

- 1, James's example does not describe all people who have wealth. He is instead making the point that in the devil's world many who possess economic power use it to oppress the poor.
2. It is arguably true that wealth does grant power to those who have it, but at the same time imposes responsibility on how they use that power.
3. In an honorable society, the rich understand they have the means to use their capital to enter into free enterprise but to do so requires them to hire personnel to produce the widgets.
4. Principle: Money itself does not produce a commodity; goods, or services. It provides the means to do so. People are needed to produce the product.
5. It must be noted that in the twenty-first century, androids are beginning to take the place of human personnel. The eventual downside is that unemployed humans will not be able to afford the android-produced products.
6. Therefore, those with wealth must accept the responsibility to avoid oppressing the poor. They have a right to exchange their labor for a fair day's wage with emphasis on fair.
7. It is understood that the profit motive is the principle that energizes free enterprise. But when the economic principle of capitalism is manipulated by those in power the brilliance and genius of that system is contorted ultimately by central planning.
8. One of the best analysts of economic systems is Dr. Friedrich von Hayek. His book, *The Road to Serfdom*, published in 1944, is considered a definitive refutation of central planning. Here are some excerpts from the essay, "Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*," by Dr. Lawrence H. White, professor of economics at George Mason University:

Hayek noted that different planners with different interests will likely fight about what the plan ought to emphasize. The plan imposes one set of priorities. The representatives of various businesses, labor unions, and government agencies will have different interests and different views about the proper set of priorities. To get a single coherent central plan the political system will tend to select a strongman who decides which plan will rule.

The chapter “Who whom?” points out that the choice is not central planning or no planning at all. The alternative to central planning is a million plans, each person with his own plan or her own plan. The plans are coordinated through a price system, which gives people signals about the most valuable use of resources, but doesn’t tell anybody what they have to do with their property. Central planning is essentially a system where somebody plans for everybody else.⁹ (p. 51)

(End JAS2-10. See JAS2-11 for continuation of study on p. 101.)

⁹ Lawrence E. White, “Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom*,” in *Mises, Hayek and the Austrian School*, ed. Gary Wolfram (Hillsdale, Mich.: Hillsdale College Press, 2017), 51. (Excerpt continues in JAS2-11 on p. 101.)



Whether private property in the means of production is officially abolished (as in the Soviet Union) or not (as in Nazi Germany), all the most important decisions are taken out of the hands of individuals. (p. 51)

The chapter “Why the Worst Get on Top” argues that, despite good intentions, when you concentrate power in a central planning system, it will attract unscrupulous and ruthless people. The people who end up holding the reign of power are not going to be the most virtuous people. Somebody who’s unscrupulous and ruthless is going to rise to the top in a system where one will dominates all other wills. Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin did not rise to the top by accident. (p. 52)

In the socialist calculation debate Hayek had argued in economic terms why central planning isn’t going to deliver prosperity. It’s not going to *coordinate activities* as well as a market system does. It’s not going to encourage the *discovery of better ways* to do things. That kind of discovery is what drives the market process. It is the entrepreneur who drives the market process by discovering lower-cost ways to produce things. In a centrally planned system there’s no room for discoveries, for new plans. There is little impetus to technical progress under a central planning system. For these reasons central planning is not going to deliver the prosperity that the market economy delivers.¹ (p. 53)

9. Capitalism is the only way that an economy can be guaranteed to produce prosperity for both the entrepreneur and the employee.
10. The rich man in James 2 is clearly an entrepreneur who has done well, well enough to afford fine clothes and a cluster of golden rings for his fingers. He is a member of the “Upper Class.” Where the actors in our cast fell in Jerusalem society is the subject of these excerpts from the book, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*:

THE WEALTHY CLASS.² The various extravagances of the rich in Jerusalem in their houses, their clothing, their servants, as well as their rich offerings and bequests to the Temple and their monuments ... give indications of this luxury: R. Meir records that the people of Jerusalem tied up their bundle of branches at Tabernacles with gold thread.

