

# James 1

Last time we started the book of James. And the book of James is written by James the brother of Christ, who was appointed to shepherd the church in Judea after Christ's resurrection. And James is writing at a time when the flock has now been scattered abroad, and is undergoing persecution, diverse temptations, as he calls them, that are trying their faith. And he tells them right at the start that they should rejoice when their faith is tempted, because the trial of their faith works patience. As they suffer persecutions, as they are tempted to leave the faith, when they hold fast, and continue to believe on Christ, it increases their anticipation of Christ's return. That patience, that enduring and waiting, works more hope in them, in their coming salvation. And James exhorts them that they need to let patience have its perfect work, to let it finish its work in them, so that they will be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. So there is the danger that as their faith is tried, and patience is working in them, that they'll somehow prevent it from coming to perfection.

And so to know what they ought to do, how to let patience have its perfect work in them, he tells them that they should ask God for wisdom, and he will give it to them liberally.

But he warns them that they need to ask in faith. That if they are going to ask for that wisdom, then they need to not be wavering, but have their minds made up. They need to be letting patience work in them, and asking for the wisdom so that they will know how to let patience have her perfect work. They shouldn't be like a wave of the sea driven with the wind. They shouldn't be a double-minded person, who is unstable. Who isn't sure whether they want to stick with the faith or not. Who in time of temptation may fall away. If they are wavering in their faith, if they are falling away, if they aren't holding fast, then they shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. Asking for wisdom in that case is just a waste of time.

*Last time we just pointed out how the persecution and scattering that James is talking about here, is the same kind of thing that is going to be coming on the twelve tribes during the time of Jacob's trouble. So the admonition that James is giving here will certainly be very relevant for them at that time as well. Especially during the second half of the tribulation.*

*And in these verses that we looked at today, James is really drawing on OT prophecies that are about that period of time, the time of the end. That are about the end of the tribulation and the second coming.*

*And so many of the passages that we already looked at, are really related to that. They are pointing to the consummation. And so the relationship of that to what James is saying is really inescapable. He's telling them to look to that, to hope in that, in their trouble, and to stand fast in the faith.*

## Verse 9

**James 1:9** Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

So James told them to rejoice in their temptations. In verse two he told them to count it all joy when they fall into diverse temptations. And now he is giving them some direction on what they should rejoice in. What the focus of their rejoicing should be, when they are being tempted.

He tells the brother of low degree to rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich, in that he is made low.

So he groups them into two categories: those that are of low degree, and those that are rich. So on the one hand you have the poor, low income, low standing in society. And on the other hand you have the rich, the people that have a higher standing in society.

And first he tells those of low degree, that they should rejoice in that they are exalted.

Now, there are only three times that it uses the term “low degree” in the Bible, only three places where it talks about those of low degree.

And the first place is in Psalm 62:

**Psalms 62:1** *To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David.* Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.

2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.

4 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

So it is talking about suffering persecution, the same context that we're in here in James.

5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

And it talks about waiting upon God, just as James spoke of their patience.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

And it speaks of not being moved, just as James told them not to be like a wave tossed to and fro.

7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

And it exhorts to trust in God at all times, to stay in the faith.

9 Surely men of **low degree** are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.

10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.

12 Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

And so he speaks of those of both low and high degree. Of those that are rich, and those that are poor. Of those that rob to satisfy their soul, and of those that have more than enough. And David said that both are vanity. That men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie. He tells them that when they suffer, they shouldn't trust in their standing, they shouldn't take solace in that they are of high degree, and set their heart on their riches. And they shouldn't

trust in the fact that they are of low degree, and oppress and rob and steal, and say that it is OK because they don't have enough, it is OK for the poor to oppress the rich. But rather, they are told to trust in God. That both those of low and high degree are vanity. Power doesn't belong to either the poor or the rich, it isn't for them to oppress one another. Power belongs instead unto God. And so they should trust in him.

And that is very much what James is telling them here. Not to trust in who they are, not to rejoice in what they are, in their degree, either low or high. But rather that the brother of low degree would rejoice that he is exalted, and the rich, that he is made low. Not to trust in riches, or in themselves, but in God. Not to trust in their standing, but to instead rejoice in God, and what he has done, and will do.

And so rather than the brother of low degree rejoicing in the fact that he is poor, and isn't like these wicked rich guys, instead of him trusting in that and joining with others in oppressing the rich, he should let patience have its perfect work, and instead rejoice in that he is exalted.

