

## Lesson Eleven — James Chapter Five, Part II: Fruit-bearing and Judgment

*Day One — Rich vs. Poor*

*Day Two — The Lord's Return*

*Day Three — Fruit-bearing in Relation to the Kingdom*

*Day Four — The Prayer of the Righteous Man*

*Day Five — Repentance*

We only have another two weeks of study in the Book of James. This New Testament book may be the most practical Christian living book you can find. James' first-century readers were scattered and living away from their homeland due of the persecution they had endured at the hands of fellow-Jews. James knew that they needed to put their faith into action if they were to reach their intended goal—the salvation of their soul.

Before we go on to the last section of James chapter five, we need to add a few ideas to the previous section. This will tie things together with this idea of *saving our souls*. As we study this week, be sure to ask the Holy Spirit to give insight into the deeper truths of God's Word. Ask Him to help you ***put aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness*** (clean out your ears so that you may hear Him properly), in order that you might ***in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls*** (Jas. 1:21).

Pray constantly to that end.

### Day One — Rich vs. Poor

As we begin today, reread James chapter five. Be sure to read it thoughtfully.

Now we will look afresh at the first section of chapter five.

#### James 5

**1** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. **2** Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. **3** Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! **4** Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has

**reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you.**

Last week we read a parable which Jesus spoke to His disciples. This parable was about a rich man who had the chance to be *rich towards God*, but he chose *not* to spend his energies on this goal. Instead, he focused on this present world. Please take a moment to re-read the parable on page 112-113.

What was this man's problem?

How does this parable and the above portion of James relate to each other? What is the lesson here?

See you tomorrow.

## Day Two — The Lord's Return

Today we are going to glance back into James and compare what he writes with something which Paul writes to Timothy. After James writes the reprimand at the beginning of chapter five concerning the rich man weeping and howling for the miseries about to come upon him, etc., he writes something that should be very encouraging to his readers who had given up everything and were being persecuted for their belief in Christ. Please notice throughout this last portion of the epistle James calls their attention to *fruit-bearing* in relation to *judgment*. He writes:

### James 5

**7 Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.**

What do you think James is intending his readers to understand here?

Paul writes some similar ideas to his son in the Lord, Timothy. The entire second chapter of II Timothy is printed below. Spend your study time today observing what Paul said to Timothy. You might want to make a list of the things Paul tells Timothy to do especially in view of the coming age.

### II Timothy 2

**1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. 3 Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. 5 And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hard-**

working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. 7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. 8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. 10 For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.

11 It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him;

12 If we endure, we shall also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful;

for He cannot deny Himself.

14 Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers. 15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. 16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from wickedness.”

20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. 21 Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. 22 Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

24 And the Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the

**knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.**

NOTES:

What specific things do you see in this chapter in II Timothy, which refers to living with a view toward the coming Kingdom?

Compare Paul's exhortations with the exhortation James wrote in James 5:7-8. What comparisons can you make?

## Day Three — Fruit-bearing in Relation to the Kingdom

In order to understand the remaining section of James, you must see it in the light of *fruit-bearing* in relation to *judgment*. Remember, too, that recipients of this letter would have most likely remembered Jesus withdrawing the offer of the kingdom of the heavens away from the Jews (their judgment) saying that He was going to offer it to a new creation (the church) who would *produce the fruit thereof* (Matt. 21:43).

Fruit-bearing becomes of utmost importance in a believer's life as he looks forward to coming judgment. Fruit-bearing and judgment are inter-connected and cannot be separated. Hence, we have James putting emphasis upon the idea of bearing fruit at the end of his letter with a view to the saving of the soul. Remember, it is at the judgment seat where a believer either realizes the salvation of his soul or doesn't realize it. Keep this in mind as you read the remaining section of his letter.

To get started today, please take the time to quickly read through James chapter five from your observation sheet. Look for verses that deal with fruit-bearing in relationship to judgment.

With the idea of *fruit-bearing* set forth in James 5:7, James tells his readers to be patient for the coming of the Lord. Why would he say this? His reason becomes obvious when you see the following verse.

