

James 1:9-12

1. James' three themes:
 - a. Trials
 - b. Wisdom
 - c. Poor
2. James 1:2-11 introduces the three key themes of this book.
James 1:12-27 will return to all three themes to expand on each of them:
 - a. 1:12-18 – Persevering in trials
 - b. 1:19-26 – wisdom in speech and in obedience to God's Word which manifest in actual good works, not just listening to "wisdom"
 - c. 1:27 – the oppressed in view of the theme of righteous poor and unjust rich.
3. 1:9-11 introduces the third theme: the Righteous Poor vs the arrogant, unjust rich.
4. These verses 1:9-11 flows from the verses before that ask for wisdom in the midst of trials. Here part of the wisdom includes understanding the exaltation of the righteous poor and humiliation of the unjust rich.
5. It seems clear in this text that instead of James beginning his letter with random thoughts and useful proverbs James is instead establishing his topics and the lines of thought he wishes to develop in this letter which seems to focus on socio-economic oppression (as found in the fourth generation of a culture.)
6. Summary of 1:2-11 is:
 - Do not be double-minded, but focus on the wisdom principle that the lowly and humble before the Lord will be lifted up. In fact, boast in this wisdom and hold to it as you endure trials. Resist the sinful urge to retaliate with violence or abusive language. This wisdom gives you internal joy and external gentleness.
7. This theme of the rich oppressing the righteous poor is repeated and detailed in:
 - a. James 1:27
 - b. James 2:1-26
8. This theme of the exaltation of the poor and the overthrow of the wealthy has been well established in Scripture:
 - a. Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:6-8 -
"The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world."
 - b. Mary (mother of the author James!) in Luke 1:48, 52-53
 - c. Jesus in:
 - i. Matthew 5:3 – "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - ii. Luke 6:20 – "And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."
 - iii. Rich fool of Luke 12:13-21
 - iv. Rich man and poor Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31
 - d. Isaiah 40:6-8 – "All flesh is grass and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the

people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”

e. Peter restates Isaiah 40:6-8 in First Peter 1:24-25

James 1:9 – “**Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation,**

2744 [e]	1161 [e]	3588 [e]	80 [e]	3588 [e]	5011 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	5311 [e]	846 [e]
Kauchasthō	de	ho	adelphos	ho	tapeinos	en	tō	hypsei	autou
9 Καυχάσθω	δὲ	ὁ	ἀδελφὸς	ὁ	ταπεινὸς	ἐν	τῷ	ὑψει	αὐτοῦ ;
Let boast	however	the	brother	-	of low degree	in	the	exaltation	of him
V-PMM/P-3S	Conj	Art-NMS	N-NMS	Art-NMS	Adj-NMS	Prep	Art-DNS	N-DNS	PPro-GM3S

1. Isaiah 29:19

“The humble will increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.”

2. Luke 14:11

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

3. “the humble/lowly brother” – *ho adelphos ho tapeinos* –

a. “the brother” – *ho adelphos* - means believer in the Lord

b. “the lowly” or “the humble” – *ho tapeinos* – means “lowly, lowly in spirit, humble”

i. *Tapeninos* or “lowly”:

1. Can indicate “humble” contrasting with the haughty

2. In context here is a contrast to “rich”, not “powerful” or “arrogant” (but, these may be assumed)

3. Sometimes *tapeinos* (“lowly”) and *ptochos* (“poor”) are synonyms in this book. And, James uses *ptochos* (“poor”) as a clear reference to socio-economic status of the believers in the Jewish community.

c. So, this means “the believer who is humble” or, in this case, “the believer who is oppressed by the world system”

d. “unimportant” in the social sense, but here the concept is clearly “poor” in contrast with “rich”

4. The believer in a lowly position should “boast” in “his exaltation” that is coming. Thus, “consider it all joy”.

a. This “boasting” is the same as the “joy” of 1:2.

b. These trials are producing justice, love and peace which will be the source of the lowly believer’s exaltation

c. Understanding this is the wisdom that the believer is to ask for.

d. 2:5 (2:5-7) – “Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?”

