

James 1:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Analysis

For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. James paints a vivid picture: the sun rising with burning heat (kausōn, καύσων) scorches grass until its beauty (euprepeia, εὐπρέπεια) perishes. Wealth fades just as quickly; the rich man "shall fade away" (maranthēsetai, μαρανθήσεται) in the midst of pursuits. The imagery echoes Psalm 103 and Isaiah 40, anchoring James's warning in Scripture.

Reformed theology affirms that earthly prosperity is transient, while union with Christ secures imperishable riches. James urges believers to interpret economic changes eschatologically: all flesh is grass, but the Word endures. This perspective frees the church to practice liberality without clinging to temporary adornment.

Historical Context

Diaspora congregations witnessed wealthy patrons losing fortunes due to Roman taxation or political unrest. Such volatility proved James's metaphor. Writing from Jerusalem, James reminded merchants that exile status made wealth precarious, urging them to align with Paul's teaching in 1 Timothy 6 about storing treasure in

good works.

The persecution climate meant believers could be dispossessed overnight, so James grounds their hope not in stability but in Christ's promise of the crown of life.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does James's imagery of withering grass challenge your view of success?
2. What practical steps can help you hold wealth loosely?
3. Where can your resources bring lasting gospel fruit this season?

Interlinear Text

ἀνέτειλεν γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος σὺν τῷ καύσωνι καὶ
is no sooner risen For G3588 the sun with G3588 a burning heat also
G393 G1063 G2246 G4862 G2742 G2532

ἐξήρανεν τὸν χόρτον καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσεν
it withereth G3588 the grass also G3588 the flower of it falleth
G3583 G5528 G2532 G438 G846 G1601

καὶ ἡ εὐπρέπεια τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἀπώλετο· οὕτως
also G3588 the grace G3588 of the fashion of it perisheth so
G2532 G2143 G4383 G846 G622 G3779

καὶ ὁ πλούσιος ἐν ταῖς πορείαις αὐτοῦ μαρανθήσεται
also G3588 the rich man in G3588 ways of it fade away
G2532 G4145 G1722 G4197 G846 G3133

Additional Cross-References

Mark 4:6 (Parallel theme): But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

Matthew 13:6 (Parallel theme): And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.