



# THE GREAT REVER\$AL

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JAMES 1:9-11 LESSON

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## JAMES 1:9-11 CONTEXT



- **1 James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion. Joy be to you! 2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 And let this perseverance bring about [its] perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete -- lacking in nothing. (Jas 1:1-4,AT)**
- **5 If any of you lacks wisdom, that person must ask God who gives to all sincerely and without reproaching, and it will be given to you. 6 But they must ask in faith(fulness), not wavering in doubt. For the one who doubts is like a surge of waves on the sea, being blown by the wind and tossed back and forth. 7 That person must not expect that they will receive anything from the Lord 8 – a double-minded individual, unstable in all their ways. (Jas 1:5-8,AT)**



## JAMES 1:9-11 CONTEXT



- James now turns to the topic of one's relationship with wealth – a topic he will return to later (Stulac 1:9; UBS, 21; Carson, 998) (cf. Jas 2:2-4, 5-12, 15-16, 4:13-17, 5:1-6; Osborne, 2; Martin, 229)
- Poverty may have been the most prevalent **trial** of James' audience (Moo T, 90; McKnight, 94).
- “Poverty often produces **trials**”; “riches often lead to **temptation**” (Blomberg/Kamell, 54; Martin, 24; cf. Osborne, 29; cf. Richardson, 72)
- People may have been double-minded in their divided loyalties to God and wealth (Moo T, 90; Martin, 22)
- James will outline a **wise** (Jas 1:5) approach to one of life's “**various trials**” (cf. Jas 1:2)(Guthrie, 216; cf. Stulac 1:9; Motyer, 42; McKnight, 94; Martin, 24)



# JAMES 1:9

## THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL



- Many of James' readers were likely poor and ostracized (Moo T, 91)
- Some Christians may sacrifice financial gain by refusing to participate in corrupt (Stulac 1:9) or idolatrous businesses
- Paul and Silas ruin someone's fortune-telling business (Ac 16:19; Stulac 1:9)
- By spreading the gospel, Paul affects the silver industry in Ephesus since people were turning away from the goddess Artemis and her temple (Ac 19:23-29; Stulac 1:9)
- There was a famine around the time this letter was written (cf. Ac 11:28-29; Moo T, 91) and James' readers may also be experiencing economic persecution because of their faith in Christ (Stulac 1:9)

Hello  
my name is

SELL OUT

SouledOut

## JAMES 1:9 THE MORAL EFFECTS OF MONEY

- Money or the lack of it can influence our thinking and behavior (e.g., envy, bitterness, materialism, greed, arrogance, etc.) (Stulac 1:9; McCartney, 99).
- It can dull our spiritual (in)sight and **seduce** us into **accepting worldly standards** (Nystrom, 56)
- People without money often wish they could trade places with those with it! (Motyer, 42)
- Scripture warns that there are potential spiritual dangers associated with being both rich **and** poor (Motyer, 42)
- And being rich may be even more hazardous to one's spiritual health (Motyer, 42) since it is tempting to trust in one's riches
- Those who **trust in their riches will fall**, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf. (Pr 11:28, NIV)



# JAMES 1:9-11

## WORTH, SECURITY, POWER



- For many, money is a “verification of **personal worth**” (Stulac 1:9; cf. Guthrie, 219). Many think wealth is **necessarily** a sign of God’s pleasure with them (McCartney, 98)
- Wealth is relative (to how much others have in comparison) (Stulac 1:9). By global standards, **we are rich** (Blomberg/Kamell, 64)
- Our self worth may fluctuate based upon how much we have in relation to others (Stulac 1:9).
- If we have less than others, we may feel more **worthless**; if we have more than others we may feel more **worthy** (Stulac 1:9)
- For many, money means **security** (Stulac 1:9); people trust in money more than God (McCartney, 99)
- For many, money means **power** (Stulac 1:9). It can be used to exploit others. Those without it may feel vulnerable to exploitation (Stulac 1:9)
- We hope to discuss **power/advantage** next time. The one who perseveres is promised the **crown of life** (Jas 1:12; Stulac 1:9)
- How much are we influenced by people who have **material** riches? How much by people with spiritual **riches**?