Now, when he tells them to rejoice in that they are exalted, what is he saying by that? Well, he's saying the same thing that David said in that Psalm. That God is their refuge and deliverer and salvation. That they've been made partakers of Christ, and been exalted as the sons of God, who will one day rule and reign with him.

In other words, to rejoice in their faith. Their faith and hope in Christ. The patience, the anticipation of what they are going to receive. To rejoice in that, in that in Christ they have been exalted, as God's dear children, and heirs of a kingdom.

Remember how Paul talked about that in Hebrews, that all things would be put under the feet of man through Christ, and we would be exalted through that, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of Israel, would be exalted. One day they are going to be delivered and exalted over their enemies. And so that is what they are to be rejoicing in, in their trials. Their hope, the object of their faith. That should be their joy.

And I said that there were three times that the term low degree was used in scripture. And the other time is in Luke chapter 1, where it speaks of those of low degree being *exalted*:

**Luke 1:46** And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

So this is what Mary, James's mother, said, when she was rejoicing in God her Savior. So this is probably a passage that was very dear to James, his mother may have even repeated this psalm of praise over to them when they were children.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and **exalted** them of **low degree**.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the **rich** he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

And so Mary spoke of the salvation that would come through Christ, and rejoiced in it. She rejoiced in how her Savior would put down the mighty, destroy the wicked, show Israel mercy, and exalt them of low degree.

And so James reminds them of that. That those of low degree shouldn't engage in class warfare. They shouldn't revel in that, they shouldn't rejoice in that. It is Christ that has and will exalt those of low degree. He will save and have mercy on Israel. And so like Mary, that is what they should be rejoicing in, during their temptation. That is what the poor should be doing, rejoicing in that hope that they have in Christ.

You know, Karl Marx said that the only way that you could get people to engage in class warfare, and achieve a Marxist utopia, is through the secularization of society. You have to get rid of religion, and especially Christianity. Because religion tells the masses that they have something better that they should be hoping in. And you have to break them of that, in order to promote societal convulsion and anarchy, otherwise known as class warfare.

And I guess the communists put that into practice, they knew that they had to get rid of God for Marxism to work.

And all forms of socialism and Marxism have that same basis. You have to get people to stop rejoicing in the hope of Christ, in order to get them to become selfish enough about things in this life to be deceived by Marxist fantasies.

But James is clearly warning these Israelite Christians against that. Telling the brother of low degree, the poor, to rejoice in that he is exalted in Christ. To rejoice that hope.

And that is also what the rich need to be rejoicing in. Their faith in Christ and his imminent return.

“Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.”

So the rich are made low. Mary spoke of how God had put down the mighty from their seats, and sent the rich empty away.

And so at the deliverance of Israel, the rich are going to be made low. They are going to be like the flower of the grass and pass away.

Many people probably have never considered it, but grass does flower. It get's little flowers on it. But they very quickly dry up and fall off. And that is what James compares the rich to.

## Verse 11

**James 1:11** For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

So the rich will fade away as the flower of the grass.

And this is something that it speaks of other places in scripture, that James is drawing on here.

We read from Psalm 37 last time, where they were admonished to rest in the LORD, and not to fret themselves because of the persecution of the wicked.

Here is what it said at the beginning of that Psalm:

**Psalms 37:1** Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the **grass**, and **wither** as the green herb.

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

So they were told not to be envious against the wicked, because they would be cut down and wither like grass.

Instead they need to trust in the LORD, and endure their temptations, still doing good. And that is the same thing that James is going to tell all of them here. It isn't the rich that are blest, it isn't those of low degree. It is those that endure temptations. So let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in that he knoweth the LORD.

So the rich, are like grass, and they will wither and pass away.

And one of the most famous passages that compares people to grass is Isaiah 40.

*And so in verse 11 James figuratively describes the second coming of Christ.*

*"For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."*

*So he says that the sun is going to rise with a burning heat. And what is that a figure of?*

*Well, if you look it up, you'll find that Christ is compared to the sun when he returns. So the sun is going to rise, Christ is going to return.*

*You remember how before Christ returns the heavens are going to be darkened. But he is going to come lit with the brightness of God's glory. So in many places it refers to Christ's return as a morning. He is going to rise like the sun.*

*And so James says that the sun will rise with a burning heat.*

*And that certainly fits the return of Christ, rising with a burning heat. He's going to come to take vengeance on the wicked. And so it describes him in other passages coming burning with his anger.*

*And James said that when that happens, when the sun rises with a burning heat, it withers the grass. No sooner is it risen than it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth. And so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. When Christ comes he will judge the rich. He will judge and destroy the wicked, and many of them will be rich men.*

