

# JAMES – PRACTICAL LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

## LIVING VICTORIOUSLY IN THE “LAST DAYS” - JAMES 5:7-8

### 1. BACKGROUND:

A. SINCE JESUS DEPARTED THE FIRST TIME AND LEFT A PROMISE THAT HE WOULD COME A SECOND TIME, PEOPLE OF MOST GENERATIONS HAVE PREDICTED HIS RETURN.

### B. “LAST DAY” PREDICTIONS:

1. IGNATIUS, THE BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, IN 110 AD SAID THE “LAST DAYS ARE UPON US!”

2. IN 236 AD, HIPPLYTUS, THE BISHOP OF ROME WROTE THAT CHRIST WAS SURE TO RETURN BY 500 AD.

3. CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS IN HIS “BOOK ON PROPHECIES” WROTE THAT THE WORLD WOULD END IN 1656 AD.

4. MARTIN LUTHER WROTE IN THE 1530S AND 1540S AD THAT THE WORLD WOULD NOT LAST ANOTHER 100 YEARS.

5. TODAY, MANY CLIMATE RESEARCHERS PREDICT THE WORLD WILL END IN 2030.

C. JESUS' OWN DISCIPLES ASKED HIM WHEN HE WAS COMING BACK IN THE OLIVET DISCOURSE.

1. Matthew 24:3 (NASB) “As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?””

2. JESUS' RESPONSE WAS...

a. Matthew 24:36 (NASB) “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

D. ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE ON THE DAY WHEN JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN HIS FOLLOWERS WERE WITH HIM.

1. I'M GUESSING THAT JAMES WAS THERE, TOO.

a. NOTE: JAMES WAS AN UNBELIEVER UNTIL THE RESURRECTION, HOWEVER, AFTER THE RESURRECTION, HE BELIEVED!

1) AND BECAME THE LEADER OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN JERUSALEM.

2) “OLD CAMEL KNEES”

2. IT WAS LIKELY THAT, JAMES, THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK, WAS WITH THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST WHEN JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN.

3. DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT THE ANGEL TOLD THEM?...

a. Acts 1:6-11 (NLT2) “So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?” He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and

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they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” After saying this, **he was taken up into a cloud** while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, **two white-robed men suddenly stood among them**. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, **but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!**”

4. I THINK THAT IT’S FAIR TO ASSUME THAT EVERYONE WHO HEARD THOSE WORDS, INCLUDING JAMES, WONDERED EXACTLY WHEN WILL THAT BE?
5. NOTE: THE FACT OF JESUS’ RETURN WAS STILL ON JAMES’ MIND ABOUT 15 YEARS LATER WHEN HE WROTE HIS BOOK.
2. James 5:7-8 (NASB) Therefore be patient, brethren, **until the coming of the Lord**. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for **the coming of the Lord is near**.
  - A. THREE CHARACTER TRAITS THAT ARE A SUMMATION OF VERSES 7-8 THAT ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD DEVELOP IN ORDER TO LIVE VICTORIOUSLY IN “THE LAST DAYS”.
    1. NOTE: IF WE DO NOT DEVELOP THESE THREE TRAITS, WE ARE LIKELY TO BE DISCOURAGED, OR INSENSITIVE, AS TIME GOES ON... AND WE MAY NOT MATURE AS FAST SPIRITUALLY.
    2. BE READY.
    3. BE PATIENT.
    4. BE STRONG.
3. INTRODUCTION
  - A. THE FIRST WORD IN THIS SECTION IS “THEREFORE”.
  - B. NOTE: ANYTIME WE SEE THE WORD “THEREFORE” IN SCRIPTURE, THE RULE IS TO FIND OUT WHAT IT’S THERE FOR.
    1. GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE REASON IT IS THERE IS THAT “THEREFORE” IS POINTING BACK TO THE PREVIOUS THOUGHT.
    2. VERSE 3 REFERS TO “THE LAST DAYS”.
      - a. NOTE: “THE LAST DAYS” IS THE TIME SIGNATURE FOR THIS SECTION OF JAMES.

