.

We're going to see that James 1 ties right back into the very first chapter, one of the very first things that James wrote in his epistle concerning what life is. Again, he says to the rich:

James 1:10: "And *let* the one who is rich *rejoice* in his humble condition..." In other words, to a rich person being a Christian really puts them into a humble condition. Why? Because in the congregation he is no greater than what he may consider the least of anyone. He gives this analogy:

"...because as *the* flower of *the* field, he himself will pass away; for the sun rises with *its* burning heat and dries up the grass, and its flower falls off, and its beautiful appearance perishes. In the same way also shall the rich man wither in his pursuits" (vs 10-11). That is obviously if he is not putting God first.

We saw the example of Zaccheus who obviously was putting God first, who was doing

what he should have been doing with the money, with the funds, with his income and everything that he was receiving.

Let's see some more concerning how we need to conduct our lives. There's another thing, too, that is really an attitude today. It's always been an attitude, but it's certainly being played on in this political year. Somehow the rich are always terrible and evil. If we only had their money then we would be better. That's not exactly Biblical. Let's see a couple of things on how we are to conduct our lives. Here's what we need to do living in this world. We see it so much around us on every side.

Psalms 37:1: "Do not fret yourself because of evildoers, and do not be envious against the workers of iniquity." That is, 'Oh, look at all the money they have. Oh, they got the cars. They have the houses and the clothes. When they walk down the street everybody recognizes them. It would be so nice.' Well, when you pull back the veil on the lives of a lot of rich people, you find that their lives are really quite empty.

That's why he says, "...do not be envious against the workers of iniquity, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass; and wither as the green herb" (vs 1-2). That's just the whole theme that we have just covered in James 1 & 4.

Here's what we need to do, v 3: "Trust in the LORD, and do good..." It's kind of strange why that is always so hard to do. Since we know, we can agree, we're probably sitting there shaking our head:

- yes, life is but grass
- yes, I'm just a vapor
- yes, I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow
- yes, I know that life could be terminated:
 - ✓ I could have a heart attack
 - ✓ I could step out in front of car
 - ✓ I could fall off a cliff
 - ✓ I could be in a plane that would crash

— whatever the case may be

And yet, how many of us really, on the other hand, trust God? Since life is a vapor; since we are all grass—**why should we not trust God? That's exactly what the whole purpose that James is teaching here.** Same thing that we find in Psa. 37.

Verse 3: "Trust in the LORD and do good..." You may not make the profit of the wicked. You may not turn the merchandise that the wicked do. But, if you do good, *you're stirring up treasures in heaven*, riches where no one is going to get it and where 'moth and rust does not consume it.'

"...dwell in the land, and cherish

faithfulness.... [God is going to take care of you] ...Delight yourself in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

- What is the greatest desire of our heart that we ought to have?
- To be in the Kingdom of God? *Yes!*

And to be in the Kingdom of God then means that *we are going to have the true riches!* Not just the riches that come and go, but *the riches which last for eternity!*

Let's also see something extremely important even in the attitude of David that he had toward himself even being king:

Psalms 16:1: “Preserve me, O God, for in You do I take refuge.” Again, that trust. That trust comes how? *By bringing God into your life, even in the mundane business things that you do!*

Verse 2: “I have said to the LORD, ‘You are my LORD; I have no goodness apart from You.’ As for the saints in the earth, ‘They are the excellent ones in whom is all my delight’” (vs 2-3).

Verse 7: “I will bless the LORD Who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the nights.” That means

- he meditates at night
- he thinks of God at night
- he asks God to direct his life and so forth

Verse 8: “I have set the LORD always before Me...” Doesn't this sound like a very familiar Scripture we're supposed to memorize? *Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all of these physical things will be added to you* (Matt. 6).

“...Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore, My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices; My flesh also shall rest in safety” (vs 8-9). Here's a prophecy of Jesus, in the life of Jesus and all that He went through.

Here's the promise that was given, v 10: “For You will not abandon My soul to the grave; neither will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will make known to Me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (vs 10-11). This is what we really need to understand in our lives so we can apply what James is teaching.