*I mean, anybody who is left at that point, if they are still in the faith, still holding fast, they aren't going to be rich. After all of the persecution and trouble, they will have very little left. There will be precious few rich who will not be destroyed at the coming of Christ.*

*And so, we won't go into in depth now, but we've looked before at the parable of the sheep and the goats. How Christ judged those that did not help his people. And so those that are rich, who haven't been aiding the Jews during the tribulation, will be destroyed. And so Christ said, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

*And so when Christ returns, he'll destroy the wicked, just as the sun withers the grass. And no matter how rich one might be, that doesn't change the fact that he's still just grass. And his flower will fall, he will wither, and perish, and the grace of his fashion will pass away.*

*And so there are many different passages that speak of that, that use that figure of the return of Christ.*

*And we already looked at some of those, like Isaiah 40:*

**Isaiah 40:3** The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

This is a prophecy that was fulfilled once by John the Baptist, and it will be fulfilled again at Christ's return. More on that later.

But there was a voice crying in the wilderness declaring the coming of the LORD. And for the first-century Jews, the twelve tribes scattered abroad, that was John the Baptist. He had come and declared that, been that voice. And they had heard him.

*Now, this is a prophecy that is often associated with John the Baptist. The gospels declare that John was that voice in the wilderness. That he was a fulfillment of this prophecy.*

*But you know, most of this prophecy has never yet been fulfilled. It says that the glory of the LORD will be revealed and all flesh will see it together. That has never happened. That has never literally taken place. But when Christ returns, when he rises as the sun with a burning heat, and the glory of the LORD is revealed, scripture tells us that all flesh will indeed see it together. The whole world will behold the coming of Christ, the glory of the LORD. For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*

6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is **grass**, and all the goodliness thereof is as the **flower** of the field:

7 The **grass withereth**, the **flower** fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is **grass**.

So the one in the wilderness is called upon to cry, and he asks why he ought to cry. What can he say? What is there to say when the LORD's glory is to be revealed? If all flesh is to see it, is not all flesh to be destroyed? Will they not be burnt up? If the LORD comes, are the people not as grass, is not all flesh as grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field? Will they not wither and fade away at the coming of the glory of the LORD? Will they not be blown away with the wind if the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon them? Surely the people is grass.

What is there to say? God is coming. Are we not all to perish?

And the reply of God is:

*So do you see why this response of the voice? Do you see why he asks, what shall I cry? The glory of the LORD is going to burn up the wicked just as the sun withers the grass. Why cry? What is there to say? What good would it do any man to speak? How can mere grass escape the heat of God's wrath?*

8 The **grass withereth**, the **flower** fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Yes, that's true, the people is grass. They will wither and fade. But the word of our God shall stand for ever.

So what is there to cry, what is there to say, to prepare the way of the LORD? How can any flesh be saved when he comes, and not wither as grass at his presence? What can preserve them?

Well, the word of our God shall stand for ever.

The word of God will endure. And the implication is that those that have faith in the word of God, will endure as well. Those that have heard the word of God, and have accepted it, those that have his word in them, will be preserved by it. And so that is the thing to cry, because that is the only thing that can preserve the hearers, when God comes. When the grass withers and fades, they will continue, and they will behold the glory of the LORD.

Not the rich, not the poor, but those of faith, those that endure. The just shall live by his faith. He will not wither like the grass. He's heard the word. He'll be preserved.

*Because the word of God will preserve those that keep it. His word will stand for ever. And those of faith, who trust and hope in that word, will stand for ever as well.*

*And so we saw that described in Deuteronomy 32 as the word of God coming down upon the grass like dew, that would refresh it and make it grow.*

And there are other passages that speak of how that happens.

When we were going through Psalms one passage that really stood out was Deuteronomy 32. And this is the way that that chapter begins:

**Deuteronomy 32:1** Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the **grass**:

3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

So he speaks of the word of God, of his words, of his doctrine, as rain, as dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass.

Now, what does the dew, and the small rain on the tender herb, do? What do the showers do when they fall upon the grass?

It greens up. It springs up and grows. It doesn't wither and fade away. But it shoots forth, and buds, and blooms, and brings forth fruit.

Remember what Paul said in Hebrews:

**Hebrews 6:7** For the earth which drinketh in the *rain* that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

Remember how we said that the rain there represented the word of God that they had heard? That was clear from the context. He was talking about how they had heard the doctrine of Christ preached over and over to them, and they didn't appear to be going on unto perfection. And so he told them that if they have the rain coming oft upon them, they should be bringing forth. And if they aren't then they must not have the right seed in them, they must be bringing forth briars and thorns instead.