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3. IN VERSES 7 AND 8 JAMES REPEATS THE PHRASE “**THE COMING OF THE LORD**”.
  4. IN VERSE 9 JAMES SAYS “**THE JUDGE IS STANDING RIGHT AT THE DOOR**”.
- C. JAMES IS **EMPHASIZING** TO HIS AUDIENCE THAT THEY SHOULD BE **READY** BECAUSE JESUS COULD **RETURN** AT ANY MOMENT... IT'S AT HAND... HE'S AT THE DOOR... BE **READY**.
4. **BE READY**:
    - A. THE MOST BASIC **RESPONSE** TO THE **TRUTH** OF JESUS' **COMING** IS PRIMARILY THAT WE SHOULD **BE READY**.
      1. **EXAMPLE**: IF YOU KNOW FRIENDS OR RELATIVES ARE **COMING** OVER FOR DINNER, THE FIRST THING YOU DO IS TO GET THE **HOUSE READY**.
    - B. **SO... SINCE JESUS IS COMING BACK**, AT THE VERY LEAST, WE SHOULD **BE READY** FOR THAT **EVENT**.
    - C. **NOTE**: THE PHRASE “**THE LAST DAYS**” IS USED **FIVE DIFFERENT TIMES** IN THE **NEW TESTAMENT**:
      1. BY **LUKE** IN THE BOOK OF **ACTS**,
      2. BY **PAUL** WHEN HE WROTE TO **TIMOTHY**,
      3. BY **JAMES**,
      4. IN THE BOOK OF **HEBREWS**,
      5. AND BY **PETER** IN 2 PETER.
        - a. **THOSE FIVE TIMES USE THE SAME PHRASE**, “**THE LAST DAYS**” ... “**THE LAST DAYS**” ... “**THE LAST DAYS**” ... “**THE LAST DAYS**”!
    - D. THE **SECOND COMING**, THE **LAST DAYS**, SHOWS UP IN **1,845** DIFFERENT **PLACES** IN THE **BIBLE**.
      1. IT'S ESTIMATED THAT 1 OUT OF EVERY 30 VERSES IN THE **OLD TESTAMENT**, AND 1 OUT OF EVERY 13 VERSES IN THE **NEW TESTAMENT** DEAL WITH THE **SECOND COMING**.
      2. **WHY: WHY SO MANY REMINDERS?**
        - a. **BECAUSE: GOD WANTS US TO BE READY**.
          - 1) **JESUS IS COMING... GET THE HOUSE READY. HE IS COMING**.
            - i. **BE READY!**
    - E. **QUESTION? ARE WE THERE YET... ARE WE LIVING IN THE “LAST DAYS”?**
      1. WHO THINKS WE **ARE**?... WHO THINKS WE **ARE NOT**?... WHO **DOESN'T KNOW**?

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- F. THE **BIBLICAL ANSWER**: IS **YES**, WE **ARE** LIVING IN THE “**LAST DAYS**” ... **BUT** WE’VE **BEEN** IN THE “**LAST DAYS**” FOR THE **LAST 2,000 YEARS!!**
1. TECHNICALLY, THE “**LAST DAYS**” ARE THE **DAYS BETWEEN** THE **FIRST COMING** AND THE **SECOND COMING** OF **JESUS CHRIST**.
- G. **ILLUSTRATION: HUSBAND WATCHING FOOTBALL GAME ON TELEVISION.**
1. WIFE: WE HAVE AN APPOINTMENT IN 30 MINUTES.
  2. HUSBAND: I’LL BE READY SOON, IT’S THE **LAST QUARTER**.
  3. WOMEN... DO **NOT** THINK YOU’RE GOING TO **LEAVE** ANY TIME **SOON!!!**
    - a. BECAUSE THE “**LAST QUARTER**” CAN LAST FOR AN **HOUR OR MORE**.
  4. THE **APPLICATION**: EVEN THOUGH WE ARE LIVING IN THE “**LAST DAYS**”, “**LAST**” DOES **NOT** MEAN **SHORT**... “**LAST**” MEANS **FINAL**.
- H. **CHRISTIAN PERIODS OF HISTORY**:
1. THE CREATION...
  2. THE FALL...
  3. THE AGE OF THE PATRIARCHS...
  4. COVENANT PERIOD...
  5. THE PERIOD OF THE LAW...
  6. THE PERIOD OF KINGS...
  7. THE EXILE...
  8. THE RETURN...
  9. NOW WE ARE IN “**THE LAST DAYS**” ... THE **LAST QUARTER**.
    - a. **SO**... THE **NEXT EVENT** ON THE **PROPHETIC CALENDAR** IS THE **COMING OF CHRIST** FOR THE CHURCH.
- I. **C.S. LEWIS** WROTE A SEVEN PART SERIES NAMED “THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA”.
1. IN THE THIRD BOOK, **ASLAN**, A **LION** FIGURE WHO **REPRESENTS CHRIST**, HAS A **CONVERSATION** WITH ONE OF THE CHILDREN NAMED **LUCY** REGARDING HIS **LEAVING**.
  2. **ASLAN** SAYS TO **LUCY**, “DO NOT LOOK SO SAD, WE SHALL MEET AGAIN **SOON**.”
  3. **LUCY** SAID, “PLEASE, **ASLAN**, WHAT DO YOU CALL **SOON**?”
  4. **ASLAN**’S **RESPONSE** WAS, “**I CALL ALL TIMES SOON**.”
  5. THE **CHURCH** HAS BEEN **WAITING 2,000 YEARS**... **HOWEVER** WE ARE **2,000 YEARS CLOSER NOW** THAN WE WERE **THEN**.
- J. THE **EFFECT** OF ALL THAT **INFORMATION** IS THAT **JESUS COULD COME BACK AT ANY** MOMENT... **AND**, THEREFORE, WE **SHOULD BE READY!!!**

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#### K. **SCRIPTURE: “BE READY”.**

1. **Matthew 24:44 (NASB)** “For this reason you also must **be ready**; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will*.”
2. **Philippians 3:20 (NLT2)** “But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are **eagerly waiting** for him to **return** as our Savior.”
3. **1 Peter 4:7 (NASB)** “**The end of all things is near**; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.”

