

**James 5:8** You too be patient [ aorist active imperative of μακροθυμέω (*makrothuméō*) ]; strengthen [ aorist active imperative of στηρίζω (*stēρίζō*) ] your hearts [ καρδίας (*kardías*): facilitation of souls' doctrinal inventory ], for the coming [ παρουσία (*parousía*): refers to the Rapture of the church ] of the Lord is near [ intensive perfect active indicative of ἐγγίζω (*engízō*): imminent ]. (NASB)

6. This is one of numerous passages in Scripture that refers to the terminal event of the Church Age and the beginning of the Tribulation on earth. Here is a good synopsis:

*παρουσία (parousía)*. His coming to remove His disciples from their toils and struggles on earth and to take them to the place He would prepare for them in His Father's house (John 14:2, 3, "that where I am, there you may be also"). This is what is referred to as the *parousía* of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4:15.

This coming is going to be startling and unexpected. The Lord will come to raise the dead in Christ, to transform the living who have believed, and to take them all to be with Him (1 Corinthians 15:50–54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17). This will constitute the Day of Christ or the Day of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6, 10; 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:2).

Simultaneously, however, there will begin a time of great suffering for those unbelievers who are alive at the time of the *parousía*. This is called the Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:12; 13:6, 9; Ezekiel 13:5; 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14; Amos 5:18, 20; Obadiah 1:15; Zephaniah 1:7, 14; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). All these passages speak of the period of the Tribulation and include judgments that extend over a period of time prior to the Second Coming [ or Second Advent ] of the Lord Jesus (which itself constitutes another time of His coming).

The coming of the Lord at the end of the seven-year tribulation period is what the Lord describes in Matthew 24:15–22, 32–34; Mark 13:14–23, 29, 30 (cf. Luke 19:41–44; 21:20–23, 32, 33; 23:28–30).



**Thus the coming of the Lord or His *parousía* consists of several comings which are in reality stages of a continuous process.<sup>2</sup>**

7. The Rapture could have occurred in the first century. It has not occurred yet in the twenty-first century. Over the course of about 1,987 years of the Church Age, many circumstances have occurred that the unenlightened have assumed would signal the Rapture, yet none have.
8. The reasons for this are that there is no biblical revelation that prophesies an event that signals its occurrence. It only reports that it is imminent which means that it “threatens to occur immediately.”
9. Speculation about “astral signs” or “human events,” or “wars and rumors of wars” have absolutely no biblical backing. James gives us the proper biblical rationale regarding the imminency of the Rapture in James 5:7–8.
10. Verse 7 begins with the commandment to have patience, the aorist active imperative of the compound verb, **μακροθυμέω (*makrothuméō*)**.
11. This compound is made up of the adjective **μακρός (*makrós*)**, “far distant regarding time,” and the noun **θυμός (*thumós*)**, “mind or soul.” This compound came to mean a “long soul” and expressed by the term “longsuffering,” referring to personal endurance, patience, or forbearance.
12. In the King James Version of the Bible, the word “longsuffering” is used to translate of the verb, **μακροθυμέω (*makrothuméō*)**.
13. This term places emphasis on the soul where all solutions to temporal problems are resolved or not. Solutions to worldly problems can only be resolved by the soul’s ability to apply doctrine to the circumstances.
14. What this planet provides is what is typical for its present status quo which is entropy. Everything it produces is produced by the grace of God Who manages this entropy on behalf of the human race.
15. What attitude is a Hebrew farmer supposed to have regarding his crops? Have patience and trust in the Lord. However, he must take the responsibility to manage his crops. The entropy of the devil’s world intrudes with negative circumstances or human laziness to destroy a crop.

<sup>2</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, gen. ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 1123–24.