Psalms 37:4: “Delight yourself in the LORD...” Tie that in with Isa. 56 & 58 where it talks about the Sabbath; especially Isa. 58:13 where it says, ‘If you will call the Sabbath Holy, a delight unto the Lord.’ Whatever God tells us to do:

- is a delight
- it is right
- it is good
- it is Holy
- it is fine

—that's why we need to set everything according to the will of God.

Here's the promise, “...and He shall give you the desires of your heart. **Commit your way unto the LORD...**” (vs 4-5). What did James say? *If the Lord will!* Is that not committing your way to the Lord? *Yes, it is!*

“...trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth your righteousness like the light, and your judgment like the noonday” (vs 4-6).

‘Submit yourself to the Lord, humble yourself before God and He will raise you up in due time.’ All of these things all tie together with it.

Verse 7: “Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of him who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret yourself, it leads only to evil, for evildoers shall be cut off, but **those who wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth**” (vs 7-9). You think about that! And what kind of earth are we going to inherit? A glorified earth! We are going to inherit New Jerusalem!

All of the so-called riches of this world are NOTHING but a mirage in the desert. They come and go with the heat and they just disappear and evaporate and are gone. Isa. 40 ties right in with so much that James writes about and talks about. When you really think about it, James must have spent an awful lot of time writing the final draft of this epistle. Every word is weighty. Every word shows a tremendous knowledge of the Bible, and a tremendous application of it, and how to take that and to put into the everyday use of our lives.

Isaiah 40:3: “A voice is calling out in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken’” (vs 3-5).

And those days are coming, and when those days come, believe me, all of the wealth and all of the riches and all of the treasure and all of the fortification of the rich is going to be gone, utterly worthless and spent and of no account whatsoever.

Verse 6: “A voice says, ‘Cry!’ And he said, ‘What shall I cry?’ ‘All flesh *is* grass...” Does that sound like James? *Yes!* Does that not sound like Jesus? *Yes!*

“...and all the beauty of it *is* as the flower of the field.... [Is that not what we read in James? *Sure!*] ...The grass withers, the flower fades...” (vs 6-7). That is so true!

- time marches on
- we’re here today, gone tomorrow
- we’re a vapor that comes and goes

And when James says, ‘What is your life? It is even a vapor’ That means that your life is a vapor, obviously, compared to God and the power of God and the strength of God. Here it is, it’s so clear.

Verse 7: “The grass withers, the flower fades because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people *are* grass. **The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God shall stand forever**” (vs 7-8).

That’s why we need to bring God into our lives, even into the difficult times; *even into the things of our daily business and our daily work*, because then we are truly bringing everything that we’re doing into the realm of the blessing of God.

Let’s look at the true riches. Let’s see then, on the other hand, what God is holding out for us. Let’s understand something about the calling that God has given us, and how great it is and how marvelous it is and how absolutely fantastic that it is. As we sit here and think about this and talk about it and read these Scriptures and go through them, we need to ask ourselves: **Do you consider the things that you are going through to be worth entering into the Kingdom of God?**

I know there are a lot of people who think they had a difficult deal; *maybe you have*. I know there are a lot of people who think the minister treated them harshly; *I’m sure that is true*. I’m sure that you have had situations where that you’ve had to leave a church that you’ve been attending because they are leaving the Word of God; *I understand that*.

But we need to also realize that what is going to cause us to rise above those trials and difficulties—so that we can succeed, so that we can obtain to the Kingdom of God—is to have more in mind of what God is going to give us; to have more in mind the real wealth of our calling. Too many times we’re—because we’re so physical in what we can see, touch, taste and buy and sell and manipulate and use—to us that represents something that is real because it is now.

However, you can’t see the universe, but it’s real and it is there, and ***the things that are not seen***—being God, Christ, the Family of God, and the future that is going to be at the return of Christ—***clearly are the things of the greatest value!*** Those are the things that are eternal. Those are things that we are going to receive to have and to hold and to live by for all eternity. So, when we put in that perspective then we can change our attitudes concerning bringing God into our daily lives, because God is interested in the things in our daily lives. God wants to know the things that are in our daily lives. And whether we think that God knows or not, God knows everything. In the final analysis, who’s kidding whom?