5. “boast” – *kauchastho* – is likely rooted in Jeremiah 9:23-24 -

“Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”

6. Romans 5:2-3 -

“Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,”

1223 [e]	3739 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]	4318 [e]	2192 [e]	3588 [e]	4102 [e]	1519 [e]	3588 [e]	5485 [e]	3778 [e]	1722 [e]
di'	hou	kai	tēn	prosagōgēn	eschēkamen	tē	pistei	eis	tēn	charin	tautēn	en
2 δι'	οὗ	καὶ	τὴν	προσαγωγὴν	ἔσχίκαμεν	τῇ	πίστει	εἰς	τὴν	χάριν	ταύτην	ἐν
through	whom	also	-	access	we have	by the	faith	into	the	grace	this	in
Prep	RelPro-GMS	Conj	Art-AFS	N-AFS	V-RIA-1P	Art-DFS	N-DFS	Prep	Art-AFS	N-AFS	DPro-AFS	Prep

3739 [e]	2476 [e]	2532 [e]	2744 [e]	1909 [e]	1680 [e]	3588 [e]	1391 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]
hē	hestēkamen	kai	kauchōmetha	ep'	elpidi	tēs	doxēs	tou	Theou
ἣ	ἑστήκαμεν	; καὶ	καυχώμεθα	ἐπ'	ἐλπίδι	τῆς	δόξης	τοῦ	Θεοῦ
which	we stand	and	we boast	in	hope	of the	glory	-	of God
RelPro-DFS	V-RIA-1P	Conj	V-PIM/P-1P	Prep	N-DFS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	Art-GMS	N-GMS

3756 [e]	3440 [e]	1161 [e]	235 [e]	2532 [e]	2744 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	2347 [e]	1492 [e]	3754 [e]	3588 [e]	2347 [e]
Ou	monon	de	alla	kai	kauchōmetha	en	tais	thlipsesin	eidotes	hoti	hē	thlipsis
3 Οὐ	μόνον	δέ	, ἀλλὰ	καὶ	καυχώμεθα	ἐν	ταῖς	θλίψεσιν	, εἰδότες	ὅτι	ἡ	θλίψις
Not	only [so]	now	but	also	we glory	in	-	tribulations	knowing	that	-	tribulation
Adv	Adv	Conj	Conj	Conj	V-PIM/P-1P	Prep	Art-DFP	N-DFP	V-RPA-NMP	Conj	Art-NFS	N-NFS

5281 [e]	2716 [e]
hypomonēn	katēgazetai
ὑπομονὴν	κατεργάζεται
perseverance	produces
N-AFS	V-PIM/P-3S

1:10 – “and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

3588 [e]	1161 [e]	4145 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	5014 [e]	846 [e]	3754 [e]	5613 [e]	438 [e]	5528 [e]	3928 [e]
ho	de	plousios	en	tē	tapeinōsei	autou	hoti	hōs	anthos	chortou	pareleusetai
10 ὁ	δὲ	πλούσιος	, ἐν	τῇ	ταπεινώσει	αὐτοῦ	, ὅτι	ὡς	ἄνθος	χόρτου	παρελεύσεται
he who [is]	then	rich	in	the	humiliation	of him	because	like	a flower	of grass	he will pass away
Art-NMS	Conj	Adj-NMS	Prep	Art-DFS	N-DFS	PPro-GM3S	Conj	Adv	N-NNS	N-GMS	V-FIM-3S

1. This is sarcastic irony. If the poor are going to boast in their future, then the rich must also “boast” or anticipate their ultimate state.
2. The future holds humiliation for the rich
3. The rich are passing away. The rich and their present power are compared to grass which is designed to fade into fuel as a food source or fuel for the fire.
4. Psalm 49:16-17 (49:16-20) -

“Be not afraid when a man becomes rich,
 when the glory of his house increases.
 For when he dies he will carry nothing away;
 his glory will not go down after him.
 For though, while he lives, he counts himself blessed
 —and though you get praise when you do well for yourself—
 his soul will go to the generation of his fathers,
 who will never again see light.

Man in his pomp yet without understanding is like the beasts that perish.”

5. The rich man is not evil because he has wealth, but like all men the rich man of this age must humble himself before the Lord. The rich man must boast in the Lord and not in his riches.

Thus, Matthew 19:24 -

“Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

1:11 – “For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.”