<b>“The Boy Who Wouldn’t Hoe Corn”</b>	
<p>Tell you a little story and it won't take long 'Bout a lazy farmer who wouldn't hoe his corn; The reason why I never could tell For that young man was always well.</p> <p>He planted his corn in the month of June And by July it was up to his eyes; Come September, came a big frost And all the young man’s corn was lost.</p> <p>His story, kith, had just begun Said, "Young man, have you hoed some corn?" "Well, I tried and I tried, and I tried in vain But I don’t believe I raised no grain."</p>	<p>He went downtown to his neighbor’s door Where he had often been before; Sayin’, "Pretty little miss, will you marry me? Little miss what do you say?"</p> <p>"Why do you come for me to wed? You, can’t even make your own cornbread; Single I am and will remain A lazy man, I won’t maintain."<sup>3</sup></p>

16. Once the farmer breaks the soil and sows the seeds he is then at the mercy of the grace of God. If the crop comes in it will be because of the grace of God. In the meantime, he must patiently wait.
17. During this time, he patiently waits for the early and late rains. This situation demonstrates the importance of a grace-oriented believer’s mental attitude who is at the mercy of the weather. Here is the circumstance that is typical for any farmer in the area of Palestine:

**Most important to the farmer is the distribution of rainfall throughout the year. This is very uneven indeed. No rain falls at all during the four hottest months of the year. This hot, dry summer is a common feature of most of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean; it is balanced by a cool wet winter, but the two critical periods are the beginning and end of the wet season, when temperatures are high enough to promote growth, and the soil is moist enough to work.**

**The farmer’s year is linked closely to the coming of the rains. In October these begin, generally with a series of thunderstorms, and plowing and sowing can then be started on the hard-baked soul.**

<sup>3</sup> Songwriters: Alison Maria Krauss, Barry Bales, Daniel John Tyminski, Jerry Douglas, Patrick John Brayer, Ron Block. © BMG Rights Management, A Side Music LLC D/B/A Modern Works Music Publishing.



If the start of the rainy season is delayed, crop yields suffer; if the delay is a long one, crop failure may result. Hence, these “early” rains are of the utmost importance. At the other end of the winter, rains continuing into late April and May, when temperatures are high, are of much more value than in January or February, when they are low; they increase yields for every day that the rains are prolonged. The farmer therefore hopes for the “latter rains.”

This combination of early and latter rains is referred to frequently in the Bible, e.g. Deuteronomy 11:14; Jeremiah 5:24; Hosea 6:3; Joel 2:23; James 5:7.<sup>4</sup>

18. The most effective things this farmer can do is depend on the grace of God and His provision of those early and late rains.
19. Faith-rest is the function of systematic grace orientation. The believer is not a prophet. He can only do what he has learned through work, common sense, and trust in divine provisions.
20. He cannot control the weather. But he has learned that the weather patterns in Palestine commonly supply the early and late rains. His duty is to trust the system and be patient while it goes through its process.
21. On occasion the general weather patterns may alter and these early and late rains do not occur. This is why in the time of abundant harvests he is to store a portion for times of famine.
22. What this takes is patience. This is the principle that opens both verses 7 and 8. In verse 8, it reads, “Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.
23. This patience stresses the principle that the Rapture, although imminent, may not occur in this farmer’s lifetime, therefore, he is to continue to follow established policies in the function of raising crops.
24. Verse 8 borrows from the agrarian example in verse 7 to apply the principle to the imminency of the Rapture. It is next on the prophetic agenda, but the timing of its occurrence is known exclusively to God.
25. Therefore, it is not and may not be considered a problem-solving device. It is a prophecy that brings an end to the dispensation of the Church Age.

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<sup>4</sup> J. H. Patterson, “Rain,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 5, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, 1976), 27–28.



