

WAIT, AND DON'T TAKE THE BAIT!

(James 5:1–12)

WHAT IS TRUE, AND WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Christians should not react to oppression by assuming God's role as an avenger, nor by presenting overstated guarantees, but by persevering in patience—trusting that in the end, God will handle all things fairly and fully.

How Should Brothers and Sisters in Christ Respond to Oppression?¹

- Do not try to take **vengeance**; God has **promised** to handle it (v. 1–6)
 - ✓ Oppressors (illus.: the unjust rich withholding pay) are **warned** to lament their coming misery (v. 1, 4)
 - ✓ Judgments bear witness against them; God sees their sin (v. 2–3)
 - ✓ Their wicked wrongdoings are many and stand condemned (v. 5-6)
- Endure with **patience**, trusting in God's **mercy** and **justice** (v. 7–11)
 - ✓ Christians should be patient because judgment day is near (v. 7–9)
 - ✓ Persistent and faithful patience, even suffering if it occurs, is expected; Christians must endure remembering the prophets and Job as examples who did the same in their day (v. 10–11)
 - ✓ How long? Persevere until God's deliverance, even if it is at the Lord's return (v. 7, 8, 10, 11)
- Do not give way to the **temptation** to fend off evil oppressors with unrealistic promises (v. 12).
 - ✓ Do not promise what you cannot accomplish (yes = yes; no = no)
 - ✓ Keep your word; Christians should be known for their integrity

APPLICATION:²

- ❖ Live with an eye toward eternity and in submission to God. Refuse to sin. Contemplate God's grace. Encourage each other.
- ❖ Live with a sensitivity toward God and the needs of other people.
- ❖ Patience is not passive; refuse to criticize others; pray for them.
- ❖ Do not take an oath to pledge what you say. Is your honor in question?
- ❖ Do not assume wealth is always for your needs first; neither should we waste nor discard what others could put to good use.

Examples of Persecuted Prophets in the Bible (see, v. 10):²

Prophet	Persecution	Passage
MOSES	The Israelites complained and rebelled against Moses because they were in the desert and had no water.	Exodus 17:1–7
DAVID	King Saul persecuted David because David was becoming a powerful leader, threatening Saul's position.	1 Samuel 20–27 Psalms 31:13; 59:1–4
VARIOUS PROPHETS	Jezebel killed many of God's prophets because she didn't like having her evil ways pointed out.	1 Kings 18:3–4
ELIJAH	Elijah had to flee for his life when he confronted King Ahab and Queen Jezebel with their sins.	1 Kings 18:10–19:2
MICAIAH	King Ahab thought Micaiah was stirring up trouble rather than prophesying from God, so he threw Micaiah into prison.	2 Chronicles 18:12–27
ELISHA	A king of Israel threatened persecution for Elisha because he thought Elisha had caused a famine.	2 Kings 6:31
ZECHARIAH	Zechariah was executed by King Joash because he confronted the people of Judah for disregarding God's Word.	2 Chronicles 24:20–22
JEREMIAH	King Zedekiah thought Jeremiah was a traitor for prophesying Jerusalem's fall, so he had Jeremiah thrown in prison, then into a muddy cistern.	Jeremiah 37:1–38:13
DANIEL	The national leaders caught Daniel praying, so Daniel was thrown into a den of lions.	Daniel 6

¹ Craig Blomberg, *James*, vol. 16, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on NT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).
² Bruce Barton, David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson, *James*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1992).