#### L. **EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD LIVE INTENTIONALLY IN THE AWARENESS OF THE CERTAINTY OF JESUS’ RETURN!!**

M. **G. CAMPBELL MORGAN SAID, “TO ME, THE SECOND COMING IS THE PERPETUAL LIGHT ON THE PATH WHICH MAKES THE PRESENT BEARABLE. I NEVER LAY MY HEAD ON MY PILLOW WITHOUT THINKING THAT MAYBE BEFORE MORNING BREAKS, THE FINAL MORNING MAY HAVE DAWNED. AND I NEVER BEGIN MY WORK IN THE MORNING WITHOUT THINKING THAT HE MAY INTERRUPT IT WITH HIS WORK. I AM NOT LOOKING FOR THE GRAVE. I AM LOOKING FOR HIM.”**

1. **THAT’S HOW WE SHOULD LIVE!!! THAT’S BEING READY... LOOKING FOR AND LIVING FOR HIM.**

N. THE EARLY CHURCH HAD A WORD FOR SAYING “GOODBYE”...

1. **“MARANATHA”... IT MEANS “THE LORD IS COMING”!**
2. **IT’S A GOOD REMINDER... “SEE YOU LATER... THE LORD IS COMING”!**
3. **WE SHOULD REMIND OURSELVES OF THAT FREQUENTLY... “THE LORD IS COMING”... SO BE READY.**

O. **DISCUSS: WAYS WE SHOULD PREPARE/BE READY FOR JESUS’ RETURN.**

1. **... AND, HE WILL RETURN... EITHER AT OUR DEATH. OR AT HIS SECOND COMING!**

#### 5. **BE PATIENT:**

A. **James 5:7 (NLT2)** “Dear brothers and sisters, **be patient** as you wait for the Lord’s return. Consider the **farmers** who **patiently wait** for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen.

B. **SCRIPTURE GIVES MANY PROMISES THAT JESUS IS GOING TO RETURN, AND THAT HE’S COMING SOON... BUT “SOON” HAS GONE FROM 15 YEARS TO 2,000 YEARS... SO JAMES ADDED THE CAUTION “BE PATIENT”.**

1. **... BECAUSE WAITING IS ALWAYS DIFFICULT.**
  - a. **THINK CHILDREN AND CHRISTMAS DAY!**
2. **SCRIPTURE GIVES MANY PROMISES THAT JESUS IS GOING TO RETURN, AND THAT HE’S COMING SOON.**

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1) BUT THAT “**SOON**” HAS NOW BEEN 2,000 YEARS... SO JAMES  
ADDS “**BE PATIENT**”.

C. JAMES ALSO USED A WORD MEANING “PATIENT” IN CHAPTER 1.

1. James 1:2-4 (NKJV) “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.
2. IN CHAPTER 1 THE WORD MEANS “PERSEVERANCE” OR “ENDURANCE” IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.

D. IN CHAPTER 2 HE USES THE WORD AGAIN AND RELATES PATIENCE TO FARMERS.

1. ONE REASON JAMES MAY HAVE USED FARMERS AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF PATIENCE IS THAT CLEMENT, AN EARLY CHURCH LEADER IN THE CHURCH IN ROME, WROTE THAT JAMES AND HIS BROTHER JUDE WERE BOTH FARMERS.

E. FARMERS PLANT AFTER PREPARING THE SOIL... BUT THE RESULTS ARE OUT OF THEIR cont      rol... THEY HAVE TO LEAVE THE GROWING TO GOD.

1. AN EARLY FROST WILL KILL THE CROP.
2. TOO MUCH RAIN WILL ROT THE CROP.
3. TOO LITTLE RAIN WILL WITHER THE CROP.
4. TOO MUCH SUN WILL BURN THE CROP.
5. TOO LITTLE SUN WILL RETARD THE CROP.
6. SO... THE FARMER PLANTS IN THE GROUND... AND HE WAITS.
  - a. ... AND WAITING CALLS FOR “PATIENCE” THROUGHOUT THE GROWING SEASON.

F. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ALL ABOUT PATIENCE AS WE WAIT FOR SANCTIFICATION (= OUR GROWING SEASON) TO BE MORE CHRISTLIKE WHICH TAKES T – I – M – E... AND TIME MEANS WAITING... AND WAITING TAKES PATIENCE.

1. ... AND “THAT STARTS WITH A “T” AND IT RHYMES WITH A “P” AND THAT STANDS FOR PATIENCE!”