26. The patience that the believer has in this context should be focused on growing in grace. While the Lord delays, he is able to accumulate more doctrine in his soul furthering his advance in the plan of God.
27. This principle is brought out by the phrase in verse 8, “strengthen your hearts.” The word “strengthen” is the aorist active imperative of the verb, **στηρίζω (stēρίζō)**.
28. This verb’s commandment is extremely important to understand in this context. *Stēρίζō* admonishes the believer to become steadfast in mind, to confirm and strengthen his inventory of doctrinal ideas in his stream of consciousness.
29. From this inventory of working objects, the believer’s inventory of doctrinal power enables him to endure the circumstances common to the hostile environment of the devil’s world.
30. This is made clear by the following term, “your hearts,” the plural noun, **καρδίας (kardías)**.
31. As you well know, this word refers to the soul’s essence with emphasis on its stream of consciousness, the place where doctrine is stored for recall and application.
32. In verse 8, there is a sequence of three words that define the mentality required to endure the exigencies of the devil’s world:
  1. **“Patient”**: the aorist active imperative of **μακροθυμέω (makrothuméō)**: This term places emphasis on the soul where all solutions to temporal problems are resolved or not. Solutions to worldly problems can only be resolved by the soul’s ability to apply doctrine to the circumstances. This indicates that the believer has a relaxed mental attitude toward life and circumstances.
  2. **“Strengthen”**: the aorist active imperative of **στηρίζω (stēρίζō)**. This verb stresses the spiritual advance that takes the believer to the level of the sophisticated spiritual life by application of the principle, “the Word of God is alive and powerful.”
  3. **“Hearts”**: the plural noun, **καρδίας (kardías)**: facilitation of the soul’s doctrinal inventory into paths of least resistance and therefore available on the soul’s launching pad for recall and application.



33. When the believer has advanced to this level of doctrinal sophistication, then he is prepared to orient and adjust to any circumstances, exigencies, situations, and challenges that the devil's world has to offer.
34. When a believer buys into the truth that he is an alien in the devil's world, is not wanted here, is the ongoing target of cosmic propaganda, and vulnerable to strategies of the Dark Side, he has a divine dynasphere into which he may ensconce himself.
35. The divine dynasphere, life inside the bubble, is his readily available environment where the power of the Word of God isolates him from the propaganda of *cosmos diabolicus*.
36. When a believer has advanced to the sophisticated spiritual life, he is no longer vulnerable to the challenges typical of the Church Age.
37. The Church Age is the intensified stage of the Lucifer's appeal. He and his demons endeavor to overwhelm the power of the Word found in the souls of advanced believers.
38. The irrational, antiauthoritarian inversions of establishment standards and the simultaneous assaults against biblical absolutes in the present hour are classical illustrations of the Invisible War in this client nation.
39. Believers are targets, but advanced believers are the ones who have bull's-eyes on their foreheads. Truth in the souls of advanced believers must be exposed and denounced as the lie.
40. The lie is then proclaimed as the truth and those who stand fast in opposition are accused of committing sins against individual, societal, and cultural absolutes.
41. The believer's duty is to maintain and stand firm from his fortress of truth. To live by it. To uphold it. To proclaim it. And do so until his physical death or the Rapture of the Church.
42. James concludes verse 8 with this, "for the coming of the Lord is near." The word that begins this final clause is the noun **παρουσία** (*parousía*). Its basic definitions are, "a state of being present," "coming to a place," "coming or arrival."
43. Several New Testament prophecies reveal that the Rapture of the church is initiated by the arrival of Jesus Christ in the atmosphere of the earth. He will be accompanied by the elect angels and by Church-Age believers who had previously died physically but are returning to exchange their interim bodies for resurrection bodies.

44. James concludes the verse with the perfect active indicative verb, **ἐγγίζω (engízō)**. The perfect tense is intensive indicating that the Rapture is getting closer and closer with each passing day.
45. James is writing in the decade of the A.D. 40s and presents the prophecy that the “coming of the Lord is near.” That was almost two-thousand years ago and still there is no **parousía**. How are we to evaluate this two-millennia delay?
43. In several New Testament passages, it is used to designate prophetically the Rapture of the church initiated by the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ in the atmosphere of the earth accompanied by the elect angels, and by Church-Age believers who had previously died physically, but returning to exchange their interim bodies for resurrection bodies.
44. James concludes the verse with the perfect active indicative verb, **ἐγγίζω (engízō)**. The perfect tense is intensive indicating that the Rapture is getting closer and closer with each passing day.
45. James, writing in the decade of the A.D. 40s, presents the prophecy, the “coming of the Lord is near” (James 5:7–8). That was almost two-thousand years ago and still there is no **parousía**. How are we to evaluate this two-millennia delay?
46. Principle: Since there is no unfulfilled prophecy during the course of the Church Age, then we may confidently conclude that the next prophetic event will be the Rapture.
47. Since this is true, the first-century church anticipated the Rapture under the principle of imminency. Paul wrote about this conclusion in:
- 1 Corinthians 1:6** The testimony concerning you [ plural pronoun **σὺ (sú)**: believers in Corinth ] was confirmed among you.
- 1 Corinthians 1:7** You are not lacking any spiritual gift. You should be eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ [ Rapture ],
- v. 8** Who will also confirm you to the end [ of the Church Age with the imputation of a resurrection body ], blameless in the day [ Rapture ] of our Lord Jesus Christ. (EXT)
48. From this passage, it is apparent that Paul understood the imminency of the Rapture and, because of this, anticipated it to occur in his lifetime.