# JAMES 1:9

## THE MORAL EFFECTS OF MONEY



- Because money is often tied to **personal worth, security, and power**, many dedicate their lives to the pursuit of more and more money (Stulac 1:9)
- The pursuit of money often becomes the **most important factor** in making lifestyle decisions (Stulac 1:9)
- James is exhorting Christians not to get caught up in the pursuit of money (Stulac 1:9)
- Material wealth can be hazardous for one's spiritual health (cf. Mt 19:24; Stulac 1:9; Johnson, 185; cf. Mk 10:25; Osborne, 28) – people often trust in money more than God (Osborne, 29)
- 19 “Do not store up for yourselves **treasures on earth**, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For **where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**. (Mt 6:19-21, NIV; Stulac 1:9; Davids U, 33; McKnight, 102)
- 24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve both God and money**. (Mt 6:24, NIV; Stulac 1:9; Moo P, 69)



# JAMES 1:9 POOR BROTHER



- **The believer in humble circumstances must boast in their high position** (Jas 1:9,AT)
- Another third-person command (UBS, 22; McCartney, 96)
- Lit. “brother” but meaning **believer** (UBS, 22; Davids N, 76; Moo T, 91; Blomberg/Kamell, 55; McCartney, 96; McKnight, 95; Martin, 24)
- James is not writing to/about any and all poor people (Blomberg/Kamell, 55; McCartney, 96) – about 90 percent of the Roman world would be considered poor by modern standards and there was little social mobility (Nystrom, 56)
- Those without Christ do not have eschatological hope (McCartney, 96)
- The **personal worth** of **brothers and sisters** in Christ is not based on material wealth (Stulac 1:9).
- Christ thought we **worth** dying for! (cf. Stulac 1:9)





## JAMES 1:9 BOAST



- **Boast** (καυχάομαι | *kauchaomai*): can refer to negative boasting, arrogance (cf. Rom 2:17, 23; 3:27; 1 Cor 1:29; 4:7; 2 Cor 11:18; UBS, 22; cf. 2 Cor 5:12; Epistle to the Hebrews 11:13; 12:1; 13:4; 14:12; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:1; 22:1; 23:1; 24:1; 25:1; 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 29:1; 30:1; 31:1; 32:1; 33:1; 34:1; 35:1; 36:1; 37:1; 38:1; 39:1; 40:1; 41:1; 42:1; 43:1; 44:1; 45:1; 46:1; 47:1; 48:1; 49:1; 50:1; 51:1; 52:1; 53:1; 54:1; 55:1; 56:1; 57:1; 58:1; 59:1; 60:1; 61:1; 62:1; 63:1; 64:1; 65:1; 66:1; 67:1; 68:1; 69:1; 70:1; 71:1; 72:1; 73:1; 74:1; 75:1; 76:1; 77:1; 78:1; 79:1; 80:1; 81:1; 82:1; 83:1; 84:1; 85:1; 86:1; 87:1; 88:1; 89:1; 90:1; 91:1; 92:1; 93:1; 94:1; 95:1; 96:1; 97:1; 98:1; 99:1; 100:1; Osborne, 29; cf. Gal 6:13; Davids U, 48; cf. McCartney, 96; cf. 1 Cor 5:6; Adamson, 62; cf. 1 Cor 3:21; Johnson, 185; cf. Martin, 25).
- 16 As it is, you **boast** [*kauchaomai*] in your **arrogant schemes**. All such **boasting** is evil. (Jas 4:16, NIV; UBS, 22; Davids U, 48; Blomberg/Kamell, 54; Johnson, 185; Martin, 25)
- This text refers to positive boasting: “joyous pride” (UBS, 22; cf. Php 1:26, 2:16; Osborne, 29-30; cf. Ps 32:11, 149:5; Rom 5:11; 1 Cor 1:31; Php 3:3; Davids U, 48; cf. 2 Cor 12:9; McCartney, 96; cf. Moo T, 91; Blomberg/Kamell, 54; Guthrie, 217; cf. Rom 15:17; 2 Cor 7:14, 11:12; Adamson, 61; cf. 2 Cor 10:13-15, 17; Gal 6:14; Johnson, 185)
- Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we **boast** [*kauchaomai*] in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also **boast** [*kauchaomai*] in our sufferings, knowing that **suffering produces endurance**, 4 and **endurance produces character**, and **character produces hope** (Rom 5:1-4, NRSV; Motyer, 42; Davids U, 48; Richardson, 71; Guthrie, 217; Adamson, 61)
- This is consonant with believers being commanded to consider trials “all joy” in James 1:2 (UBS, 22; Motyer, 42; Davids U, 48; Guthrie, 216; Adamson, 61; McKnight, 94)
- This boasting is **not based on material wealth** (Stulac 1:9)