Ephesians 1:4: “According as **He has personally chosen us** for Himself...” That is quite a statement. That one could represent a sermon or two in itself. But let’s stop and think about this for just one minute. The greatest Being in the universe—God the Father Himself—*has chosen you and me* and all of those that God calls, ***He has chosen in Christ Jesus***.

Just a little aside here:

- Is it not very foolish for an organization to say then that the only ones that really belong to God are in this corporate structure of this physical church?
- Are they not limiting God when they say that?
- Are they not trying to restrict God when they say that?
- Are they not trying to tell God whom He can and cannot choose?
- And whom He will and will not work with?

They may not realize it, but that’s exactly what they are doing. So, ***God the Father is the One Who chose us!*** What is that worth?

When I was in the real estate loan business and when I go to some of these loan or real estate offices or with different people that I meet, I have kind of a little standard joke that I always bring out. I say, ‘Well, where is that million dollar check that you said you would write for me?’ Of course, everyone gets a laugh out of it, and say, ‘If I write it, then I’ll split it with you.’

Or I also kid them and say, ‘What was the winning numbers in the lotto and did you win it?’ And they’d get a big laugh out of that. Or, did you send off for that Reader’s Digest Publisher’s Clearing House contest and did you win the \$10-million check? And they’d get a kick out of that.

A lot of people set their whole lives and their hopes on winning from gambling, winning from lotteries, winning from giveaways. ***But the greatest and most wealthy and most fantastic riches come from God, because He has chosen you!*** You put that in the forefront of your mind and keep that there.

“...chosen us for Himself before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love” (v 4).

If you're feeling kind of low and if you're feeling kind of down, and if you feel that James is 'stabbing me in the heart' with all of these things, because 'I find myself falling so short.' Listen, ***with the grace of God you stand before Him blameless!*** You're not going to be out seeking to do evil, that's for sure. But because of the conviction of sin that you have, and because of your own inadequacies and shortcoming—and I find myself in that, too, so I'm preaching to me just as well as you—***that we stand before Him Holy and without blemish, before Him in love!***

“...before *the* foundation of *the* world in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love; having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will” (vs 4-5).

God Who is love—Who is the Author of love, giving, serving, caring, kindness, goodness, and every wonderful adjective that we could praise God with—***is going to take care of His Family!***

He chose us “...for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will... [and that means His own will and desire] ...to *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; in Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (vs 5-7).

Let's understand how important the riches of the grace of God are. ***No amount of money in the world can buy it!*** Therefore, it is the most expensive thing that can be. And yet, in the contradictions to the human mind, it is the cheapest because it's free. However, the cost, on the other hand, is still the greatest, *because it cost the life of Jesus Christ*, the only begotten Son of God, to forgive your sins. *It cost you your life* to be buried in Christ, so that you may be partaker of these riches.

If we can keep all of these things in mind, and understand these, then we can get more of perspective of how evil that this whole business world is and the whole atmosphere is and all of these things are compared to what God has for us.

Verse 17—here's his prayer: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him.” There is the greatest insider trading you could ever want. That you have the knowledge of God and the revelation of Him.

Verse 18: “*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened...” That's why God is so angry and upset at so many ministers and churches that cut this off from people.

I see this so often: that people who have been baptized 10, 15, 20, 30 years or more, have not been taught; do not know God's way the way they ought to. They want to, but they haven't been taught, because the ministers have been so interested in the politics and the religion of churches—numbers, money, cars, homes and all of the things that James says is just going to pass away—***that they've totally neglected the true wealth of God, the spiritual things that they need to be teaching the brethren!***

After all that is what we need to do: to teach the brethren to grow in grace and knowledge and all grow together. I know that one of the most exhilarating things that you can ever experience in your life is when you are studying the Word of God and BING! *the light shines and you understand!* You grasp it! Brethren, that's what we need to do. Keep our eyes on that!

Verse 18: “*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling... [tremendous and awesome and wonderful hope] ...and what *are* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

There's going to be the riches of His glory; the riches and the power of that glory. That is going to be given to the very sons of God, to those who are going to be in the Kingdom of God. After all, those are the true riches and those are the true, absolute marvelous things of God, which are going to last forever. It's not going to be like the grass or the flowers and dry up.

