

Epistle of Ya'akov ~ 5:7-12

Patience in Suffering

We learned in our last post that the oppressors would be punished, but the oppressed have to wait on **God** rather than take matters violently into their own hands. This exhortation did not mean they could not speak out against injustice; it only forbade violence and personally hostile speech (5:9) as an appropriate solution to injustice. Oh, how we have forgotten this in our society today.

⁷ So, brothers, be patient until the Lord returns. See how the farmer waits for the precious "fruit of the earth"—he is patient over it until it receives the fall and spring rains. ⁸ You too, be patient; keep up your courage; for the Lord's return is near.

Until the Lord returns, anticipates an end to all exploitation and suffering. Consequently, the oppressed should exercise self-control in their reaction to their oppressors. "**Fruit of the earth**" is a quotation from the **b'rakhah** (blessing) said before eating berries or vegetables, "Blessed are you, Adonai our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the earth." This is the blessing that **Yeshua** spoke over the wine during the Last Supper.

The fall and spring rains reference the climatic pattern in **Isra'el**, where the bulk of the rainfall comes between November and March. Harvest here becomes an image of the day of judgment, as elsewhere in **Jewish** literature. *The Lord's return is near*, follows up his remark that this is the **acharit-hayamim** as we learned in verse 5:3 in our last post.

⁹ Don't grumble against one another, brothers so that you won't come under condemnation - look! The Judge is standing at the door! This repeats the warning of 4:11–12.

¹⁰ As an example of suffering mistreatment and being patient, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of Adonai.

Most **Tanakh** prophets faced significant opposition for their preaching, some faced death. **Jewish** tradition had amplified martyrdom accounts even further; hence no one would dispute **Ya'akov's** claim. Virtuous examples were an essential part of ancient argumentation.

¹¹ Look, we regard those who persevered as blessed. You have heard of the perseverance of Iyov (Job), and you know what the purpose of Adonai was, that Adonai is very compassionate and merciful.

The perseverance of Iyov (Job), and *you know what the purpose of Adonai was*, is reflected in Milton's "Paradise Lost," "to justify the ways of **God** to man." **Iyov's** troubles began when **God** chose to answer **HaSatan's** challenge by permitting him to touch **Iyov's** possessions and person, except that he could not take **Iyov's** life (Job 1–2). **Iyov** persevered in the face of all his losses and pains, magnified by the unhelpful advice of his "friends" (Job 3–37). In the end, **God** vindicated himself and proved to **Iyov** that only **God** had the power and wisdom to deal with **HaSatan**.

¹² Above all, brothers, stop swearing oaths - not "By heaven," not "By the earth," and not by any other formula; rather, let your "Yes" be simply "Yes" and your "No" simply "No," so that you won't fall under condemnation. ~ Ya'akov 5:7-12 (CJB)

Yeshua taught similarly at Matthew 5:33–37. We dare not take an oath if we do not know what tomorrow will bring because it is such a serious commitment. The law required a person to be true to an oath they had taken (Lev 19:12). A person should avoid invoking **God's** name in a false oath.

In our next post, we complete our study of **Ya'akov** as we dig into what he says about **The Prayer of Faith**.