# JAMES 1:9

## HUMBLE CIRCUMSTANCES, HIGH POSITION



- **Humble circumstances** (ταπεινός | *tapeinos*): “lowly, humble” (NIDNTTE, 448), “of low **social** status” (BDAG, 989; cf. EDNT, 333)
- The humble(d) James writes of are Christians who are poor economically **and** socially (UBS, 22; cf. 2 Cor 7:6, 10:1; Davids U, 32; Moo P, 65; cf. Lk 1:52; Rom 12:16; Adamson, 62; McKnight, 96; Martin, 25), and who likely faced social marginalization (Davids U, 32)
- People who have been humbled by life’s circumstances are often more inclined to trust in God (Osborne, 29; Nystrom, 59) while those with wealth are often “poor in faith” (McCartney, 97)
- In the world, people often think humble circumstances means inferior **worth** (Stulac 1:9)
- **High position** (ὑψος | *hypsos*): “a position of high status” (BDAG, 1045; cf. EDNT, 410). This high position comes from being a brother or sister in Christ (Stulac 1:9; Motyer, 43; Osborne, 28; Adamson, 62)
- Though **lowly** in the eyes of the world, poor believers are **elevated/exalted** due to their relationship with Christ (Osborne, 28) – we have already been seated with Him in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6-7; Osborne, 30-31; cf. Eph 4:8; Moo T, 91) and will be exalted completely in the life/age to come (cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 55; Richardson, 71; cf. Nystrom, 55; Martin, 25)



# JAMES 1:9

## HUMBLE CIRCUMSTANCES, HIGH POSITION

- 20 But our **citizenship is in heaven**. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (Php 3:20-21, NIV; Osborne, 29; Moo T, 91)
- 5 Listen, my dear **brothers and sisters**: Has not God chosen those who are **poor** in the eyes of the world to be **rich in faith** and to **inherit the kingdom** he promised those who love him (Jas 2:5, NIV; UBS, 20; Davids U, 32; Moo T, 91; Richardson, 72; Blomberg/Kamell, 55; McKnight, 97; Johnson, 185; Martin, 23)
- 3 “Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the **kingdom of heaven**. (Mt 5:3, NRSV; Davids, 32; Blomberg/Kamell, 63)
- 5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will **inherit the earth**. (Mt 5:5, NRSV; cf. Lk 1:52-53; Davids, 32)
- Looking at his **disciples**, he said: “Blessed are **you who are poor**, for **yours is the kingdom of God**. (Lk 6:20, NIV; UBS, 23; Osborne, 29; Blomberg/Kamell, 63; McKnight, 94; Martin, 25)
- We should take pride! Children of God are heirs of God’s **everlasting kingdom** (Davids, 32)!



# JAMES 1:9

## THE RICH AND POOR IN SCRIPTURE



- The poor can refer to the financially poor (e.g., Amos 2:7, 8:6; Carson, 998; cf. Davids U, 48)
- Yet, in the OT (LXX), there is often a contrast of the humble (*tapeinos*) “righteous poor” – who trust God for their deliverance (Johnson, 185; cf. Heb. *‘ānî*, Moo, 92 and *‘ānāw*, Blomberg/Kamell, 54) – and the (wicked, ungodly, oppressive) rich (Lockett/Evans, 267; Moo T, 92; cf. Carson, 998)
- In the OT (LXX), this word is used to describe those who “[count] for little in the world” and/or those who may be oppressed (Ps 10:18, 18:27, 34:18, 138:6; Carson, 998; cf. Ps 82:3; 102:17; Is 11:4, 14:32; Lockett/Evans, 267; cf. Judg 6:15; Davids U, 48; cf. Is 49:13; Davids N, 76; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 55; Guthrie, 217; Johnson, 185)
- You save the **humble** [*tapeinos*] but bring low those whose eyes are **haughty**. (Ps 18:27, NIV cf. Ps 17:28 LXX; Carson, 998; Lockett/Evans, 267; Guthrie, 217)
- The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are **crushed** [*tapeinos*] in spirit. (Ps 34:18, NIV cf. Ps 33:19 LXX; Carson, 998; Lockett/Evans, 267; Davids U, 48; Guthrie, 217)
- Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the **poor** [*tapeinos*] and the oppressed. (Ps 82:3, NIV cf. Ps 81:3 LXX; Lockett/Evans, 267)



