

Wednesday in the Word
Digging Deeper
September 9, 2020
James 5:1-7
Suffering Sadduceans

In last week's study we were made to understand that we ought not to make plans and then bring them to the Lord for His Blessing but rather to first go to the Lord and ask His instruction so that we may fit into His plans. Chapter 4 verse 15. In preparing for this study that precise miscalculation seems to have given wrong direction to the course of two considerations. It seemed a sure thing to consider wealthy people in general and especially those who have hoarded their wealth in opposition to the cause of Christ. It seemed more so correct to look at verse 6 and say that we Christians are the 'just' and that we ought not to resist the evil people of this world. It could then be said that in our precepts of non-resistance we would learn to divert the attacks against us by stepping aside and allowing the evil intentions of these Wealthy Warlords of our lives to take them on a continued course ending in their own destruction.

Upon further diligence another more pressing scenario comes to light. James appears to have written his epistle somewhere in the early 60s. No, you hippies. Not the 1960s. The 60s. The writings of Josephus state to us that Rome descended to destroy Jerusalem and it's people by the year 70 AD. Read Josephus for yourselves if you can because the account of the destruction is particularly graphic and frightening. James, the brother of Our Lord knew from the teachings that he had sat under that this destruction would come soon, swift and with great terror. Hence the double fulfillment of the end times Jesus preached in the gospels. Refer to Matthew 24 among others. It is most likely that the rich mentioned here were those of the Sadducean Aristocracy. The Sadducees. As the high religious orders of the Jewish faith had long resisted the grace, mercy and blessing of the Lord and now resisted His most glorious act of forgiveness through His visitation in Christ, they would now suffer the final fate of seeing their wealth, their religion, their city, their Temple and their austere way of life thoroughly destroyed. The final rejection of Messiah and His taking the Cross for them would mean that the city and it's people would suffer their punishment with them. The suffering of a Messiah on a Roman implement of crucifixion could not be more out of character with that of any Rabbi much less this Nazarene who they supposed was but a fraud. The descriptions of these wealthy people and their activities in verses 1 through 5 can certainly speak of our current population and their treatment of the believers in Christ in our world. Think of today's suffering servants and the tormented missionaries that we only read about. May we thank God that we are not residents of those nations which perform these evils, though our blessed America is seeing the beginnings of the shift away from godliness.

Our Focus then Falls in on verse 6. "Ye have condemned and killed the just and he doth not resist you." Considering the mind of God and His servant James in the writing of this text we can realize that this condemned and killed Just One is our Lord Jesus Christ. And yet we find this interesting addendum that "He doth not resist you." We will look today at the resistance performed by Jesus and what he requires of us. Though Jesus was bold and obviously much stronger than any of His protagonists He allowed them to take him under arrest. Matthew

26:47-56. Note also in James 5:4 the Lord of the Sabaoth, a phrase which speaks of God in Christ as the Commander of the Armies of Heaven (Joshua 5:13-15) and the fact that the Roman soldiers fell down at his voice. (John 18:3-9) Obviously, Jesus was fully in command of all these events yet offered no resistance during His arrest, trial (or mock trial as it truly was) or His execution. (Matthew 26:59-65 Isaiah 53:7) This utterly illegal proceeding was perpetrated by the very people who claim to be just and legal at all times. As Jesus often stated during his Earthly Ministry He had many times been challenged to rise to His obligations and yet stated that it was "not yet His time". John 7:6-8 are an example. Upon here cursing the wealthy and those who killed Jesus, James in 5:5 warns them that it is not yet their time but that it is right around the corner. They are still gaining in riches and living an elaborate lifestyle and yet are being told that they are being fattened for the day of Slaughter. A bit of commentary research brings up the conjecture that verse 6 in the Greek may better be read as "you have condemned and killed the Just One and does He not resist you?." This point of view would be interesting to think of in that Jesus did not resist his arrest, trial or execution and yet this coming Day of Slaughter would be a prophetic day of resistance that would come off as a much greater degree of punishment. The destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple and their religious ideals assure us that they would endure a much more drastic form of punishment than Jesus would have delivered them through His garden arrest. The destruction of the temple, soon to occur, would bring about a 2000 year period of waiting and bring us right up to today in which the news is constantly speaking of the building of the Third Temple. Jews who continue to reject their Messiah are anxiously awaiting this day so they can begin anew the religion that they have had to put on hold for this long time. And we are even told through prophecy that many Jews will accept Yeshua Jesus as their Messiah. Yet from this very Temple will come much of the destruction foretold by Jesus and now referred to by James. See Daniel 9, Matthew 24, Revelation 6 through 18.

As an aside to our study we might digress to the first five verses of James 5. The weeping and howling literally speaks of the shrieking of a traumatically dying person. The corruption of the garments and the moths and the destruction of the gold and silver by fire, speaks to the last days of Jerusalem which was about to come upon them. Part of the ruin of the city came about through a devastating fire and the following decay. An interesting item is the rust mentioned concerning gold and silver. In our world today that seems unlikely and yet in the world of 50 to 60 AD gold and silver were not perfectly pure and there remained certain iron mixtures which would literally rust out of the gold and silver. Some of it may have even been mixed in to add to the weight but decrease the value through fraud. Another interesting item and verse 4 is that we note there are hired laborers. Most of the local world of that time used slave labor to work in the fields and yet here we see that as laborers are hired there was a bit of a more fair and just Society.

No scripture refers to Jesus being resistant to anyone during his Earthly Ministry. When those opportunities came he simply slipped through the crowd or used words of such impact as to silence his tormentors and accusers. Luke 4:28-30, Mark 1:22. He was never physically resistant to any, though He did defend His Father's House. Matthew 21:12-13. It may be interesting to note that especially in His office as God He need not resist any human or demon. Resistance implies equal competition. God is equal to no one and He does not need to resist

the devil as we are told to do back in chapter 4 verse 7. God is the source of all creation and when it comes time to avenge His Son, our Savior and His people the church and his Nation Israel he will utterly destroy the devil and cast him into eternal Darkness. Jude 6, Revelation 16:10. Elsewhere extended to the bottomless pit. Revelation 20:1-3. Resistance never was an issue with God. We however are given the precept of non-resistance which many of us seem to take as more of a suggestion. We are not to resist evil people. We can deflect their attacks and let them bring themselves to destruction or we can meet their evil with love. The love of the Good News of Jesus Christ or the love of prayer for their lost souls. Compare Matthew 5:39-42 to an end days passage in Luke 21:12-16. And always remember Ephesians 6:10-13 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Looking back to James we remind ourselves yet again of 4:7. Resist spiritual evil forces and pray against them. Do not resist evil people but pray that God's Word would speak through you and pray for them that he might save them. Walk with the King today and.... Be a Blessing!