

PATIENT TILL HE COMES

James 5:7-12

Life was hard for many of the believers to whom James wrote, and they longed for the Lord's return. In this section of his letter, James encourages his beloved to be patient as they wait for the Lord's return. The key idea in this passage is to be patient in the midst of suffering as we wait for Jesus' coming.

James intentionally focused on two aspects of patience; he used two distinct Greek words to convey two distinct ideas related to patience. The first Greek word James used was *makrothuméō*. *Makrothuméō* is *patience towards people*. *Makrothuméō* involves *exercising understanding and patience towards people* (1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Peter 3:9). The second word James used is *hupoménō*. *Hupoménō* involves putting up with difficult circumstances (2 Tim. 2:8-10).

According then to James, to patiently wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus involves caring for one another in the church family and putting up with difficult circumstances.

In verses 7-10 the focus is on patience towards one another in the church family. James' likens patience with one another in the church family to farming in verse 7. A farmer knows it takes time for the barley to grow and for his fig trees to fruit. He doesn't control how long; God provides the early and late rains. The farmer must be patient and let the process play itself out until the time of the harvest.

In the same way, we don't know when the Lord is going to return. But while we wait, we are to be patient with each other in the church family. While we wait, we all are in the process of sanctification; we are at different stages in our spiritual growth. As we wait for Jesus there is plenty of opportunity to get frustrated with one another and be tempted to keep our distance. James is telling us to stay engaged and stick it out with each other as we wait for Jesus.

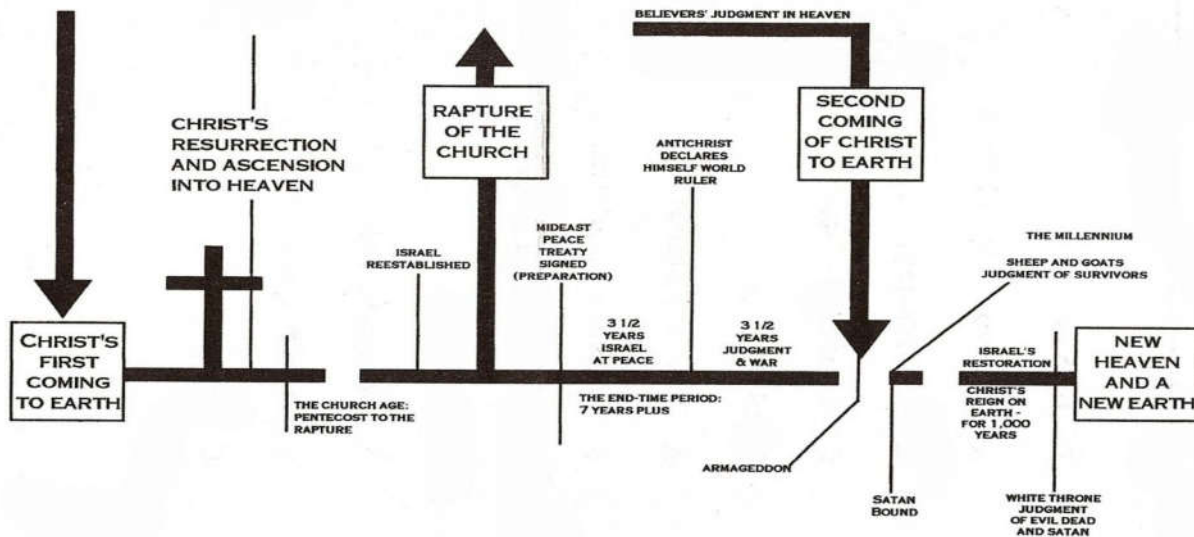
In verse 8 James tells us to *establish our hearts?*" Our *hearts* in this context refers to our will. To *establish our hearts* means to decide something in advance. When we exchange our marriage vows, we *establish our hearts*. At the moment we make these promises, all those things are in the future, but we are deciding in advance that we will be faithful to each other through sickness and health, through prosperity and poverty, for better or for worse.

In the context of James 5:7-12 we establish our hearts by deciding now we will exercise understanding and patience with one another in the church family and that we will put up with difficult circumstances as we wait for Jesus' return.

James called upon his people to make these commitments in light of Jesus' return and judgment. As in the days of James, so also in ours; Jesus could come back at any moment in the Rapture event (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Once gathered to Jesus, each of us will stand before Him and give account of our Christian life. Jesus will purify us and rebuke or reward us as we are due (Rom. 2:6-8, 8:16-17; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 19:6-8). After the Bride of Christ, the Church, has been purified, we will be wed to Christ at the Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-8). After the Marriage of the Lamb, we will return with the Lord Jesus at His second coming to deliver the Jews and defeat the Antichrist at the end of the seven-year Tribulation (Rev. 19:11-21). Then all the Old Testament saints and all the Tribulation saints will be resurrected so they can attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Dan. 12; Matt. 8:10-12; Rev. 19:9, 20:4). Then we will reign and rule with the Lord Jesus in His Kingdom here on earth for the next 1000 years (Rev. 20:4-6). At the end of the Millennial Kingdom there will be one final battle at which Satan will be forever defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:7-10). Then

the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). Then God will make a New Heaven and a New Earth and the Heavenly Jerusalem will be our dwelling place here on earth and we will dwell with God forever and ever (Rev. 21-22)!

ORDER OF EVENTS OF BIBLE PROPHECY



The warning in verse 12 is not against cursing (although we're not to cuss!). To swear means to take an oath that what we are saying is true or that what we promise we will fulfill. Jesus condemned this kind of oath (Matthew 23:16-22). As Bob Deffinbaugh explains:

The purpose of these technical oaths was to appear to be promising something that they (the pharisees) had no intention of fulfilling. One could swear by the temple and feel no obligation to keep his oath, but if he swore by the gold of the temple he was obligated (Matthew 23:16-17). This kind of oath taking was hypocrisy because it gave the appearance of a most solemn promise, but the reality was that the oath taker had no intention of keeping his promise.¹

A Christian shouldn't need to make oaths; our word should be our bond. Above all else, as James says, we should speak truth; it is the basis of trust. Without this, believers cannot trust each other. How then can we care for one another? Such a violation of trust among believers will be rebuked by the Lord Jesus at the Judgment.

¹ <http://bible.org/seriespage/real-religion-requires-endurance-james-57-20>