

11. With regard to the words used by Isaiah in verse 6, we find mankind typified as grass along with its floral accouterments. The message they present is described in this excerpt:

The appointed theme is the perishable nature of all flesh, and, on the other hand, the imperishable nature of the word of God. Men living in the flesh are universally impotent, perishing, limited; God, on the contrary, is the omnipotent, eternal, all-determining; and like Himself, so is His word, which, regarded as the vehicle and utterance of His willing and thinking, is not something separate from Himself, and therefore is the same as He. *Chasdō* [חֶסֶד] (masculine singular of *cheseth*) is the charm or gracefulness of the outward appearance.⁶

12. The NIV translation of Hebrew noun **כְּסֵף** (*cheseth*) in Isaiah 40:6 is “glory.” The NASB translation of the Greek noun **καυχάομαι** (*kaucháomai*) in James 1:10 is also “glory,” an ellipsis based on its use in verse 9.
13. The application in Isaiah emphasizes the beauty and splendor possessed by the flowers in context. The application in James makes reference to the prosperity enjoyed by the “rich man.”
14. Both the flower of the grass and the prosperity of the wealthy are described by the imagery initially found in Isaiah and used by James to make his similar illustration. Let’s note Isaiah first.
15. As already noted, the grass represents mankind which is fallen. Isaiah introduces the illustration by a metaphor: “All flesh is grass.”
16. The grass has temporal possessions depicted as a flower. In its prime, it is glorious, but its beauty is brief. The bloom quickly withers, fades away, and falls to the turf.
17. This process is even hastened “when the breath of the Lord blows upon it” as observed by Isaiah 40:7. This imagery illustrates the divine management of a fallen environment caused by human sin.
18. All earthly life is temporal be it of man, animal, fish, bird, tree, plant, and the flower that adorns grass. Humans and their temporal possessions are destined to pass away.

⁶ Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 3d ed., trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), 2:143.

19. The brevity of life on this earth is made stark by this illustration written by Isaiah and alluded to by James. Few people in history—those whose lives are preserved for whatever reason in history books—are remembered beyond their fourth generation, Ancestry.com notwithstanding.
20. Macbeth summarized the lives of most people who've existed on this earth in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.⁷

21. Such is the lachrymose tale of “poor players” who consider the world their stage for acquiring glory, but, without Christ, are self-appointed idiots whose sound and fury will be drowned out by the incessant roar of the lake of fire, signifying nothing.
22. Such is not the tale of the rich man in our verse. He is commanded to celebrate “his humiliation,” the Koine Greek noun **ταπείνωσις (tapeínōsis)**.
23. The meaning of this word in Attic Greek is “humiliation, abasement, low estate, low condition, lowness of style.”⁸
24. This is the interpretation some expositors apply to the word. However, its meaning in the Koine Greek of the New Testament is different. Verse 10 begins with the phrase, “but the rich man in his humiliation.”
25. The word is correctly translated, but it does not capture the impact of the word in its context. The rich believer understands the fragility of his prosperity and also knows his salvation comes with a guarantee of eternal life.

⁷ William Shakespeare, *The Plays and Sonnets of William Shakespeare*, in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 27, eds. William George Clarke and William Aldis Wright (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952), 27:308–309 (act 5, scene 5, lines 19–28).

⁸ Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. and aug. Henry Stuart Jones (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), 1757 (s.v. ταπεινωσις).

26. Humility is the basic definition of *tapeínōsis*, however its meaning here has to do with the rich believer's understanding of how he has been graced out by the justice of God.
27. He celebrates over the prevenient grace of God through Christ. This allows him to have grace orientation toward his earthly riches in light of his heavenly advantages.
28. Whereas Isaiah introduced his example with a metaphor, James opts for a simile, "an explicit comparison between two different things, actions, or feelings, using the words 'as' or 'like.'"⁹
29. The simile of grass and flower expresses the fleeting nature of human life and the accouterments one might acquire in the process.
30. This horticultural simile is introduced by James in the middle of verse 10 with the phrase, "like flowering grass he will pass away."
31. The Greek word for "flower" is the noun **ἄνθος (*ánthos*)** and for "grass," the noun **χόρτος (*chórtos*)**. Literally, "flower of grass." It is the flower that is being highlighted here.
32. There are hundreds of varieties of flowering grasses, many of them quite striking. However, James correctly points out that the lifespan of grass is fleeting and their death certain.
33. The adorning flowers provide the perfect illustration of material possessions a believer might acquire during his lifespan. In other words, the details of life.
34. Things that define prosperity, regardless of assumed permanence, include health, income, savings, retirement, investments, insurance, housing, food, clothing, relatives, friends, church, social life and a variety of materialistic possessions, i.e., certain valuables, vehicles, and keepsakes.
35. Like flowers, they are apt to fade, die, fall off, and decompose. The details of life come and go. At times you have them, at times you won't. The word describing this in verse 10 is the singular, future middle indicative of the verb **παρέρχομαι (*parérchomai*)**.

⁹ Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 206.

36. Here it is used in James's simile to mean, "to pass away," or "to perish." "The future tense may indicate that something will take place or come to pass. The portrayal is external, summarizing the action: 'it will happen.'"¹⁰
37. In context, the predictive future means that the grass's flower at some point in the near future will begin to fade from the peak of its splendor.
38. Since the simile is comparing the rich man with the flower of grass, he will ultimately fade physically while his possessions, like the flower will "pass away."
39. The middle voice is deponent indicating that the rich man, like the flower, will produce the action of "fading away" while the indicative mood certifies it as a fact.
40. Of all of life's various attractions, it is the accumulation of the Word of God in the soul that is the major export a believer takes with him into the eternal future.
41. Now we are ready to observe our expanded translation of the sentence that began in verse 9 and concluded in verse 10:

James 1:9 But the poor believer must keep on celebrating [**IM #6: present active imperative of the verb *καυχάομαι* (*kaucháomai*)**] in the sphere of exaltation in his high status of royal family of God.

v. 10 and the rich man must keep on celebrating [**IM #7: present active imperative of the verb *καυχάομαι* (*kaucháomai*): borrowed from v. 9**] in his grace orientation, because like the flower of grass he and his earthly blessings will perish. (EXT)

42. James expands on the simile in verse 10 with further illustrations on the subject of the flower in verses 11–12.

James 1:11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. (NASB)

(End JAS1-17. See JAS1-18 for continuation of study at p. 171.)

¹⁰ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 568.