And so the Bible speaks of the word of God as the soft and gentle rain, the showers of dew, that come down upon the grass and the tender herb of the field.

And so, why does some grass wither and fade away, and other not? How will some people be preserved when all others fade away at the coming of the glory of the LORD? It will be because of the word of God, that has come oft upon them. The word of God will preserve and sustain them, so that they will not wither. The word of our God will stand for ever, and it will cause them to green, and grow, and bud, and bring forth fruit.

**Psalms 103:13** Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.  
14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.  
15 As for man, his days are as **grass**: as a **flower** of the field, so he flourisheth.  
16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

And you'll notice how several passages have spoken of wind causing the wicked to fade away. They will be blown and carried away of the wind and destroyed. Just as he spoke of the double-minded man being like waves of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;  
18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

And so they are preserved by the word of God. By fearing him, and keeping his word. And so James says:

*And that is by no means the only passage that says that. So let's look at a few more.*

**2 Samuel 23:1** *Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,  
2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*

*So David speaks of how God inspired him to write his many psalms. And it is as that man to whom God's word came that he says what he now says.*

**3** *The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.*

*And so among the things that God said to David were things that were important for him to understand as the ruler of his people. Wisdom for him regarding the kingdom. And we definitely saw that as we went through the book of Psalms.*

**4** *And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the **sun riseth**, even a morning without clouds; as the tender **grass** springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.*

*So God says that a man who heeds that, and rules justly and in the fear of God, will be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth.*

*And we know what that is a figure of. That is a figure of the coming of Christ. Because when Christ comes, that's the kind of ruler that he is going to be, he is going to rule justly.*

*And he says that when Christ comes, it will be as a morning without clouds.*

*Now, we know, from many passages, that when Christ comes, he will come with clouds. But here David speaks of that morning as a morning without clouds. And he describes it that way, as a*



clear shining after rain, for a reason. What he's saying is that at that point, the rain has already come and gone. The clouds are gone, and the sun is coming up. And so, on a morning like that, he said that it is like the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. The tender grass that received the rain springs forth when the sun comes out and shines clearly. That is when it really begins to grow.

But the rain is past. The clouds are gone. So any grass, that didn't receive the rain, is in trouble. The clouds are gone, and now the sun is risen and shining clearly, with a burning heat. And that will cause the tender grass that received the rain to spring forth. But if there is any grass that didn't receive the rain, it would wither, and its flower would fall, and it would perish. And so when the sun comes up, if you haven't received the rain, it is too late. You have to have received the rain before that, if you are going to spring forth, and not wither.

5 Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

So David acknowledges that it was not himself of which God was speaking. That his house at that time was not so with God. But one day it will be, in Christ. And that was all David's salvation, all his hope, all his desire.

6 But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:

7 But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.

And so just as Paul did in Hebrews, David puts a difference between the tender grass that springs forth after the rain has come upon it, and that which beareth thorns and briars. Those that are as thorns and briars, who have received the rain, heard the word spoken, but not brought forth fruit, not had faith, they will be destroyed. They'll be burnt up.

And so David, with his final words, spoke of his desire that the sun would arise, and that the grass would spring forth as the clear shining after rain. He had seen that take place, as an allegory of that, during his lifetime. God had given him the doctrine of the Psalms, that had caused the grass to spring forth, resulting in the glorious reign of Solomon. But David's hope was in what he knew to be a still future fulfillment of that, when all the wicked would be as thorns and briars thrust away, and the righteous would spring forth at the rising of the sun clearly shining after rain.

And David spoke of that also in Psalm 72.

**Psalms 72:1** A Psalm for Solomon. Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

So this is a prayer of David asking God that his son would be the kind of ruler that he described there, one that does justly, in the fear of God.

2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown **grass**: as showers that water the earth.

7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

So he says that the reign of the king's son will be like showers that water the earth. That he will come down like rain upon the mown grass.

And he explains what he means by that by saying that in his days the righteous will flourish, and the abundance of peace.

So David is saying that his son will carry on what his father has begun here, and will himself also be as showers upon the mown grass.

And Solomon was indeed like that. He did cause the righteous to flourish, and bring peace to the earth.

And one way that he did that was through his wisdom, through his proverbs that he wrote. And that wisdom and those sayings were given him by God. Solomon also spoke the word of God, from the throne. And so his rule in that wisdom and judgement was like showers upon the earth. And of course, he wasn't the perfect fulfillment of that. The king's Son that would be the true end of that prophecy would be Christ.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

Did you notice that there were two prophecies there that Solomon would be brought gifts and gold from Sheba? And the queen of Sheba did indeed come to Solomon bringing him gifts.