393 [e]	1063 [e]	3588 [e]	2246 [e]	4862 [e]	3588 [e]	2742 [e]	2532 [e]	3583 [e]	3588 [e]	5528 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]	438 [e]
aneteilen	gar	ho	hēlios	syn	tō	kausōni	kai	exēranen	ton	chorton	kai	to	anthos
11 ἀνέτειλεν	γὰρ	ὁ	ἥλιος	σὺν	τῷ	καύσωνι	καὶ	ἐξήρανε	τὸν	χόρτον	, καὶ	τὸ	ἄνθος
Has risen	for	the	sun	with	[its]	burning heat	and	withered	the	grass	and	the	flower
V-AIA-3S	Conj	Art-NMS	N-NMS	Prep	Art-DMS	N-DMS	Conj	V-AIA-3S	Art-AMS	N-AMS	Conj	Art-NNS	N-NNS

846 [e]	1601 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]	2143 [e]	3588 [e]	4383 [e]	846 [e]	622 [e]	3779 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]
autou	exepesen	kai	hē	euprepeia	tou	prosōpou	autou	apōleto	houtōs	kai	ho
αὐτοῦ	ἐξέπεσεν	, καὶ	ἡ	εὐπρέπεια	τοῦ	προσώπου	αὐτοῦ	ἀπώλετο	οὕτως	καὶ	ὁ
of it	has fallen	and	the	beauty	of the	appearance	of it	has perished	Thus	also	the
PPro-GM3S	V-AIA-3S	Conj	Art-NFS	N-NFS	Art-GNS	N-GNS	PPro-GN3S	V-AIM-3S	Adv	Conj	Art-NMS

4145 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	4197 [e]	846 [e]	3133 [e]
plousios	en	tais	poreiais	autou	maranthēsetai
πλούσιος	ἐν	ταῖς	πορείαις	αὐτοῦ	μαρανθήσεται
rich [man]	in the midst of	the	pursuits	of him	will fade away
Adj-NMS	Prep	Art-DFP	N-DFP	PPro-GM3S	V-FIP-3S

1:12 – “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.”

3107 [e]	435 [e]	3739 [e]	5278 [e]	3986 [e]	3754 [e]	1384 [e]	1096 [e]
Makarios	anēr	hos	hypomenei	peirasmon	hoti	dokimos	genomenos
12 Μακάριος	ἄνθρωπος	ὃς	ὑπομένει	πειρασμόν	, ὅτι	δόκιμος	γενόμενος
Blessed [is the]	man	who	endures	trial	because	approved	having been
Adj-NMS	N-NMS	RelPro-NMS	V-PIA-3S	N-AMS	Conj	Adj-NMS	V-APM-NMS

2983 [e]	3588 [e]	4735 [e]	3588 [e]	2222 [e]	3739 [e]	1861 [e]	3588 [e]	25 [e]	846 [e]
lēmptsetai	ton	stephanon	tēs	zōēs	hon	epēngeilato	tois	agapōsin	auton
λήμψεται	τὸν	στέφανον	τῆς	ζωῆς	ὃν	ἐπηγγείλατο	τοῖς	ἀγαπῶσιν	αὐτόν
he will receive	the	crown	-	of life	that	He has promised	to those	loving	Him
V-FIM-3S	Art-AMS	N-AMS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	RelPro-AMS	V-AIM-3S	Art-DMP	V-PPA-DMP	PPro-AM3S

Crowns in Scripture

Stephanos

The *stephanos* (στέφανος) the victor's crown.

1. It is the symbol of victory given to the winners in the Greek games or a contest.
2. It is a reward or a prize.
3. Stephanos is the word for crown in this discussion of five crowns.
4. It is the crown for the winners in the Christian life.
5. It is used in these verses:
 - a. 1 Corinthians 9:25
 - b. 2 Timothy 2:5
6. The *stephanos* is also used as an ornament for festivities and celebrations in these verses:
 - a. Proverbs 1:9
 - b. Proverbs 4:9
 - c. Song of Solomon 3:11
 - d. Isaiah 28:1
7. The *stephanos* was also used to honor someone publicly who had distinguished themselves in service or given to someone for their worthiness.
8. These were worn at the *parousia* (advent or return) of kings.

Diadema

The *diadema* (διαδεμα) was the kingly crown.

It is the crown worn by nobility who were possessor of a royal position.

Ranking of the Crowns

There are five crowns mentioned in scripture. They deal with different aspects of the Christian life. The crowns reflect levels of maturity in regards to a believer's growth and accomplishments of service to the Lord. They are placed here in a possible list in the order that they could be obtained by the believer.

1. **Incorruptible Crown** (1 Cor. 9:25) - this crown would be the first level a believer would attain to. This crown indicates mastery over the sin nature. The Corinthians are being urged to run the Christian life in such a way as to receive the reward in the end. Here the emphasis is in self-control.