# JAMES 1:9

## THE RICH AND POOR IN SCRIPTURE



- Though the Lord is **exalted** [*hypsēlos*], he looks kindly on the **lowly** [*tapeinos*]; though lofty, he sees them from afar. (Ps 138:6, NIV cf. Ps 137:6 LXX; Carson, 998)
- He mocks **proud mockers** but shows favor to the **humble** [*tapeinos*] and oppressed. (Pr 3:34, NIV; Carson, 998; Davids U, 48; Guthrie, 217; Johnson, 185)
- But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God **opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.**” (Jas 4:6, NIV; cf. 1 Pet 5:5; Carson, 998; Osborne, 30; Guthrie, 217; Adamson, 62; Johnson, 185; Martin, 23)
- James likely echoes Jeremiah 9: 23 This is what the Lord says: “Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the **rich boast of their riches**, but let the one who boasts boast about this: **that they have the understanding to know me**, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the Lord. (Jer 9:23-24, NIV; Carson, 998; cf. 1 Cor 1:31; Stulac 1:9; Osborne, 30; Moo P, 65; Richardson, 72 FN; Blomberg/Kamell, 54 FN; McCartney, 98; Adamson, 61; McKnight, 97)



# JAMES 1:9

## THE GREAT REVERSAL



- As we've seen, the rich being humbled and the poor being exalted is a theme that runs throughout Scripture (cf. 1 Sam 2:7; Pss 37, 73; Lk 1:53; 16:19-31; Davids U, 48; cf. 1 Sam 2:1-10; Martin, 23; cf. Moo T, 92; Blomberg/Kamell, 63; Guthrie, 217; McKnight, 94; Johnson, 185) – also the Exodus, the conquest of Canaan, prophetic hopes of the exiles, the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31), etc. (Blomberg/Kamell, 63) – “The Great Reversal” (Blomberg/Kamell, 63; cf. McCartney, 95; McKnight, 96)
- “21 Blessed are you who are **hungry** now, for you will be **filled**. “Blessed are you who **weep** now, for you will **laugh**. 22 “Blessed are you when people **hate** you, and when they **exclude** you, **revile** you, and **defame** you on account of the Son of Man. 23 **Rejoice** in that day and **leap for joy**, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.
- 24 “But **woe to you who are rich**, for you have received your consolation. 25 “Woe to you who are **full** now, for you will be **hungry**. 26 “Woe to you who are **laughing** now, for you will **mourn and weep**. “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets. (Lk 6:21-26, NRSV; Davids U, 49; cf. Moo P, 65; Guthrie, 217; McKnight, 94; cf. Mk 10:25; Lk 18:25; Johnson, 185)



# JAMES 1:9

## THE RICH AND POOR IN SCRIPTURE



- Proverbs says godly wisdom brings riches and honor (Pr 3:16). 16 Long life is in her right hand; **in her left hand are riches and honor.** (Pr 3:16, NIV). The Lord blessed Solomon with wisdom and wealth (1 Ki 3:12-13; Motyer, 45)
- Poverty can also be caused by laziness (Pr 6:11, 10:4, 14:23, 24:34), haste (Pr 21:5), chasing fantasies (Pr 28:19), stinginess and eagerness for wealth (Pr 28:22), and disobedience (Pr 13:18)
- Whoever **disregards discipline comes to poverty** and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored. (Pr 13:18, NIV)
- Wealth is not **inherently** bad (Motyer, 45) and poverty is not **inherently** good (Osborne, 30).
- This is why the early church sought to alleviate poverty **in the church** (Ac 2:44-45, 4:32-34; Osborne, 30; cf. McKnight, 94). If poverty was good, Scripture would not command us to help the poor (Blomberg/Kamell, 55)
- Neither poverty nor riches are necessarily to be desired: 8 Keep falsehood and lies far from me; **give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread.** 9 Otherwise, **I may have too much and disown you** and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or **I may become poor and steal,** and so dishonor the name of my God. (Pr 30:8-9, NIV)



# JAMES 1:9

## RICH AND POOR PEOPLE



- Some argue that James is not referring to rich Christians but referring to rich non-Christians (Stulac 1:9; Davids, 32; McKnight, 99-100; Johnson, 191; Martin, 26; cf. UBS, 23-24).
- Later, the rich are outsiders who negatively oppress God's people (Jas 2:6-7; 5:1-6; UBS, 23-24; Carson, 998; Stulac 1:9; Davids, 32; McCartney, 97; Nystrom, 55; Guthrie, 217; McKnight, 99; Johnson, 185; Martin, 22)
- James does not call the rich person “brother” (Stulac 1:9; cf. UBS, 23-24; Osborne, 28; Martin, 23)
- It may be odd that James talks about a brother or sister “passing away” (UBS, 23-24)
- Often, in Scripture the rich are associated with the wicked (e.g., Lk 6:23-26; Carson, 998) and foolish (Lk 12:13-21; Davids, 33).
- Therefore, many conclude that the rich James is referring to are non-Christians (Moo T, 92)