Here's what God wants; here's what Paul says he was praying that God would do for every one of us:

Ephesians 3:16: “That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory...” He's going to talk about the most wonderful and powerful and fantastic thing that there ever can be in your life, which is:

“...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... [because you're trusting in Him] ...*and* that being rooted and grounded in love...” (vs 16-18). That's what it has to be.

{note sermon series on the Epistles of John—in particular 1-John—and the love of God}
That is really something!

“...that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (vs 18-19).

That is the whole and complete plan of God, that, yes, we can be the very sons of God! Clothed with glory, spirit, wealth and righteousness.

Verse 20: “Now, to Him Who is able... [has the power] ...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, to Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen” (vs 20-21).

That, brethren, is what we need to focus into. If you are really seeking the true riches of God, that’s what we’ll focus in on.

I saw an advertisement the other night, the man said, ‘Ya’ll come to my free seminar and I will show you how to make all kinds of money and wealth and riches and I guarantee that you’re really going to make lots and lots of money.’ Showing all these people driving around in Lincolns and wearing diamond rings and expensive clothing and all this sort of thing. I said to myself, I know if you go to that seminar there’s a hook in it some place.

There is no hook, brethren, into God’s calling! He wants *you* totally—100%—absolutely completely so that He can do the following:

Colossians 1:26: “*Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations...” In other words, until Christ came no one even had the faintest idea of what God’s plan was or what it would entail or what God had in store for His saints.

“...but has now been revealed to His saints; to whom God did will to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (vs 26-27).

That I submit is the greatest, most wealthy, most wonderful, most expensive, greatest treasure that you could have in the world, which is ***Christ in you!*** Therefore, it doesn’t matter if your circumstances in the world are rich or poor, young or old. Whatever the situation, if Christ is in you that is the greatest wealth.

That’s why it’s so very, very important for us to realize and understand James 4:14: “You do

not even know what *will happen* tomorrow! For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears. Instead, you *ought to say*, ‘If the Lord wills we will live, and we will do this or that’” (vs 14-15).

Now, I want you put in your notes these Scriptures—with this thought in mind: The success of the world brings the glamour of people, but the success with God makes only temporary friends in the world. That’s true, because you have to love God first with all your heart, mind, soul and being, and then you have to do as Jesus said here:

- Matt. 4:4—man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.
- Luke 4:4—says the same thing
- Deut. 8:3—says the same thing
- We’re also in seeking the will of the Lord always put that first!

I call to your attention the example of Jesus just before He was arrested and then led off to be tried and crucified:

- Luke 22:42—nevertheless, Father, not My will but Your will be done
- Eph. 5:17—we’re also to be understanding and knowing the will of God

Colossians 3:17—here’s how we’re to conduct our lives in accordance with James 4:15—“And *in everything*—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him.” *Everything!*

That’s why when you ask God to bless your day, let it be a blessing indeed! Let it be according to the riches and fullness and the goodness and the grace of God!

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* (except where noted)

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 5:20
- 2) Hebrews 13:24-25
- 3) James 4:13-17
- 4) James 5:1-7
- 5) James 4:13
- 6) Ezekiel 28:17-18
- 7) Revelation 18:7-20
- 8) Matthew 13:22
- 9) Luke 16:8-15
- 10) Luke 19:8-27
- 11) Proverbs 10:2-3, 5-6
- 12) Proverbs 11:1, 4
- 13) James 4:14-15

- 14) James 1:10-11
- 15) Psalm 37:1-4
- 16) Psalm 16:1-3, 7-11
- 17) Psalm 37:4-9
- 18) Isaiah 40:3-8
- 19) Ephesians 1:4-7, 17-18
- 20) Ephesians 3:16-21
- 21) Colossians 1:26-27
- 22) James 4:14-15
- 23) Colossians 3:17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 6:11, 24; 25
- Revelation 3:1-9
- Isaiah 56; 58:13
- Matthew 4:4
- Luke 4:4
- Deuteronomy 8:3
- Luke 22:42
- Ephesians 5:17

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *Epistles of John*

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