### James 5

**7 Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. 8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.**

Why were they (are we) to be patient?

Then as we have seen, James gives an example to his readers of someone who patiently endured—the example of Job. We glanced at it on Day Five of last week’s homework, seeing that Job was twice-blessed for his endurance. A double-portion is one of the blessings a believer will receive through faithful endurance.

Now James moves on to practicality again. Keeping in mind fruit-bearing with a view to judgment, let’s continue reading.

**James 5**

**13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. 14 Is anyone among you sick? 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; 15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.**

Although James is writing to first century scattered saints, these are things we are to be doing as well. These are very practical things we are to do daily. Pray, pray, pray! Pray in all situations — in suffering, in joy, and in sickness. We should be doing these things with each other in the body of Christ.

Verse 14 specifically shows us what we are to be doing with those who are sick in our churches. Who is to call for the elders?

What are the elders to do?

But if after this step of obedience, what if God does not heal? What if He does not take away a difficult situation? Then we must concentrate on endurance, trusting the Lord through it. Paul had a similar situation. Look what his attitude about it was.

**II Corinthians 12**

**7 And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.**

Write out what Paul’s attitude was concerning this “thorn” which God refused to remove.

Seeing Paul as an example, what should be our attitude when God seems not to answer our requests?

The following passage sums up this message to us. We really must be careful how we walk in this present world, for there are great ramifications for us in the coming age.

**Ephesians 5**

**15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.**

What should be our daily habit?

Is the Lord speaking to you about anything right now? Why don't you write it down now so you won't forget?

## **Day Four — The Prayer of the Righteous Man**

We'll continue in James chapter five, picking up where we left off yesterday. Notice how vv. 13-15 are connected to vv. 16-18 by the use of the word *therefore*. In vv. 16-18, James gives us the example of Elijah praying about the earth's rains. This passage has also to do with a righteous man praying and the end result being that of fruit-bearing.

**James 5**

**13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. 14 Is anyone among you sick? 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; 15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.**

**16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit.**

What was the first thing James told his readers to do in v. 16?

What are some practical reasons for confessing our sins to one another?

Scripture gives us many warnings against coming to God with an unrepentant heart. Let's read a few.

**Psalms 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear;**

**Job 27:8** “For what is the hope of the godless when he is cut off, When God requires his life? 9 “Will God hear his cry, When distress comes upon him?

**Proverbs 15:8** The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.

**Proverbs 15:29** The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous.

**Proverbs 21:13** He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered.

**Proverbs 28:9** He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.

**John 9:31** “We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him.

What will be the outcome of someone who comes to God in prayer with an unrepentant heart?

After James tells his readers to confess their sins to one another (v. 16a), he then tells them to pray for one another for healing. Keeping v. 15 in context, is James referring to physical sickness, spiritual sickness, or both? Why do you think so?

Then James tells his readers something about Elijah, using him as an example. If you have time to read the story, you will find it in I Kings 7 and 18. It is a great story of faith in God’s power. But for our purposes here, look at what Elijah prayed for first (vv. 16-18). What was it?

I Kings 16:29ff reveals the reason Elijah prayed for no rain — it was for judgment to come upon Ahab, one of the worst kings of Israel. Ahab brought idol worship into Israel and was to be judged for it. For three and a half years it did not rain in the land. Then Elijah prayed for rains to water the earth again, bringing an end to the drought, and the result was that the earth could *bear its fruit* once again.

There are many things to learn from this story, but look at what James draws from this scenario. He deals with the prayer, which brought about the rain, so that the earth *could bring forth its fruit once again*. **This is in the context of James telling the believers how they are to pray for one another.** Relate v. 16 through 18 back to vv. 14, 15. These are not unrelated verses. How do you see these verses related to each other?

Based upon this example, how and why are we to pray for one another?

The Apostle Paul also deals with praying for the brethren in the way of fruit-bearing. Printed below is one instance. Underline vv. 5, 6, and vv.10, 11, and circle the words *bearing fruit*.

**Colossians 1**

**3** We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the Word of truth, the gospel, **6** which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth...