¹ Lawrence E. White, “Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom*,” in *Mises, Hayek and the Austrian School*, ed. Gary Wolfram (Hillsdale, Mich.: Hillsdale College Press, 2017), 51–53.

² Mr. Golden Fingers.



The banquets given by wealthy people were an important part of life, and frequent references to customs peculiar to Jerusalem suggest that the city set the tone of contemporary etiquette throughout the land. We hear that the host weighed most carefully the social advantages of inviting a large number of guests against providing good entertainment. Undiluted wine was drunk from crystal drinking glasses at table, and when spirits were high people might well start handclapping to accompany the dancing, as did for example the 'great men' of Jerusalem at the circumcision of Elisha whose father belonged to the aristocracy. (p. 92)

There is reliable evidence that at Passover time in Jerusalem poor people were invited in from the street. On certain political occasions there was a feast given for 'the whole populace' of Jerusalem, such as Marcus Agrippa gave on his visit there, and Archelaus \är-kē-lā'-us\ on the death of his father Herod. (p. 93)

From time immemorial Jerusalem had attracted the wealth of the nation—merchants, landowners, tax-farmers, bankers and men of private means. Several members of the Sanhedrin came from these circles. The councillor Nicodemus (John 7:50) was wealthy. It is said that he brought a hundred Roman pounds' worth of ointments and spices for Jesus' burial (John 19:39). Jerusalem merchants dealing in grain, wine and oil, and wood, who belonged to the Council between AD 66-70, are mentioned in rabbinic literature. When Joseph of Arimathea, another member of the Sanhedrin, is described as εὐσχήμων [*euschēmōn*: "Elegant; of good standing, prestigious, honorable, respectable"] (Mark 15:43), the papyri make it clear that this means a wealthy landowner. He was a rich man (Matt. 27:57) and owned a garden to the north of the city with a family grave hewn from the rock (John 19:41; cf. 20:15). The main part of his property would probably be in his native city, since the Jerusalem site had evidently not been long in the possession of his family, for the grave was newly hewn. (pp. 95–96)

THE MIDDLE CLASS.³ Next to the merchants, who imported goods from a distance and stored them in large warehouses, were the retail traders who had shops in one of the bazaars. Then came the small industrialists or craftsmen who owned their own premises and did not hire themselves out for wages. These constituted the middle classes: there were no industrial factories. This was true of the Jerusalem of the time of Jesus.

³ Mr. Chazzan.




It is evident, however, that the middle classes did best for themselves when they were connected with the Temple and its pilgrims. The Temple officials and workers were very well paid, as is shown by the report, exaggerated though it is, that the shewbread bakers and makers of incense received first twelve, then twenty-four minas, or about an eighth, a quarter, or half a talent each day. (p. 100)

The tavern trade depended almost entirely on the pilgrims, whose main requirement was a large space with plenty of room for their mounts and beasts of burden. (p. 101)

The pilgrims brought considerable traffic to those engaged in the catering trades. In the first place there were the offerings which the pilgrims had to bring, which varied according to the purpose of their pilgrimage. At Passover time they brought a lamb and possibly a free-will offering. (p. 102)

The rest of the trades in Jerusalem also profited to a greater or lesser degree from the pilgrim traffic. If a man was to fulfil the commandment to rejoice at the festival he had to see that his women-folk enjoyed themselves too. The Babylonian Jews gave their wives bright clothes for Passover, and the Palestinians white linen, most of which will have been bought in the city. It may generally be assumed that people would take home souvenirs of Jerusalem, and their liberality expressed itself in gifts to the Temple, which resulted in commissions to the craftsmen of the city. (pp. 103–104)

THE POOR.  We are entirely dependent for our knowledge of the poorer classes on literary sources, and these leave much to be desired when it comes to detailed information. (p. 109)

The sources are sufficiently adequate to enable us to form some idea who constituted the poorer classes. We must distinguish between those of the poor who earned their own living, and those who lived, either partly or wholly, on relief.