# JAMES 1:9

## RICH AND POOR PEOPLE



- My brothers [and sisters], show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. 2 For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, 3 and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” 4 have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 **Listen, my beloved brothers [and sisters], has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?** 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the **rich** the ones who **oppress** you, and the ones who **drag you into court?** 7 Are **they** not the ones who **blaspheme the honorable name** by which you were called? (Jas 2:1-7, ESV; UBS, 23-24; Carson, 998; Stulac 1:9; Davids U, 32; Moo P, 66; Richardson, 73;



# JAMES 1:9

## RICH AND POOR PEOPLE



- Come now, you **rich people**, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you. 2 Your **riches** have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. 4 Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous one, who does not resist you. (Jas 5:1-6, NRSV; UBS, 23-24; Carson, 998, Lockett/Evans, 267; Stulac 1:9; Osborne, 28; Davids U, 32; Moo T, 92; Richardson, 75; Adamson, 64; Johnson, 185)
- 7 Be patient, then, **brothers and sisters**, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains (Jas 5:7, NIV; Stulac 1:9)
- On the non-Christian rich view, James would be telling them **sarcastically** to boast in their humiliation (i.e., their destruction) (Davids U, 33; Moo T, 90, 92; Blomberg/Kamell, 56; Nystrom, 55; Guthrie, 218; Adamson, 61; McKnight, 99; Johnson, 190; Martin, 26) – which doesn't seem as likely as the alternate view... (Osborne, 29; Moo T, 92; Guthrie, 218)



# JAMES 1:9

## RICH AND POOR CHRISTIANS



- A more likely view is that James is addressing rich Christians (UBS, 24; Carson, 998; Motyer, 42; Osborne, 28, 30; Moo T, 90; Richardson, 71; Blomberg/Kamell, 58; Nystrom, 55; Guthrie, 217-218; Adamson, 61) – the most prevalent view throughout church history (Blomberg/Kamell, 57)
- “Brother” from James 1:9 likely also governs “the rich” in James 1:10 (UBS, 24; Moo T, 92; McCartney, 96; Nystrom, 55; cf. Martin, 25)
- There is no verb in James 1:10, thus “boast” of James 1:9 should be supplied (UBS, 24) – applying to both the poor and rich person (Nystrom, 55; Guthrie, 217-218)
- James is writing to Christians, why would he address rich non-Christians here? (UBS, 24; cf. Nystrom, 55)
- James writes against showing partiality to rich people in their gatherings (Jas 2:1-4; Carson, 998), likely implying that there were at least some rich people in the congregation (McCartney, 98; Guthrie, 218; cf. McKnight, 98)
- In James 4:13-17, he addresses brothers and sisters with some financial means who are planning business trips (Blomberg/Kamell, 57; Guthrie, 218; McKnight, 98)



# JAMES 1:9

## RICH AND POOR CHRISTIANS



- Jews recognized that rich people often have a tendency to be selfish, arrogant, exploitative, etc. (Carson, 998)
- But, as later Jewish texts recognized, not all rich people are wicked or unable to be saved (e.g., Sir 31:5-11; Carson, 998; cf. Sir 10:22; Moo P, 66). In the OT, “rich” was not often a synonym for “wicked” (Moo P, 66)
- Jesus brings salvation to the house of the rich tax collector, Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10; Carson, 998; cf. Moo P, 66; McKnight, 98)
- In Amos, the prophets addressed Israelites who were not living as Israelites should (Am 4:1-3; Nystrom, 55)
- In 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14, Paul addresses idle believers who were not living as believers should and were in danger of losing their membership in the community (Nystrom, 55).
- Something similar could be taking place here (Nystrom, 55)
- Also, in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul writes against **rich** Christians who were celebrating the Lord’s Supper with worldly divisions based on socioeconomic status (Nystrom, 55)