But you see also how many of these things were only partly fulfilled under Solomon, as a shadow of things to come.

16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like **grass** of the earth.

So he again speaks of the people being like the grass of the earth. He speaks of how they will flourish.

Now, he says that there will be a handful of corn in the earth. That is grass seed, wheat seed.

When the Bible is talking about corn it is talking about grains, not about maize. And what grows from grain, from grains of corn, is really just a kind of grass. That is all that wheat is.

So when he says that there will be an handful of corn in the earth, what he's saying is that there will be a handful of grass seed, of wheat seed. And he said that that seed is going to be planted, and the fruit thereof is going to be so great, that it will shake like Lebanon.

*Now, Lebanon, was not the land of grass. Lebanon is the land of the cedar, right? Even today. And the Bible many times speaks of the cedars of Lebanon. And it uses cedars, pines, large trees like that, to represent the kings and great men of the earth. It often speaks of the cedars of Lebanon that way, figuratively, in prophecy.*

*So Lebanon is the land of the great and tall trees. Like redwoods, sequoias. And he says that the fruit of this grass seed, when it springs up and grows, is going to shake like Lebanon. Like a mighty cedar. That is what is going to come from this handful of corn. It is not going to be as grass that perishes, but as the cedars that grow for ever. Remember what the oldest trees in the world are. They are bristlecone pines. So evergreen trees are both the largest and oldest of the trees. And they are always green, they never wither. And so that is what the offspring of that handful of corn will be like. It will come from seed that is just the seed of grass, just like the seed that any other men come from. But the children will be evergreen, will be great, and will endure for ever.*

*17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.*

*18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.*

*19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.*

*20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.*

*And so that was David's last prayer that he wrote. And in it he speaks of the coming of a time when men shall flourish like grass, just as he did in his last words which we just read. So this was on David's mind in his later years.*

*And what was revealed to him was that God was going to raise up a man to sit on his throne, that would do justice and judgement. That would destroy the wicked, who are as briars and thorns, but who would cause the grass of the earth to flourish.*

*And when that happens there is going to be a handful of corn in the top of the mountains, speaking of the seed of man, and the fruit thereof will shake like Lebanon.*

*So there is going to be a seed in Israel, a few people on the tops of the mountains, who are going to have children that will be great in the earth.*

*And that is a prophecy that is confirmed in other places. That this will be the calling of the grass of the earth, which the showers will cause to flourish.*

*In Daniel chapter 4 Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon sees a dream. And Nebuchadnezzar's dream is actually prophetic of what will happen in the latter days. Remember how Revelation speaks of Babylon the great. So Nebuchadnezzar represents, allegorically, what will happen to Babylon the great, of what will befall the beast and the whore that rides it.*

*Nebuchadnezzar says:*

**Daniel 4:13** *I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;*

*14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:*

*So Nebuchadnezzar was depicted in the dream as a great tree, that would be cut down.*

*And what this actually is is a figure of the whore. Or as we better know it, of the "church." The "church" is going to be cut down. Remember how it says that that the wild branches of the olive tree will be broken off, and the natural branches will be grafted back in. So the true church is going to be taken out of the earth, and the remainder, which is only the whore, is going to be cut down, God is no longer going to be working with them. Instead, he will be working with Israel, with the good olive tree once again, with the natural branches.*

*So pay close attention to what he says next:*

*15 Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender **grass** of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the **grass** of the earth:*

*Now, he's used various figures here that the Bible uses in prophecy. And two of them are things that we've been talking about here. The grass of the earth, and being wet with the dew of heaven.*

*So the tree was cut down, which represents the cutting off of God's work with the Gentile church on this earth at that time.*

*But the stump of the roots is left. So there is still something there to be grafted onto, Israel can still be grafted into the natural root.*

*But here it doesn't describe it that way, it doesn't use grafting as a picture of that. Instead it describes Israel as David described them: the tender grass of the field. And so the stump of the roots would be left in the earth in the tender grass of the field. So the tender grass of the field would be those which would be surrounding those roots, that stump. The portion of the roots would be among them.*

*And when he speaks of that stump of the roots, he says that with that stump of the roots in the grass of the earth would be left a band of iron and brass. And that iron and brass are figurative of power and judgment. As in, a kingdom. So the power and judgment of the kingdom of heaven is going to be committed to the grass of the earth. It is going to be with them.*