A. SLAVES AND DAY LABORERS. We find most of the slaves in the city, as domestic servants, and even here, except at court, their number is not large. (p. 110)

Day laborers were much more numerous than slaves. On an average their services earned one denarius a day (Matt. 20:2, 9). (p. 111)

B. THE SUBSIDIZED POPULATION. It is typical of Jerusalem that a large section of the population lived chiefly on charity or relief. (pp. 111–12)

Begging in Jerusalem was concentrated around the holy places, i.e. at that time around the Temple, but beggars were not allowed in every part of the Temple. (p. 117)

We find beggars elsewhere, not only in the Court of the Gentiles, but at the outer gates of the Temple area.

We can safely assume that the conversation between Jesus and the sick man in John 5:6, was occasioned by a request for alms. Since (the) pool [of Siloam (John 9:7)]—it remained a place of healing after AD 70, as is proved by votive offerings found there—must have been much sought after as a place of miracles, the sick had ample opportunity for begging.⁵ (p. 118)

11. Therefore, we find that Mr. Golden Fingers was among The Wealthy Class, Mr. Chazzan is an entrepreneur within the Middle Class, and Mr. Beggar was associated with The Poor.
12. All three of these men were Jews who had placed their personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life. Golden Fingers is rich in material things but weak in doctrine. Had he been a mature believer, he would have taken up for Mr. Poor Man.
13. Mr. Chazzan is in business of some kind and has run afoul of law causing Mr. Fingers to have him arrested. Whatever the court's verdict, it resulted in him being in debt to the rich man.
14. The Poor man, by virtue of his position among the indigent, gets no respect from the other two but has positive volition.
15. Therefore, he has a relaxed mental attitude and is willing to sit wherever he's allowed in order to hear the Word of God taught by James.

PRINCIPLES:

1. James is giving us an example of how some believers behave toward others. The poor were usually treated with compassion in first-century Jerusalem. In the case of the chazzan, his residence in advanced reversionism explains his rudeness toward a person he considered to be a friend.

⁵ Joachim Jeremias, "Economic Status," in *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*, 3d ed., trans. F. H. Cave and C. H. Cave (1962; repr. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 93, 95–96, 100, 101, 102, 103–04, 109, 110, 111, 103–04, 109, 110, 111, 111–12, 117, 118. <http://khazarzar.skeptik.net/books/jeremias2.pdf>



2. James scolds the chazzan by pointing out that a rich man is oppressing him by taking him to court. In view of that, why does he, in turn, oppress a friend who has done him no wrong?
3. The wealthy man did not ask for a front row seat but being use to favoritism because of his wealth, he did not argue.
4. Those who have significant wealth must assume the responsibility to take care of those who are in need, especially those who assist him in his professional endeavors.
5. Failure of entrepreneurs, whose talents and abilities enabled them to own giant corporations that employ thousands of people, must take the initiative to direct the company's profits toward his workers.
6. In our society, this would include certain benefits such as the option to buy shares of stock, profit sharing, retirement plans, e.g., IRAs or 401(k)s, health insurance, and systematic raises based on performance.
7. Failure to do these kinds of things during the emergence of the industrialization period of our history is what led to the development of labor unions which only resulted in increasing the problem from yet an additional source of exploitation.
8. Mr. Golden Fingers is not exploiting the chazzan, but the chazzan is oppressing the poor man by rudely imploring him to sit on the floor.
9. Incidentally, we examined the King James and New American Standard's translations of the final phrase of verse 3, "... sit here under my footstool" and "... sit down by my footstool" respectively.
10. We went with the latter in our translation but in the visual, "Synagogue at Gamla, Golan Heights, Israel," the seating arrangements make it clear that "under" and "by" were precise dependent upon where the chazzan's seat happened to be.
11. The chazzan wants to appease Golden Fingers in hopes of mollifying the legal situation between them. All he has done is waste his time on the rich man while insulting his friend, the Poor man.
12. As we approach verse seven, we will address the third of three rhetorical questions that are presented to answer the question that concluded verse 4, where the culprits are asked rhetorically, "have you ... become judges with evil thought and motivations? Yes you have!"
13. The word "become" is the aorist middle indicative of the verb **γίνομαι** (**gínomai**) and in the context of the verse it demands a positive answer.



