

The laborer in New Testament times received about 15 cents per day, besides in some cases for his provisions. The incidents in the Old Testament and in the New Testament show that the laborer was at the caprice of the employer.³

36. The men in the James 5:4 context not only withheld payment throughout the night but did not do so the following day when the produce was delivered to the grocers.
37. From this analysis of the greedy and even criminal behavior of what the passage indicates are these “men,” referred to in James 5, verse 1 as “you rich,” by the plural masculine of address of the noun, **πλούσιος (plousios)**: “wealthy men.” By this we can identify the culprits who are the antagonists in Chapter 5.
38. They are at least two men and, according to verse 3, financially flush with possessions of gold and silver. The translation of verse 4, above, from the *New International Version*, is fine, but we will now expand it further:

James 5:4 Observe this, the wages of the workers [plural aorist active participle of the verb, ἐργάτης (*ergátēs*): agricultural laborers] who have harvested your fields, the ones having been defrauded of wages by you rich reversionists, keep screaming [present active indicative of κράζω (*krázō*) an urgent protest for help]; and the outcries [the plural βοή (*boē*): screams] of the ones having harvested has reached the ears of [יהוה צבאות (Yehowah *Sevao*’th (Hebrew) or Κύριος Σαβαώθ (Greek)] the Lord of the Armies [Jesus Christ].⁴ (EXT)

James 5:5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. (NASB)

1. Verse 5 begins a description of the lifestyle of the reversionistic believers we have observed in verse 1–4. Their souls’ modus operandi functions from the standards of *cosmos diabolicus* instead of the grace orientation from the Word of God.

³ William Edward Raffety, “Wages,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), IV: 3063.

⁴ The Hebrew letter “b” (ב) (*Bet*) contains a “dot” named *holem* and pronounced: “b.” However, when the *holem* is absent (ב), the pronunciation changes to a “v.” Therefore, the Hebrew title of the Lord is pronounced, “*Sevao*’th”. Yet, in the Greek of the New Testament, the “β” or *beta* is not so affected and remains unchanged in the English translation. Both are translated, “the Lord of the Armies.” (See: J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 3. [NOTE: More later about this nuance.]



2. Their lifestyle is one of opulence and pleasure. They aggrandize themselves while taking advantage of others. Money is their major motivation. They have **plenty** of cash, but no **capacity** for gratitude nor of personal integrity.
3. This exposes their reverse process reversionism in their business relationships which is also associated with their frantic search for happiness.
4. Now that these workers have been used by these men to accomplish their financial objectives, they now consider them as slaves who are no longer useful—out of sight, out of mind.
5. These men were not slaves. They had homes and families, they are citizens of Israel, they are men who make their living by contributing to the overall progress of a Priest Nation under a free-enterprise system. Yet, regardless of these attributes, they are used, lied to, and finally denied payment for a job professionally completed.
6. This verse opens with the statement, “You have lived luxuriously on the earth.” “Lived luxuriously” is the aorist active indicative of the verb, **τροφάω (trupháō)**.
7. Yet, in this context, it indicates their luxurious lifestyle was one of self-indulgence which resulted in taking advantage of men who accomplished honest days’ work yet without being paid.
8. This is why in verse 4, the workers are described as continuously screaming their protests because they were defrauded. In those days there was no Harvesters’ Union to which they could take their complaints.
9. Their luxurious lifestyle is described by the culminative aorist active indicative of the verb, **σπαταλάω (spataláō)**: “to live in luxury and pleasure in eating, drinking, and self-indulgence or a “wanton” lifestyle. “Wanton” is defined by *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (11th ed.) as: “undisciplined, lustful, sensual, merciless, malicious, unduly lavish, and extravagant.”
10. Back in my days of yore such men’s behavior was described as “playboys: men who live a life devoted chiefly to the pursuit of pleasure.” [M-WCD, 11].
11. The culminative aorist tense is constative for past completed actions in the status of monetary reversionism which is emphasized by the indicative mood for self-indulgence.
12. Although in the depths of reversionism these men have, by means of their wealth, developed sophisticated tastes especially in the field of early-day haute cuisine [ót kwi-zén], a term which over the last century has been used to describe the elaborate French cuisine.



13. The Israelites had available to them a wide variety of things to eat, and some were able to enjoy haute cuisine Israeli style which was apparently available in Jerusalem. Some support for this is found in this reference:

Food: Among the Israelites. *Articles Allowed.* Milk was an article of daily food—not only the milk of cows but also of sheep and goats, sometimes sweet, sometimes sour, thick, or curdled. ... after bread, the chief food of the poorer classes in Arabia and Syria, and it appears on tables of well-to-do persons. The rich had upon their tables deer, gazella, roebuck, and various kinds of winged game. *Fish* were supplied in great abundance from the Lake of Gennésaret (John 21:11; cf. Matthew 14:17; 15:34), whereas in earlier times the Phoenicians brought fish to Jerusalem from the sea (Nehemiah 13:16).

Roasting on a spit was perhaps the oldest way of cooking flesh but less common among the Israelites than boiling. Roast flesh was used only by the rich and better classes.⁵

WEALTH: The possession of wealth is not regarded as sinful, but, on the contrary, was looked upon as a sign of the blessings of God. But while it is not sinful to be rich it is very dangerous, and certainly perilous to one's salvation (Matthew 19:23). It is because of the danger of losing the soul through the possession of wealth that so many exhortations are found in the Scriptures amid especially at those who have an abundance of this world's goods. (1 Timothy 6:17; James 1:10, 11; 5:1).

