

## Ya'akov (James) ~ Part 7

### Exhortations for Suffering Saints

If you find that family gatherings often lead to squabbles due to differing opinions on life decisions, remember James 5:9's admonition against grumbling. Create a *'family agreement'* where everyone commits to speaking respectfully and listening deeply, even when disagreements arise. Hold a family meeting to draft the agreement together, including a commitment to pray for unity when conflicts arise. This lays a foundation for healthier communication and reinforces the family's reliance on each other and on **God**.

### Perspective and Priorities

***<sup>13</sup> Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such-and-such a city, stay there a year trading and make a profit!" <sup>14</sup> You don't even know if you will be alive tomorrow! For all you are is a mist that appears for a little while and then disappears. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, "If Adonai wants it to happen, we will live" to do this or that. <sup>16</sup> But as it is, in your arrogance, you boast. All such boasting is evil.***

Planning is an essential ingredient of today's managerial society. Still, it is easy for planners to forget that they stand only as God permits—not only their plans, but they themselves. Hence, ***"If Adonai wants it to happen, we will live" to do this or that.*** If we don't live, what good will the plans do?—as in Yeshua's story about the rich man who built new barns (Luke 12:16-21). ***"Don't boast about tomorrow, because you don't know what today may bring forth!"*** (Proverbs 27:1). For more on boasting, see 1 Corinthians 1:31.

***<sup>17</sup> So then, anyone who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it is committing a sin.***

***Anyone who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it is committing a sin*** of omission far more serious than the sin of those who are uninformed—as is clear from Luke 12:47-48, 2 Kefa 2:21. Romans 14:23 makes a related yet distinct point, likewise 1 Corinthians 8:13. In this specific situation the sin is to announce plans as if we could control all the circumstances, failing to acknowledge that **God** is in charge and our plans depend on His will.

### Judgement Against Oppressors

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

***<sup>5</sup> <sup>1</sup> Next, a word for the rich: weep and wail over the hardships coming upon you! <sup>2</sup> Your riches have rotted, and your clothes have become moth-eaten; <sup>3</sup> your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat up your flesh like fire! This is the acharit-hayamim, and you have been storing up wealth! <sup>4</sup> Listen! The wages you have fraudulently withheld from the workers who mowed your fields are calling out against you, and the outcries of those who harvested have reached the ears of Adonai-Tzva'ot.***

*The wages you have fraudulently withheld.* Compare Leviticus 19:13, "**The wages of him who is hired shall not stay with you all night until morning**"; Deuteronomy 24:14-15, Malachi 3:5. *The outcries have reached the ears of Adonai-Tzva'ot*, like those of **Abel's** blood (Genesis 4:10) and of the **Israelites** in **Egypt** (Exodus 3:7). **God** saw the sin in these cases and dealt with it; likewise, He will not ignore injustice toward workers.

*<sup>5</sup> You have led a life of luxury and self-indulgence here on earth—in a time of slaughter, you have gone on eating to your heart's content. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned, you have murdered the innocent; they have not withstood you.*

## Steadfastness in Suffering ~ Part 1

*<sup>7</sup> So, brothers, be patient until the Lord returns. See how the farmer waits for the precious "fruit of the earth"—he is patient over it until it receives the fall and spring rains* (Deuteronomy 11:14; Jeremiah 5:24; Joel 2:23). *<sup>8</sup> You too, be patient; keep up your courage, for the Lord's return is near.*

*"Fruit of the earth."* The quotation is from the *b'rakhah* (blessing) said before eating berries or vegetables, *"Blessed are you, Adonai our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the earth."* *The fall and spring rains*, called in the **Hebrew Bible**, respectively, *yoreh* and *malkosh*. The reference is to the climatic pattern in **Isra'el**, where the bulk of rainfall comes between November and March. Substantial rains in **October** (the *yoreh*) and **April** (the *malkosh*) are rare but greatly benefit crops.

*<sup>9</sup> Don't grumble against one another, brothers, so that you won't come under condemnation—look! The Judge is standing at the door! <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering mistreatment and being patient, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of Adonai. <sup>11</sup> Look, we regard those who persevered as blessed. You have heard of the perseverance of Iyov, and you know what the purpose of Adonai was, that Adonai is very compassionate and merciful.* (Deuteronomy 11:14; Jeremiah 5:24; Joel 2:23). <sup>1</sup>

In our next post, we will finish exploring the **Letter of Ya'akov**.

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<sup>1</sup> Ya'akov 4:13-5:11.