*Now, they won't possess the kingdom yet. But the possession of the kingdom, the rightful power and judgment of the kingdom will be theirs, and the portion of it will be with them, and it will ultimately be with them that it will be received. It is from the midst of them that the power and judgment, that the kingdom must be dispensed. But with them it is in safeguard.*

*16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.*

*And so what is Babylon depicted as in Revelation? As a beast. And how long is the tribulation? Seven years.*

*So for that period of time the man's heart will be taken away, the Spirit and the church will be taken out of the way, and what remains will have the heart of the beast.*

*So the saints will be taken up, and the "church" on this earth will no longer be defined by men, by people, it will no longer be the congregation of the saints, but it will be purely a political system, a kingdom. A man's heart will be taken away from it, and it will be given the heart of a beast. The basic essence of it will be changed. And by saying that a beast's heart will be given to it, what did the beasts represent that it talks about in Daniel? Well, they represented different kingdoms. And so at that point what was before the congregation of the saints will be purely a kingdom, a political system, for seven years. No more saints in it.*

*And what does a beast do to the grass? It devours it and tramples it down. And so Nebuchadnezzar was told that he would eat grass as oxen. And that is exactly what the*

*antichrist's kingdom will be doing, it will be making war against Israel, it will be devouring them and trampling them down.*

*But after seven years, the Spirit and the church will return. And just as Nebuchadnezzar was restored to his place, so the church will take up its position as rulers of the earth, ruling and reigning with Christ. From Israel, the great nation in all the earth. The stump of the roots will still be there in the earth, with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of field. That is where the kingdom's seat will be. With Israel, in the tender grass of the field.*

*So power and judgment will be with Israel, and when the kingdom comes, they will be exalted with it. They will be as a handful of corn on the top of the mountains, but their fruit shall shake like Lebanon.*

*And it speaks of that also in Micah 5:*

**Micah 5:1** *Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.*

*2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

*3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.*

*4 And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.*

*5 And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.*

*6 And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.*

*So it is speaking of Christ the King, and how his kingdom will be established.*

*7 And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the **grass**, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.*

*So the remnant of Israel at that time, will be like showers upon the grass. It is through them that the men of the earth will be refreshed, and will flourish. Through the kingdom of heaven, through Christ's kingdom over Israel, and over all the earth.*

*So all the grass that hasn't received that dew, that persecuted Israel rather than hiding them, will perish. But those that did it unto one of the least of these His brethren, those that received that dew, it will preserve them, and they will spring up and flourish. They will abide.*

*But when he says that the dew tarries not nor waiteth for the sons of men, what is he saying by that?*

*The same thing that it was saying when it said it would be a morning without clouds. That if you haven't already worked to protect Israel at that point, if you haven't already received the dew, it will be too late. They will already be off on their way to Zion, too late to try to befriend them now. But don't worry. They'll be back. They'll remember you.*

*8 And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.*

*And they will also be great. As David implied when he said that they would shake like Lebanon. There would be only a remnant, only a handful upon the mountains, but they would become great.*

*9 Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.*

*So as we talked about in Hebrews, the remnant of Israel out of weakness will be made strong, will wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens. They will not just be as the grass of the earth that has received the dew of heaven, but will even be as the cedars of Lebanon.*

*And so in the book of Revelation, it talks about the grass.*

**Revelation 9:3** *And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.*

*4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the **grass** of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.*

*So remember how 144,000 of all the tribes of Israel were sealed? And so when he says those which have not the seal, he's speaking of those that are not of the children of Israel that have followed Christ.*

*And so the locusts are going to hurt all but those children of Israel, all but the grass of the earth.*

## Verse 12

**James 1:12** Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

And so it isn't those of low degree, just because they are poor, that will be blessed, or those that are of high degree, just because they are rich, that will be blessed, but it is the man that endureth temptation, that will be blessed. The man whose faith comes through the temptation, whose faith is tried by the temptation, and proved. It is he that will not fade away, that will not wither like the grass, but will receive the crown of life, that the Lord has promised to them that love him.

So when they go through temptations, he has told them to rejoice. To rejoice because it works patience. Not to rejoice in the fact that they are low and humble, not to rejoice because they are high and rich. But to rejoice in their faith, to rejoice in the work of Christ, that he will do. That though they be rich, yet they are nothing, but as the grass which shall pass away. But are preserved by faith in the word of God. And that though they be poor and be nothing, they are exalted to partake of a crown of life and Christ's eternal kingdom.

So they should rejoice in the hope, that through faith they will be made partakers of.