"They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. . . I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

- a. Paul is focusing the believers on running the race or living the life God has given them to compete in.
- b. Just as each life has a race, each life has a reward available.
- c. Only those who run the race and run it according to the rules will get a prize.
- d. The crown or *stephanos* would wither and sometimes was withered (either of pine or celery see "1 Cor., NICNT, Fee") at the time of the victory but it meant fame, prestige and fortune. The symbol of victory would fade but the fame was more enduring.

- e. Paul does not run aimlessly (9:26), meaning he does not live his Christian life without purpose or direction. Nor should we if we want to achieve what has been made available to us. Consider someone who enters a race not knowing the distance or direction.
 - f. The boxer failing to land a blow is ridiculous and pointless. It is an analogy of the undisciplined believer missing his purpose.
2. **Crown of Righteousness** (2 Timothy 4:7-8) - The second level of crowns goes to those who live righteously in this world while they look forward to Christ's return. They are those who are not captivated by this world, but hunger and thirst after righteousness.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

- a. This is a crown for righteous behavior and an upright life.
 - b. "have longed" is in the perfect tense suggests those who greatly anticipated Christ's return in the past and continued to do so up until the moment of the rewarding.
 - c. This life is described by Paul to Titus in Titus 2:12,13: "[The grace] teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."
 - d. "fought" is the word *agonizomai* and though it can refer to a military fight, it is clearly a reference to training and competing in athletics; -It is the same word translated "competes in the games" in 1 Corinthians 9:25 - "make every effort" in Luke 13:24 - "struggling" in Colossians 1:29 - "wrestling" in Colossians 4:12 - "strive" in 1 Timothy 4:10 - "fight" in 1 Timothy 6:12 - "race" is the noun form in Hebrews 12:1
 - e. Notice: The same awards awaits all who qualify.
 - f. Notice the "fight" (or, the agony of training and competing comes first, and then the successful "finish" of the race. The believer cannot think they will achieve victory without the struggle of preparing for and demonstrating righteousness.
3. **Crown of Life** (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10) - The third level to attain to is to proceed in God's plan for your life while enduring trials. The believer who moves forward in God's call and assignment in the face of difficulty, even martyrdom, will receive this crown.

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him." "Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life."

- a. Testing and trials are part of the Christian life. It should be understood that when faced with test and trials many Christians turn back and do not continue on the path God has called them to run on.
- b. Jesus said we would have trouble: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)
- c. "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." (John 15:18)

- d. Paul writes to Timothy, “You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” 2 Timothy 3:10,11,12)
 - e. The doorway to the next level towards fulfilling God’s plan is to endure hardships and persecution.
 - f. The reward is for “persevering” and remaining “faithful”. The reward is not given for having great faith and getting delivered from the trial or test.
 - g. We are faithful to the Lord in the trial. The Lord is faithful to reward us for enduring the trial.
4. **Crown of Joy** (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thess.2:19) - This crown is for those who lead others to Christ or demonstrate fruitfulness by influencing others towards righteousness.

“Therefore, my brother, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!” “For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.”

- a. Rewards are not just for how we live and what we do, they are also for the influence we have on how others live and what they do.
 - b. It was being said in Thessalonica that Paul did not really care for the Thessalonians, but Paul said he did, and it should be obvious, since they will result in a crown for him if they succeed.
 - c. Gabriel tells Daniel in Daniel 12:3, “Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”
5. **Crown of Glory** (1 Peter 5:4) - The greatest achievement is to fulfill your calling and finish the work God gave you to do. The scripture reference is speaking to pastors who finish their work faithfully, but this crown is not only for pastors. It is for anyone who finds and fulfills their assignment God has given them.

“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder. . . One who will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care. . .and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.”

- a. Again we see the rewards being given upon Christ’s return. Here Christ is seen as the Chief Shepherd paying his workers that he contracted out labor to shepherd for him.
- b. Earthly crowns or *stephanos* were made of vines, etc. This crown is made out of Glory! (Isaiah 28:5)
- c. Just like Paul’s crown in 2 Timothy 4:7,8 was available to “ALL who long for Christ’s appearing,” this crown is also available to all who serve at the position and with the capacity they were given. It is not just the office of pastor, although that is the context of the verse. The application extends to all believers who become what God has created them to be and they serve him in that position.

Review of Crowns:

1. Incorruptible Crown for mastery over the sin nature.
2. Crown of Righteousness for living righteously in this world.
3. Crown of Live for enduring trials while proceeding in God's plan.
4. Crown of Joy for leading others to Christ and in righteousness.
5. Crown of Glory for fulfilling your calling and finishing the work assigned