

James 5:1-6

Introduction:

1. Subjects previously covered in our study of James include:
 - a. "facing temptations" (1:2-18)
 - b. "hearing and doing the Word" (1:19-27)
 - c. "respect of persons" (2:1-13)
 - d. "faith and works" (2:14-26)
 - e. "a warning for teachers" (3:1)
 - f. "use of the tongue" (3:2-12)
 - g. "true and false wisdom" (3:13-18)
 - h. "strife among Christians" (4:1-10)
 - i. "speaking evil of others" (4:11-12)
 - j. "self-sufficiency" (4:13-17).
2. In his letter James mentioned rich people several times.
 - a. (1:9-11) The rich Christian is to rejoice in his trials when he is made humble.
 - b. (2:6-7) Partiality is not to be shown toward the rich because they often treat Christians badly.
3. (5:1-6) Rich men are warned and rebuked.
 - a. These verses were not written to rich men who use their wealth to glorify God and to assist the needy.
 - b. They were written to rich men who gain their wealth through sinful means and who fail to use their wealth in ways that please God.

Discussion:

- I. (vs.1-3) RICH MEN ARE WARNED
 - A. (vs.1) Sinful rich men are warned that miseries will come upon them.
 1. These miseries should cause the rich to weep and howl.
 2. Riches will not prevent sinful men from suffering punishment at the judgment (Proverbs 11:4; Zephaniah 1:18).
 - B. (vs.2-3) Sinful rich men are warned that their treasures are in the wrong place.
 1. Their riches will corrupt, their garments will be moth-eaten, and their gold and silver will rust.
 2. The rich men under consideration are concerned with laying up treasures on earth, rather than in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 12:15-21).
 - C. Other important warnings and instructions are given in 1 Timothy 6:9-10, 17-19.
 - D. These strong warnings for sinful rich men should keep Christians from wanting to be like them.
- II. (vs.4-6) RICH MEN ARE REBUKED
 - A. (vs.4) Sinful rich men are rebuked for the manner in which they accumulate their wealth.
 1. They are rebuked for keeping the wages earned by their workers.
 - a. The law of Moses did not allow such behavior (Leviticus 19:13; Proverbs 22:16).
 - b. However, some Jews had a problem in this area (Malachi 3:5).
 2. Christian employers are to treat their workers fairly (Colossians 4:1).
 - B. (vs.5) Sinful rich men are rebuked for living in pleasure.
 1. These rich people are concerned about themselves and not about others.
 2. (Luke 16:19-23) Jesus described the rich man who had a similar problem.
 3. The "royal law" teaches Christians to be concerned about others (James 2:8).
 - C. (vs.6) Sinful rich men are rebuked for condemning and killing the just (James 2:6-7).

Conclusion:

1. We must avoid the practices of the rich people that James described in these verses.
2. A positive example is Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-60).
3. See 3 John 2