

Rusted Riches

James 5: 1-3

The Lord defines a "rich man" as he "that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12: 21.) God gives us the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus to clothe needy brethren in their affliction, not to hold back these riches. Yet, when the fleshly self-righteous man reigns, we will hold back these riches instead of giving liberally as our God and we will upbraid unlike our God (James 1: 5.) And just as rich men of the earth heap treasures together for the future so men who are rich in self-righteousness think they are heaping treasure together for their future acceptance with God by dealing with fellow sinners in such an overbearing way. Notice this phrase "Ye Heaped Treasure Together." The apostle Paul used a similar expression in Romans 2 when addressing the self-righteousness that James is warning us to put off (Romans 2:3-5). The self-righteous man will not declare the riches of God's goodness and forbearance and longsuffering in the face of Christ Jesus, by which the Holy Spirit leads erring sinners to repentance. Instead, like the rich men of this earth, through the hard and impenitent heart, self-righteous men treasure up the riches of their law-keeping, their yoking of others, for the last days (Galatians 6:13). Both kinds of rich men think their treasure will be salvation, but in reality they are heaping up the wrath of God (Matthew 5:22, 23). Like rich men bite and devour to obtain their riches, vain religionists bite and devour (Galatians 5:15). If we insist on treating each other as dogs rather than as sheep, then the Spirit of God says to the wolf, "Howl for your miseries that shall come upon you."