(JAS3-85.Rev. See JAS3-86 for continuation of study at p. 311.)



49. It was reasonable for Paul to conclude this since there was nothing in Scripture to indicate another prophetic event would precede it.
50. However, after almost 2,000 years since Paul wrote, we find ourselves with the same conclusion: “Why not now?” Because of the testimony of the farmer:
- James 5:8** You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord [ **the Rapture** ] is near. (NASB)
51. We have no more information regarding the day of the Rapture than he did. He was comfortable to remain patient. The seeds were in the field. He anticipated the early and late rains. He was prepared to harvest his crops at the appropriate time.
52. Although the prophecy of the Rapture indicates it is imminent, it does not reveal any catalyst for the event. This is known only to the Father (Mark 13:32*d*). Its execution is in the divine decree about which we are not aware.
53. Therefore, to what conclusion are we forced? The Rapture, being imminent, may occur in our lifetimes, but it may not. Consequently, we are to use its imminency as a motivation to grow in grace, advance to spiritual maturity, and make spiritual growth our top priority.
54. In James 5:8, the coming of the Lord at the Rapture is indicated by the noun *parousía* [pär-ü-sē-ə].
55. It has been transliterated into the English dictionaries and capitalized, “Parousia,” and defined as the Second Coming. In some contexts, it does, but in others, which we are noting, it refers to the Rapture of the Church.
56. What follows is an interesting and insightful synopsis of the words *parousía*—“coming”—and *engízō* —“near”—regarding James’s comments on the Rapture:

**In [James 5] verse 7, James urged believers to be patient in view of the fact of the Lord’s coming. Now he bases his exhortation to patience and spiritual firmness on the nearness of the Lord’s coming. The verb James uses, *engízō* (“is near”), occurs elsewhere in the New Testament in similar eschatological contexts.**



We need to say something about the “nearness” idea as we find it here in James. Not much is gained from a consideration of the verb *engízō* itself—it denotes simply “nearness” in space or time. But what is crucial is to understand this “nearness” in the appropriate temporal framework: salvation history. With the death and resurrection of Jesus and pouring out of the Spirit, the “last days” have been inaugurated. This final age of salvation will find its climax in the return of Christ in glory. But—and here is the crucial point—the length of this age is unknown. Not even Jesus knew how long the “last days” would last (cf. Mark 13:32).<sup>5</sup> What this means is that the return of Christ, as the next event in the salvation-historical timetable, is, from the time of the early church to our own day, “near,” or “imminent.”

Every generation of Christians lives (or should live!) with the consciousness that the *parousía* could occur at any time and that one needs to make decisions and choose values based on that realization.

So it was as true in James’s day as it is in ours: we need to *be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near*.<sup>6</sup>

57. Our research into the doctrine of the *parousía* leaves us with the principle that James and the writer of Hebrews emphasize:

**James 5:7** Therefore be patient [ aorist active imperative of μακροθυμέω (*makrothuméō*): faith rest ], brethren, until the Rapture of the church. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

**v. 8** You too be patient; facilitate [ aorist active imperative of στηρίζω (*stēρίζō*) ] your soul’s doctrinal inventory, for the Rapture [ παρουσία (*parousía*) ] of the Lord is imminent [ intensive perfect active indicative of ἐγγίζω (*engízō*) ]. (EXT)

<sup>5</sup> “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”

<sup>6</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 224–25.