That it is not impossible for man of wealth to be saved, however, in the Gospels, of such rich men as Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathaea (John 19:38–39; Matthew 27:57–60), and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10). It may fairly be inferred from the Gospel records that James and John, who were disciples of Our Lord, were men of considerable means (Mark 1:19–20; John 19:27).

Those possessing wealth are liable to certain kinds of sins against which they are frequently warned, e.g., oppression of the poor (James 2:6).⁶

⁵ “Food,” Merrill F. Unger, in *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed., R. K. Harrison, ed. (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988), 437.

⁶ William Evens, “Wealth,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, James Orr, gen. ed., (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), IV:3076.



14. These men are used to living high on the hog, not only from their own wealth but also from the labor of others whom they hire to do a job but refuse to pay them once the task is completed.
15. Their lifestyle may be compared to those who lived in southern Italy on the Gulf of Tarentum [Ta-rén-tem] in the city of Sybaris [sí-be-ris]:

Sybaris [sí-ba-ris], ancient Greek city in southern Italy situated on the Gulf of Taréntum known for its wealth and the luxury of its inhabitants, which contributed to the modern meaning of “sybaritic.”⁷

Sybarític [síb-e-rít-ik]: Devoted to or marked by pleasure and luxury. Of or related to Sybaris or its people.⁸

16. The fifth verse begins with the phrase, “You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure” As noted above, the word **τρυφάω (trupháō)** means to live luxuriously and in pleasure.
17. This is a stark contrast between the lifestyle of the harvesters described in verse 4 who cry out in anguish because their wages were withheld by the two entrepreneurs:

James 5:4b ... the ones having been defrauded of wages by you rich reversionists, **keep screaming** [present active indicative of κράζω (*krázō*) an urgent protest for help]; and the **outcries** [the plural βοή (*boē*): screams] of the ones having harvested has reached the ears of [צְבָאוֹת יְהוָה (*Yehowah Seva’oth* (Hebrew) or Κύριος Σαβαώθ ⁹ (Greek)]: the Lord of the Armies [Jesus Christ]. (EXT)

18. Note in verse 4, the screams of the defrauded workers have reached the ears of *YHWH Savao’th*. Then, at the end of verse 5, James concludes the verse with the prophecy that they have “fattened their souls for the day of slaughter.
19. These two verses impute divine discipline to the two men who have lied to the workers, withheld their wages, and in doing so, stranded them in their own Priest Nation without the means to feed their families.

⁷ “Sybaris,” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 2010), 11:452.

⁸ “sybaritic,” in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, fifth ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), 1762.

⁹ Phonetic values of letters: Distinguish carefully between consonants of similar form. Example: בּ is simply “b,” but ב (b) is pronounced as a ‘v’. There are six letters which have each a hard and soft pronunciation—indicated in writing without and with a dot called a *Daghes* (שָׁבָט). The word, (צְבָאוֹת): *Seva’oth*, is the plural for “Armies.” (J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, second ed. (Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press, 1959), 14, 16.



20. Principle: There is nothing new under the sun. The absence of honor and integrity among the citizens of Israel is illustrated by the fraudulent behavior of these two men.
21. They revel in their successful chicanery as they celebrate the lifestyle of the rich and famous. Their ill-gotten gain will soon be the reason for the Lord's divine justice to come down like a mighty stream:

James 5:5 You have lived [constative aorist active indicative of the verb: *τρυφάω* (*trupháō*): in luxury and in pleasure] in luxury [constative plural aorist active indicative of the verb: *σπαταλάω* (*spataláō*): luxury in eating and drinking; self-indulgent; “wanton”: being without check or limitation¹⁰] and self-indulgence in the land, you have been a sensual hedonist on the earth and led a life of wanton [constative plural aorist active indicative of the verb: *τρέφω* (*tréphō*): to fatten yourselves by revelry, i.e., lascivious or promiscuous merrymaking] pleasure; you have nourished your souls as in a day of slaughter. (EXT)

1. These three constative aorist tenses may be defined as follows:

The aorist normally views *the action as a whole*, taking no interest in the internal workings of the action. It describes the action in summary fashion, without focusing on the beginning or end of the action specifically. This is by far the most common use of the aorist, especially with the indicative mood.

The constative aorist covers a multitude of actions. The event might be iterative [repetitious] in nature, or durative [continuative], or momentary [brief], but the aorist says none of this. It places the stress on the fact of the occurrence, not its nature.¹¹

2. In our context, these two men's souls oscillate in an uninterrupted rhythm between luxurious eating and drinking and hedonistic pleasures of promiscuous decadence.

¹⁰ The best English noun to define this word is “voluptuary: a person whose chief interests are luxury and the gratification of sensual appetites.” The verb form is, “voluptuous: given to or spent in enjoyment of luxury, pleasure, or sensual gratifications.” *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, eleventh ed. (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2014).

¹¹ Daniel B. Wallace, “Culminative Aorist,” in *The Basics of New Testament Syntax* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 241.