They will receive a crown of life, if they endure.

And that crown of life is mentioned only twice in scripture. Here in James, and once in the book of Revelation, chapter 2. And that is when Christ is speaking to the seven churches. Here is what Christ had to say to the second of those churches, the church in Smyrna:

**Revelation 2:8** And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Now, if you pay attention, you'll see that each time Christ introduces himself to each church, he does so in a manner appropriate to what he has to say to that church. And here he introduces himself as he that was dead, and is alive. So here he's going to talk to them about death and resurrection.

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

So he speaks of the tribulation that they are experiencing. The same thing that James has been talking about here.

And he also mentions that they are in poverty, many of them. But he says that they are rich. So like James said here, let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted. They are rich in Christ, in the hope of his kingdom.

And interestingly, he also speaks of Jews. Or rather those that say that they are Jews, but are not.

So Christ is speaking to the church that is going through trouble and persecution. And they are apparently coming into contact with people who are claiming to be Jews, but who are actually the synagogue of Satan. He says that they are blaspheming.

Now, why would somebody who was from the synagogue of Satan, blaspheme, and claim to be a Jew, when they were not?

Well, clearly there must have been some people, that actually were Jews, that they were trying to impersonate. They were lying, and trying to pretend that they were Jews like these other people, when they were not.

Now, why would they be trying to do that?

Well, what did James tell us about the Jews here? He said that the twelve tribes were scattered abroad.

So there were all these Christian Jews that were scattered abroad to all of these different Gentile areas, and no doubt made contact with the Gentile churches.

So there were all of these strangers, who were Jewish Christians, who would show up to these different Gentile cities, and the Gentile brothers would no doubt seek to take them in and lend them aid.

Even though the Gentile Christians themselves were undergoing persecution, and were in poverty, they would help their Jewish brethren.

But apparently, what happened was, this got dangerous. Because you have these people who are total strangers that you are taking into confidence. And then there are these other people that are trying to kill you. Remember what Christ said about him having died. He's going to talk more about dying here. So there are persecutors that are trying to kill them.

And what better way to find out where they meet, and infiltrate them, and capture them, and put them to the sword, then by pretending to be some Christian Jews from out of town?

So those of the synagogue of Satan, these wicked pagans that were persecuting them, would lie and blaspheme, and say that they were Jews, when they were not.

And so this admonition Christ is giving this Gentile church relates to this same period of time, when the Jews are being scattered abroad, as James is writing to them here in James. So this actually relates to some of the same people that James is writing to, who would be scattered among these Gentile churches, and would have to beware of others who would claim to be Jews and were not.

And so Christ is giving them very similar admonition here, a lot of similarities, because it is the same situation.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a **crown of life**.

So he speaks of them being tried. So again, they are going through a trial of their faith. But if they are faithful unto death, he will give them a crown of life. Just as he was put to death, but has risen again.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

So he that overcomes, he that endures, will not be hurt of the second death. He will instead receive a crown of life.

So that's the only other place in scripture where it uses that term, "crown of life." And it is a very similar context.

He tells them to be faithful, to stand fast when their faith is tried, even unto death, and he will give them a crown of life.

So, we might ask is that crown *the life*, the resurrection itself, is it figurative of that, or is it literal, is it actually speaking of a literal crown that we will receive, or that martyrs will receive?

And I believe that it is speaking literally. It doesn't make sense to take it figuratively. If the crown of life was just life, then why say "the crown of life," why not just say "life"? I mean, what is it a figure of, why a crown, what exactly is that supposed to represent? It really doesn't make much sense that way. So I believe that it is speaking of a literal crown, a crown of life.

Now, the Bible actually talks about a literal crown, that was worn, that was a crown of life. It doesn't use that term, but you could certainly call it that.

You see, the high priest, in the temple system, wore a crown:

**Exodus 39:30** And they made the plate of the holy **crown** of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

So the high priest had this crown of pure gold, a plate of gold that was tied to the mitre on his head, that said "Holiness to the LORD." And he wore that crown when he was performing his holy ministry.

And Leviticus 16 gives us a glimpse as to why.

**Leviticus 16:1** And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died;



So this is God responding to some of the priests dying. They died because they came into God's presence in the wrong manner, and fire came out from the LORD and devoured them. And so because of that, to prevent that happening again, God gives Moses and Aaron some more instruction about this.

2 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

So he's trying to keep Aaron alive, he's trying to keep the high priest alive, when he comes before the mercy seat. Because the LORD would appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. They'd be coming before God's presence. Kind of like Isaiah 40, when God was coming to earth, and they needed to be preserved, when his glory was revealed.