# JAMES 1:10

## HUMILIATION OF THE RICH



- **But the rich in their humiliation, because like a flower of the field they will pass away** (Jas 1:10, AT)
- **Humiliation** (ταπείνωσις | *tapeinōsis*): “experience of a **reversal in fortunes**” (BDAG, 990) Cognate of “humble” (Blomberg/Kamell, 55)
- **They** will pass away could also be translated “**it** will pass away” – referring to the rich person’s riches (UBS, 25; Johnson, 186)
- If James is rhetorically addressing ungodly rich people, he is perhaps speaking of rich people who will continue their materialistic lifestyle but find their fortunes reversed (Stulac 1:9; cf. Davids, 32)
- 30 If that is how God clothes the **grass of the field**, which is **here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire**, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith (Mt 6:30, NIV; Stulac, 1:9; Adamson, 63; cf. Lk 12:28; Davids U, 49)
- The image could recall the Sermon on the Mount and remind them of God’s providential care (Stulac 1:9), though Jesus is making a different point (Davids U, 49)



# JAMES 1:10

## HUMILIATION OF THE RICH



- James is saying not to be deceived by the “apparent security” of wealth (Stulac 1:9; cf. Richardson, 72). The rich need to be reminded of the **transitory** nature of worldly wealth (UBS, 25; Moo T, 93; Nystrom, 56; Guthrie, 218; Johnson, 191)
- James is telling rich Christians to boast not in their “possessions or position” (UBS, 24; cf. Martin, 25) or depend on their wealth (EDNT, 18)
- “Those who die with the most toys still die” (Osborne, 30; Blomberg/Kamell, 56). They will die one day and their possessions will come to nothing (cf. Job 3:14-15, 15:29-30; Ps 49:16-20; 73:12, 18-20; Osborne, 30; cf. Adamson, 65)
- 16 Do not be overawed when others grow rich, when the splendor of their houses increases; 17 for **they will take nothing with them when they die, their splendor will not descend with them.** 18 Though while they live they count themselves blessed— and people praise you when you prosper— 19 they will join those who have gone before them, who will never again see the light of life. 20 **People who have wealth but lack understanding are like the beasts that perish.** (Ps 49:16-20, NIV; Osborne, 30; Moo T, 93; Adamson, 65)



# JAMES 1:10

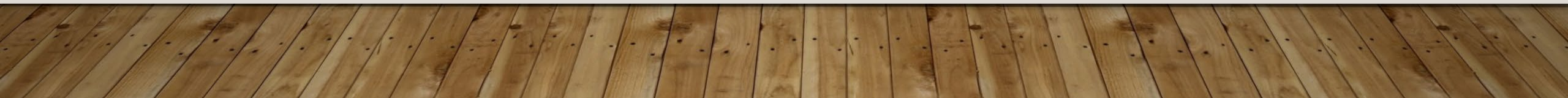
## HUMILIATION OF THE RICH



- Rich Christians may be rich in worldly goods, but they have been saved from spiritual poverty (Motyer, 43)
- James tells rich Christians not to take pride in their high worldly status but in their **lowly/humble** status in Christ (Osborne, 28; Adamson, 66; Johnson, 191; cf. Martin, 25) – whom they depend on (Osborne, 28; Blomberg/Kamell, 55-56)
- All Christians – rich and poor – must depend on Christ alone (Osborne, 30). Wealth does nothing for your soul's salvation (Adamson, 66 cf. Pr 11:4; cf. Martin, 26)
- Both rich and poor believers are equal in Christ: the material rich become spiritually humbled, the materially humbled become spiritually rich (Osborne, 28, 30)
- They must remember to humble themselves before the Lord (Moo T, 93): **10 Humble yourselves before the Lord**, and he will lift you up. (Jas 4:10, NIV; Moo T, 93; Adamson, 62; Martin, 23)
- **12 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled**, and those who **humble themselves will be exalted** (Mt 23:12, NIV; Moo T, 93; McCartney, 98; Guthrie, 217; cf. Lk 14:11, 18:14; Moo P, 66; Johnson, 186)
- They should also identify with Jesus, who humbled himself (Php 2:8; Moo T, 93; cf. Martin, 25) and was despised and rejected by society (Moo T, 93; cf. Is 53:3; Osborne, 31)



