

The Book of James – The Only NT Book

James 5 - Reiterations; endure suffering, warnings to wealthy

(And two more problem passages)

Part 1 James 5:1-6 Condemnation of Rich

- v. 1-3, 5 Serving Mammon instead of God – 1:11, Matthew 6:19-24
- v. 4, 6 Wealth by oppression 2:6b-7, 5:1

Part 2 James 5:7-11 Patient endurance in suffering

- v. 7-8, 11 Patient perseverance 1:2-4
- v. 9, 11c Not complaining against each other, but modeling the Lord in
compassion and mercy 3:14,16-18

James 5:12 Matthew 5:33-37, James 3:5-6, 8 (1-12)

James 5:13-18 Prayer as a lifestyle

- v. 13-18 I Thessalonians 5:17 (16-18)
- v. 14-15 Anointing with oil and prayer

1. Verb is *aleipsantes* (daub or smear), not *chiro* (ritual anointing) but these are general use, not 100% usage
2. Luke 10:33-34 Oil as medicineⁱ
 - A.T. Robertsonⁱⁱ in his book Word Pictures states that oil was “one of the best remedial agencies known to the ancients.”
 - The Expositors Bible Commentary agrees, stating “oil was the most common medicine in biblical times.”
 - Josephusⁱⁱⁱ records “during Herod’s last illness, he was given a bath in oil in hopes of effecting a cure.”
 - The Mishna^{iv}, which is the oral reciting of Jewish customs, also declares the medicinal use of oil.
3. But by context, this is ceremonial – administered by elders with the prayer and related to forgiveness of sins.

James 5:19-20 Bearing Burden of Restoration (not Evangelism)

I am going to disagree with a very popular interpretation among the some of the commentaries I most commonly use.

- v. 19 “among you” “is caused to stray from the Truth” – could be taken for failing Christian, or a lost church member, **but not if** Galatians 6:1 (and v 10) is considered as a parallel passage!
I John 5:16-17 definite parallel with Galatians 6:1
- v. 20a “save a soul from death” again, could refer to unsaved members, **but not if** in parallel with I John 5:16-17
- v. 20b “cover a multitude of sin” again, could refer to unsaved members, **but not if** James is describing restoration as an act of love, citing Proverbs 10:12. Peter also cites the passage in specific regard to love based in I Peter 4:8-9.

Bottom line, this passage may reasonably be interpreted as regarding the evangelism of lost church members, but the most natural interpretation, and one which is expanded in the next NT book written (Galatians), is that this refers to restoring a Christian who has become caught up in sin.

ⁱ http://www.westpalmbeachchurchofchrist.com/articles/diff_quest/anointing_oil.html

ⁱⁱ SBTS Louisville, KY, Th.M 1888

ⁱⁱⁱ Historian 37-100 AD

^{iv} Example, Mishnah Beruah, section 202, paragraph 80