

James 2:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

Analysis

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? James reminds them that God has chosen (exelexato, ἐξελέξατο) the poor (ptōchous, πτωχούς) of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom promised to those who love Him. Divine election often favors the lowly, as seen throughout Scripture.

This does not romanticize poverty but highlights God's upside-down kingdom. Reformed soteriology rejoices that God's choice rests not on merit but mercy. Favoritism opposes God's elective purposes.

Historical Context

Most early Christians were poor (1 Corinthians 1:26). James, leading relief efforts for famine-stricken saints (Acts 11), saw firsthand how God used poor believers mightily. His statement harmonizes with Paul's teaching that God chose the foolish and weak.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How can you honor and learn from the faith of materially poor saints?
2. What does God's choice of the poor reveal about His kingdom values?
3. How might this verse reshape your giving or relationships?

Interlinear Text

Ακούσατε ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί· οὐχ ὁ θεὸς

Hearken	brethren	my	beloved	not	G3588	God
G191	G80	G3450	G27	G3756		G2316

ἐξελέξατο τοὺς πτωχοὺς τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, πλουσίους

Hath	G3588	the poor	G3588	world	of this	rich
G1586		G4434		G2889	G5127	G4145

ἐν πίστει καὶ κληρονόμους τῆς βασιλείας ἣς

in	faith	and	heirs	G3588	of the kingdom	which
G1722	G4102	G2532	G2818		G932	G3739

ἐπηγγείλατο τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν αὐτόν

he hath promised	G3588	to them that love	G25	him	
G1861				G846	

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:3 (Kingdom): Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 6:20 (Kingdom): And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God.

Revelation 2:9 (Parallel theme): I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

2 Corinthians 8:9 (Parallel theme): For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Luke 12:21 (References God): So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

1 Peter 1:4 (Parallel theme): To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Hebrews 11:26 (Parallel theme): Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Luke 12:32 (Kingdom): Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

James 1:12 (Love): Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (Love): But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.