

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. 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 then 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?

(End JAS3-38. See JAS3-39 for continuation of study at p. 381.)



46. Principle: Since there is no unfulfilled prophecy during the course of the Church Age, then it may be confidently concluded 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 was confirmed among you.

v. 7 You were not lacking any of the spiritual gifts. You should be eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ [**Rapture**],

v. 8 Who will strengthen you to the end [of the **Church Age**], 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.
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: “patience.”
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 13:32d). Its execution is in the divine decree about which we are not aware.
53. Therefore, to what conclusion are we forced? The Rapture, being eminent, 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-sé-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 of the Church:

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).¹ 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.

¹ “But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”



**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.*²**

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 (*stērizō*)] your soul's doctrinal inventory, for the Rapture [παρουσία (*parousía*)] of the Lord is imminent [intensive perfect active indicative of ἐγγίζω (*engízō*)]. (EXT)

Hebrews 10:24 Let us repeatedly consider how to encourage fellow members of the local church from the source of the Royal Law and the Law of Freedom and from the source of the working objects of divine-good production,

v. 25 stop habitually forsaking the command to assemble ourselves together in the synagogue/church, as is the consistent behavior of certain reversionists, but encouraging them through your consistency; and even all the more as you see the day of the Rapture being imminent. (EXT)

4. Specific Details about the Rapture in:

1 Thessalonians 4:13 Now we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest who have no hope.

1. Ignorance of Bible doctrine is strategically the greatest failure of the Church-Age believer. This lack of knowledge is self-induced by lack of interest in serious study of the Bible.
2. Consequently, the believers at Thessalonica were confused. They learned from Paul about imminency but wrongly concluded that those who died would not be included in the Rapture.

² Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 224–25.