# JAMES 1:11 HEATWAVE

- **For the sun rises with scorching heat, and the field dries up, and its flower falls, and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed. In the same way, the rich – in their journeys [in life] – will fade away (Jas 1:11, AT)**
  - **Scorching heat** can refer to a sweltering east wind from the desert called the sirocco (UBS, 26; Osborne, 30; Adamson, 63; Martin, 27; cf. Job 27:21; Jer 18:17; Hos 12:1; Davids N, 49; cf. Is 49:10; Davids, 78; cf. Keener, 672; Moo T, 94; Blomberg/Kamell, 56; Guthrie, 218)
  - The sirocco blows like hot air out of an oven and can kill flowers, grass, etc. in hours (UBS, 26) if not seconds (Osborne, 30)
  - even though he thrives among his brothers. An **east wind** from the Lord will come, blowing in **from the desert**; his **spring will fail** and his **well dry up**. His storehouse will be plundered of all its treasures. (Hos 13:15, NIV; Moo T, 94; Guthrie, 218)
  - But the sirocco is not associated with the rising of the sun (UBS, 26; Davids U, 49). This wind blows continuously (day and night) for three or four days during the time periods when seasons change (UBS, 26; Davids N, 78; Guthrie, 218)
  - This can refer to the Lord's judgment (UBS, 26; contra Moo P, 67) but likely refers to how our lives and luxuries fade away (Osborne, 30)
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# JAMES 1:11

## GRASS WITHERS, FLOWERS FALL



- Here, James may switch from talking to rich Christians to talking to rich people in general (Motyer, 44; also v. 10: Adamson, 62)
- James compares the rich/riches to fleeting grass – a common image in Scripture (cf. Ps 37:2, 90:5-6; Carson, 998; cf. Ps 102:4, 11; Keener, 672; cf. Ps 37:20; Job 15:30; Lockett/Evans, 267; cf. Is 51:12; McCartney, 99; cf. Davids U, 33; Adamson, 64; McKnight, 101; Johnson, 186; Martin, 23)
- Do not fret because of the wicked; do not be envious of wrongdoers, for they will soon **fade like the grass**, and **wither like the green herb**. (Ps 37:1-2, NRSV; Carson, 998)
- I Man born of woman is **short of days** and full of trouble. 2 He **blossoms like a flower**, then **withers**; he flees like a shadow and does not last. (Job 14:1-2, HCSB; Carson, 998; Lockett/Evans, 267; Blomberg/Kamell, 56; McCartney, 97; Johnson, 186; Martin, 23)
- The **life of mortals is like grass**, they **flourish like a flower of the field**; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. (Ps 103:15-16, NIV; Lockett/Evans, 267; Osborne, 30; Davids U, 49; Richardson, 72 FN; Blomberg/Kamell, 56; Guthrie, 218; McKnight, 101; Johnson, 186; Martin, 26)
- But from **everlasting to everlasting** the **Lord's love is with those who fear him**, and his righteousness with their children's children— (Ps 103:17, NIV; McCartney, 97)





# JAMES 1:11

## GRASS WITHERS, FLOWERS FALL



- 6 A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “**All people are like grass**, and all their faithfulness is like the **flowers of the field**. 7 The **grass withers** and the **flowers fall**, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the **people are grass**. The **grass withers** and the **flowers fall**, but the **word of our God endures forever.**” (Is 40:6-8, NIV; Carson, 998; Keener, 672; Lockett/Evans, 267, Osborne, 30; cf. 1 Pet 1:24; Davids U, 33; Moo T, 93; Blomberg/Kamell, 56; McCartney, 97; Guthrie, 218; Adamson, 62; McKnight, 101; Johnson, 186; Martin, 23, 26)
- Like the beauty of flowers, wealth is short-lived (Adamson, 64)
- A rich man’s wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination. (Pr 18:11, ESV; Richardson, 72)
- This world is passing away (1 Cor 7:31; Richardson, 75), heaven and earth will pass away (Mt 24:35, 5:18; 2 Pet 3:10; Moo P, 67)
- Wealth and riches look impressive now, but they don’t last (Moo T, 94)– like a soap bubble (Davids U, 33)
- People who depend on riches have **misplaced their trust!** (Guthrie, 218)
- In the grand scheme of things, our lives are like flickering candles; let’s let our light shine for Christ while we can (Osborne, 30)





