

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Notes

Sermon Notes for February 20-21, 1999

Dale Whitehead

"Rich Man, Poor Man"

James 2:1-13

The Principle (James 2:1)

For us to profess faith in the Gospel of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ while holding an attitude of personal favoritism is contradictory and incompatible.

The Example (James 2:2-4)

James 2:2-4 gives us an example of "personal favoritism" that was particularly appropriate for their situation. It involved the church's different responses to people with differing degrees of material wealth.

The Inconsistency (James 2:5-7)

Their preferential treatment was inconsistent with God's choice of the poor (James 2:5-6) and it was inconsistent with the hostile actions of the rich toward them. (James 2:6-7).

James is not talking about those who are "poor in spirit" but economically "poor."

There is no spiritual merit in being poor nor is there any spiritual merit in being rich (2 Timothy 1:9).

God has chosen both the rich and poor for salvation.

"Rich in faith" does not mean that their faith is their wealth. "Faith" is denoting their personal trust in God and His gospel rather than the sphere or realm where their wealth is known and enjoyed.

Being an heir is attained not through meritorious effort but through a personal relationship with the Ruler of the kingdom.

The reference to "kingdom" here is to the future kingdom. Christ inaugurated His kingdom during His first advent, and now He rules in the lives of those who have accepted Him as their Sovereign. The

kingdom in its full manifestation is still in the future, awaiting the return of Christ in glory (Matthew 25:31; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:11-13).

When James says, "But you have dishonored the poor man" he is in effect saying, "How can you claim to be God's child and yet think and act so differently from Him?" It is inconsistent.