14. That verse was the apodosis in response of a protasis made up of three third-class conditions presented in verses 2 and 3. Here's how that all fits together in the expanded translation:

James 2:2 If [the protasis of three, third-class conditions] a nobleman [ἀνὴρ (*anēr*): aristocrat] enters into [εἰσέρχομαι (*eisérchomai*): 1st 3CC] the synagogue of Messianic Christians, wearing golden rings on all his fingers and dressed in a dazzling, expensive tunic girded with a belt studded with fine gems, and there also enters [(*eisérchomai*): 2d 3CC] a beggar in filthy clothes,

v. 3 and you kowtow [ἐπιβλέπω (*epiblépō*): 3d 3CC] to the one who is carrying his flashy multicolored mantle and toga, and you say in a pleasant voice, “You sit here in this place of honor,” and you say officiously to the beggar, “Stand there or sit down by my footstool,”

v. 4 [apodosis] Have all of you not [οὐ (*ou*): introduces a rhetorical question demanding a positive answer] been discriminating in your *kardías* and become judges with evil thoughts and motivations? Yes, you have! (EXT)

15. Verses 5 through 7 provide three rhetorical questions that are designed to shed light on the question posed on verse 4.

James 2:5 [IM #15] Begin to concentrate, fellow members of the royal family of God; has not God elected to privilege [Phase 1: eternity past] the poor of this world [Phase 2, time], to be rich inside the evanescent divine power system, as heirs of the kingdom of God [Phase 3, eternity] which He promised to those who love Him?

v. 6 But you have oppressed the poor man. Is it not the rich men who oppress you and personally force you before the magistrates of the courts? (EXT)



16. Verse 5 drives home the point that whoever believes in Jesus Christ has been elected to privilege although they are the poor of the world who are heirs to all the assets, accouterments, and privileges associated the kingdom of God while on earth and in the eternal state.
17. Verse six forces the chazzan to use common sense to realize that the rich man has oppressed him in the courts. That same common sense is to be applied to his personal oppression of the poor man.
18. In verse seven, James forces the chazzan to use logic to realize that by kowtowing to the rich man and oppressing the poor man, he has in doing so blasphemed Jesus Christ.

James 2:7 Do they not blaspheme the fair
name by which you have been called? (NASB)

1. It is rich men who have oppressed the chazzan. He, too, is a believer in Jesus Christ. He, too, possesses all the accouterments possessed by the poor man since he, too, enjoys the privileges associated the kingdom of God while on earth and in the eternal state.
2. Even though he is out of fellowship, even though he is in the advanced stages of reversionism, this man is said to be called by what is referred to as “the fair name.”
3. The word “blaspheme” is the present active indicative of the verb **βλασφημέω (blasphēmēō)**: “to speak in a disrespectful way that demeans, denigrates, maligns; to slander, revile, or defame.”⁶
4. “The static present tense may be used to represent a condition which is assumed as perpetually existing, or to be ever taken for granted as a fact.”⁷
5. The static tense indicates that reversionists keep on maligning and blaspheming “the fair name.” The word “fair” is the adjective **καλός (kalós)** and may be defined by such words as “excellent, honorable, distinguished, blameless.”
6. All of these are worthy to describe the noun “name,” but since it refers to Jesus Christ we’ll use “blameless” to describe the impeccable Messiah. That “blameless name,” by which believers are properly called, is “Christian.”
7. We are personally not blameless, but we are baptized at the moment of salvation into Christ. Our sins were judged on the cross in Him. We have on our agenda a perfect resurrection body and the possession of eternal life.

⁶ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 178.

⁷ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1957), 186.