3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen *mitre* shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

And so the high priest was only to come into the holy place with a sin offering, and with the holy garments on, including the mitre and the golden crown, lest he die.

So he had to be sure to have a blood offering to make atonement, and the holy crown on his head, when he went into the holy place.

And so that crown was a crown of life. It was a crown to be worn to proclaim God's holiness, to proclaim that holiness belongs to God, and not to man, so that the high priest wouldn't die when he came before God's presence. That God would be reminded that man is not holy, and would forgive the high priest of his uncleannesses. So that God would be reminded that they acknowledged their own sin, but that holiness belongs to God. So that God wouldn't kill them for presumption when coming into his presence.

So it was a crown, that when worn, gave the wearer life. It preserved them, and kept them alive, so they wouldn't be slain at God's presence.

And I think that that is the kind of crown that it is talking about here. I think that is the kind of crown that Christ was promising to them. A crown that would give them life. A crown that they would put on, and wear, and be able to abide for ever in the presence of the glory of the LORD. A crown of life.

And I don't think that that crown is something that is given only to martyrs. You might get that idea from Revelation, because Christ says "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give the a crown of life." But here in James it says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." So it is for anyone who endures temptation, they can consider themselves blessed, because they'll receive that crown of life. He says that the Lord has promised that crown to them that love him. So it is a crown that will be given to all those that love the Lord, and endure

temptation, and hold fast to that faith and hope. To those who do not fall away, but keep the faith.

And so this is a crown that we all are going to receive. We are going to rule and reign with Christ, and we are going to be given crowns. And those crowns are crowns of life, that preserve the wearer in the presence of God. And I don't think that those crowns are going to declare God's holiness, but the holiness of the wearer. Instead of saying "Holiness to the LORD", they'll say "I am the righteousness of GOD." They'll indicate that he who wears that crown is holy, having been covered by the blood of Christ, had his flesh put to death, and been raised and glorified unto life eternal, in holiness. And so it is a crown that we will wear, that people will see, and they'll know that that man is holy, that that man is righteous, that that man can come before the presence of God, that he can behold the glory of the LORD. That that man, is a son of God.

And so James tells them that this is what they should be rejoicing in. Both rich and poor should be rejoicing in that blessing, that hope of receiving God's promises, including a crown of life.

So the grass is going to wither, all men will fade away at the presence of the LORD. But they will not fade away, if they endure and stay in the faith. They will be given a crown of life that they may abide in God's presence.

*And that sealing of the 144,000 is something that is also reminiscent of that crown of life that we talked about. Like that crown of life worn by the high priest, that had "Holiness to the LORD" on his forehead, that seal in their foreheads will give them life, so that they will not be hurt by that plague.*

*And there is a passage in the OT, that we looked at when we were going through Psalms, a prophecy of the 144,000, and it does indeed speak of crowns.*

**Isaiah 28:1** *Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!  
2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.  
3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:  
4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.*

*So he compares those of Ephraim, those that rebelled against the son of David, those that rejected the kingdom ordained by God, to a fading flower. Does that sound familiar? And he says that they have a crown that is a crown of pride, in themselves. But that when God's mighty one comes, they will be destroyed, and trodden under foot. Like the flowers of the grass.*

*5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a **crown** of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,*

*6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.*

*And at that time, the residue of Israel, that have waited upon God, and remained faithful to his kingdom, and the Son of David, will be made strong by the LORD. He will be a crown to them, and strength, and they will turn the battle to the gate.*

*7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.*

*8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.*

*But they protest that all Israel had gone astray, every one to his own way. How then can any be saved? Who is there that would be a residue that God could crown? Will they not all be destroyed at the revealing of the glory of the LORD?*

*9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

*Young virgins. They will receive the dew of God, the knowledge of the Almighty. His doctrine shall distill upon them as the showers upon the grass. And though they be as an handful of corn in the top of the mountains, yet the LORD will crown them, and their fruit will not be as a fading flower, but it will shake like Lebanon.*

*So in the last days, this is indeed what will befall the twelve tribes scattered abroad. They will be exalted, those that endure will be given a crown of life. But the rich, as the flower of the grass, will pass away.*

*So let them put their faith and hope in that, and rejoice in the trial of their faith. Let them not trust in riches, let them not try to preserve their wealth. And let not the poor seek it. But let them rejoice in the coming of the glory of the LORD, when all flesh shall be as grass, but they will be preserved by the word, when through it they are kept in the faith, unto life eternal. To receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.*