

James 5:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

Analysis

Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. The wages withheld from laborers cry out; the Lord of hosts hears. Economic injustice is not silent—God hears exploited workers.

Reformed social ethics emphasize God's defense of the poor. James assures oppressed believers that God notices every unpaid wage.

Historical Context

Tenant farmers in Judea often suffered withheld wages (Leviticus 19:13 violation). James invokes Yahweh Sabaoth, warrior protecting the oppressed. Early Christian tradition held deep concern for just wages.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Are your business practices just before God?
2. How can you advocate for exploited workers locally?
3. What structural changes can ensure prompt, fair compensation?

Interlinear Text

ἰδοὺ, τὰ μισθὸς τὰ ἔργατῶν τὰ ἀμησάντων
Behold which the hire which of the labourers which have reaped down
G2400 G3588 G3408 G3588 G2040 G3588 G270

τὰ χώρας ὑμῶν τὰ ἀπεστερημένος ἀφ' ὑμῶν κράζει
which fields you which kept back by fraud is of you crieth
G3588 G5561 G5216 G3588 G650 G575 G5216 G2896

καὶ τὰ βοαὶ τὰ θερισάντων εἰς τὰ ὦτα
and which the cries which of them which have reaped into which the ears
G2532 G3588 G995 G3588 G2325 G1519 G3588 G3775

κυρίου Σαβαὼθ εἰσεληλύθασιν
of the Lord of sabaoth are entered
G2962 G4519 G1525

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:13 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

Jeremiah 22:13 (Parallel theme): Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;

Romans 9:29 (References Lord): And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

Malachi 3:5 (References Lord): And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Exodus 22:27 (Parallel theme): For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

Psalms 9:12 (Parallel theme): When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

Job 34:28 (Parallel theme): So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.

Exodus 3:9 (Parallel theme): Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

Genesis 4:10 (Parallel theme): And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

Luke 18:7 (Parallel theme): And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?