... **9** For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11** strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much! Are you striving to maintain righteousness before your God? Are you then praying for others in this respect, as well? You should be! Before closing today, why don't you do business with God? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what He would like for you to pray for at this moment. Write out your prayer, if you like.

## Day Five — Repentance

We ended our study time yesterday in the middle of a thought from James. We will pick up where we left off. Be sure to keep vv. 19, 20 in context, remembering what you learned yesterday about this passage. Perhaps you could skim yesterday's work for a quick review, especially the middle section of pg. 127.

Notice that there was a drought on the earth (the earth could not bear fruit) due to Ahab's sin. But then Elijah, who was a righteous man, prayed and the rains came, allowing the earth to bear its fruit once again. With that flow of thought in mind, read the last section of James chapter five again.

**James 5**

**13** Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. **14** Is anyone among you sick? 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; **15** and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

**16** Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. **17** Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. **18** And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit. **19** My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, **20** let him know that he



**who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.**

Rephrase the last phrase of v. 15 along with v. 16. What is the thought here?

After mentioning forgiveness of sin, James mentions a righteous man praying, giving Elijah as an example, with the end result being fruit-bearing. Now with that in mind, read vv. 19, 20.

In v. 20, who may stray from the truth, a believer or a non-believer?

And who is to turn him back? (Look at the last sentence in v. 16).

Relate this to what is said about Elijah and what he was able to do.

What will this righteous man accomplish in turning a brother back from the error of his ways?

Remembering what you have learned from the previous verses, which we have studied concerning the salvation of the soul, what would it mean that the righteous man would *save a soul from death*?

Keeping this passage united as one, what does fruit-bearing have to do with the saving of one's soul? (This is an important question to consider; don't take it lightly).

Below is a large passage from the gospel of Matthew which lays out a similar idea of turning a brother back. It is spoken by Jesus at a time when the disciples came to Him with a question. Read through this thoughtfully, noting the question asked by the disciples and the answer given by Jesus. Verse 12ff relates to our lesson today, but the context of this passage is valuable.

**Matthew 18**

**1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! 8 And if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to**

enter life crippled or lame, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out, and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the fiery hell. 10 See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven. 11 For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

12 “What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? 13 And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. 14 Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.

Before we go on in the passage to the section relating to a brother confronting another brother about sin, let's consider a few questions. State the question asked of Jesus by His disciples (v.1).

The word *greatest* <3187> in v. 1 implies great in rank, stature, level, or order. It is from the root of the Greek word *megas* <3173>. Look up these definitions if you like.

*greatest* <3187> <3173>

Is there any indication whatsoever that Jesus reprimands the disciples for wanting to know who will be the greatest in the kingdom?

In the days of Moses, do you remember who it was within the camp that placed stumbling blocks before the people causing them not to desire to go into the land (Num. 13)?

Then when Jesus came to the Jews as King offering the kingdom of the heavens to the Jews, what group of people *shut up the kingdom in the faces of men* (Mt. 23:13)?

It is very serious to cause anyone to stumble and fall away from entering into the kingdom! (Remember *entering into the Kingdom* is **not synonymous with** *receiving the free gift* of eternal life. You should know that immediately by now!)

Continuing —

#### Matthew 18

15 “And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED**. 17 And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and

**a tax-gatherer. 18 Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. 20 For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.”**

Remember to keep everything you read within the context of the passage. How does this passage relate to James 5:19-20?

From what you have previously studied in the Biblical Survey study, if the Children of Israel were found to have leaven in their house during the seven day feast of Unleavened Bread, what was to happen to them?

In understanding Matthew 18:17, one can see that it is the same picture here for the Church. (You see God never changes!) And if the process set forth here for the Church in Matthew 18:15-20 works, then the sinner’s soul has been saved (James 5:19-20). And the one who erred from the truth should be restored into fellowship. Do you see how this fits together?

We’ll close with this.

**1 Thessalonians 5**

**23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Week’s End Summary:**

Understanding James —  
To the Saving of the Soul

Lesson Eleven  
James Five, Part II:  
Fruit-bearing and Judgment