# JAMES 1:11 JOURNEYS



- **Journeys** (πορεία | *poreia*): likely refers to one's “way of life” (NIDNTTE, 106; Martin, 27), “daily conduct” (UBS, 27; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 56)
- Can also refer to one's travels in life (i.e., a rich person's **business trips** (EDNT, 136; cf. Jas 4:13-17; Johnson, 187; Moo T, 94; Martin, 27; cf. Lk 13:22; McKnight, 103; cf. Stulac 1:9)) – being “cut off ‘mid-career’” (Laws as quoted by McCartney, 102; cf. Guthrie, 218; Martin, 24)
- **Destroyed** (ἀπόλλυμι | *apollymi*) can also mean “lost” (NIDNTTE, 537; UBS, 27)
- 16 And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ 18 And he said, ‘I will do this: **I will tear down my barns and build larger ones**, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” ’ 20 But God said to him, ‘**Fool!** This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ 21 So is the one **who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.**” (Lk 12:16-21, ESV; Stulac 1:9; Motyer, 44; Davids U, 33, 49; Richardson, 73; Blomberg/Kamell, 56; Guthrie, 217; Adamson, 65; cf. Lk 14:15-24; McKnight, 103; Johnson, 185, 187; Martin, 26)
- Whether James is referring to one's daily “comings” and “goings” (Blomberg/Kamell, 56; McCartney, 101) or to business dealings in particular, both people and worldly wealth don't last (Blomberg/Kamell, 56)



# JAMES 1:9-11 WEALTH IS THE WRONG MASTER



- “...those who worship wealth perish with their god.” (Motyer, 44). Contrary to worldly thinking, **money does not = security!** (Stulac 1:9); security comes from Christ (Moo T, 93)
- 6 But godliness with **contentment** is great gain. 7 For **we brought nothing** into the world, and we can **take nothing** out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (1 Tim 6:6-10, NIV; Carson, 998; cf. Stulac 1:9; Motyer, 44; Martin, 28)
- 17 Command those who are **rich** in this present world **not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth**, which is **so uncertain**, but to **put their hope in God**, who **richly provides us with everything** for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be **rich in good deeds**, and to be **generous and willing to share**. 19 In this way they will **lay up treasure for themselves** as a firm foundation for the **coming age**, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. (1 Tim 6:17-19, NIV; Carson, 998; Motyer, 44; Davids N, 76; McCartney, 97; Martin, 28)



# JAMES 1:9-11 CONCLUSION THE GREAT REVER\$AL



- The **test** of living in humble circumstances can **perfect** our Christ-like character/conduct (Stulac 1:9).
- Money can be a great servant but is a horrible master (modified quote from J.P. Moreland).
- Money is not inherently evil; how we **acquire** it (e.g., Jer 17:11), **use** it (Lk 12:19-20), and **think** of it (1 Jn 2:15) can be (Motyer, 45; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 64; McCartney, 95). Wealth should be used in godly ways (cf. Lk 16:9)
- The world often associates money with **personal worth, security, and power/advantage** (Stulac 1:9)
- Our **worth** is not determined by our **material wealth**, but our **spiritual health** as brothers and sisters in Christ (Stulac 1:9)
- We must reject our culture's values of money and materialism, as we grow in Christ-like maturity (Stulac 1:9). We must not "define [our]selves by [our] worldly status but by [our] spiritual status" (Moo T, 95)
- Our **security** comes not from money, but from the Lord (Stulac 1:9). We must not worship/trust in money rather than God (Blomberg/Kamell, 63)



# JAMES 1:9-11 CONCLUSION THE GREAT REVER\$AL



- Because we know this, Christians ought to be generous with money to help our brothers and sisters who are in need (Jas 2:14-17; Stulac 1:9; cf. Jas 1:26-27; Moo T, 94)
- The goal of life is Christ-like perfection/maturity (Motyer, 43). Having this **wise** mindset helps see both material prosperity and poverty in the proper, godly perspective (Motyer, 43; cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 55; Nystrom, 56; Davids, 33)
- Poor Christians should **boast** in their exalted position in/with Christ (Osborne, 28; Moo T, 94; Guthrie, 219); Rich believers should **boast** in their humble dependence on Christ (Osborne, 28; Adamson, 66; cf. Guthrie, 219)
- Both rich and poor Christians must “evaluate themselves by **spiritual** and not **material** standards.” (Moo P, 69; cf. Osborne, 31). This is very countercultural (Moo P, 69).
- We should not boast in the **material riches** of the world, but the **spiritual riches** of Christ (cf. Blomberg/Kamell, 57).
- Rich unbeliever about his friend who was a poor Christian: “When I die, I shall **leave** my riches. When he dies he will **go** to his.” (Adamson, 66)
- Because life and luxury is so fleeting (cf. Guthrie, 219), let’s make the most of every opportunity (cf. Eph 5:16; Blomberg/Kamell, 65)



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