

1 Peter 1:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

Analysis

Peter addresses believers' conduct during earthly sojourn, grounding it in God's character as impartial judge. The conditional "And if ye call on the Father" (kai ei patera epikaleisthe) assumes believers do call on God as Father—this is definitional of Christianity. The participial phrase "who without respect of persons judgeth" (ton aprosōpolēmtōs krinonta) uses aprosōpolēmtōs meaning impartially, without favoritism. God judges "according to every man's work" (kata to hekastou ergon)—evaluating deeds objectively, without bias based on ethnicity, social status, wealth, or religious heritage. This isn't justification by works (contradicting Paul's clear teaching) but God's assessment of faith's genuineness by examining its fruit. James similarly teaches that genuine faith inevitably produces works (James 2:14-26). Peter's exhortation follows: "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (en phobō ton tēs paroikias hymōn chronon anastraphēte). "Sojourning" (paroikias) recalls verse 1's identification of believers as temporary residents, pilgrims en route to permanent homeland. "In fear" (en phobō) means reverential awe, not servile terror—filial respect for Father whose holiness demands reverence. This fear motivates holy living during earth's brief pilgrimage.

Historical Context

Peter addresses believers experiencing persecution under potentially unjust human judges. He reminds them that ultimate judgment belongs to God who judges impartially, evaluating all fairly regardless of social position. This provided

comfort (unjust earthly verdicts don't constitute final judgment) and warning (believers aren't exempt from divine evaluation). The phrase "without respect of persons" echoes Old Testament emphasis on God's impartiality (Deuteronomy 10:17, 2 Chronicles 19:7) and Jesus's teaching (Matthew 22:16). Roman society was rigidly hierarchical—patricians, plebeians, freedmen, slaves occupied distinct legal and social categories. Peter declares God recognizes no such distinctions—He judges works, not status. For wealthy believers tempted to presume on God or poor believers tempted to despair, this truth levels all before divine tribunal. The call to "fear" during sojourn recalls Israel's wilderness wandering—probationary period requiring faithfulness. Early church understood earthly life as brief pilgrimage to heavenly city (Hebrews 11:13-16).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does knowing God judges impartially (without favoritism based on status, wealth, or heritage) affect both your confidence and your conduct?
2. What does it mean practically to 'pass your time in fear' as a pilgrim during earthly sojourn, and how does this differ from worldly anxiety?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τῆς ἀπροσωπολήπτως
And if the Father ye call on who without respect of persons
G2532 G1487 G3962 G1941 G3588 G678

κρίνοντα κατὰ τῆς ἐκάστου ἔργον ἐν φόβῳ τῆς
judgeth according to who every man's work here in fear who
G2919 G2596 G3588 G1538 G2041 G1722 G5401 G3588

τῆς παροικίας ὑμῶν χρόνον ἀναστράφητε
who sojourning of your the time pass
G3588 G3940 G5216 G5550 G390

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 19:7 (Parallel theme): Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

Matthew 6:9 (Parallel theme): After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Parallel theme): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Philippians 2:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Hebrews 12:28 (Parallel theme): Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

Jeremiah 3:19 (Parallel theme): But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me.

Ephesians 1:17 (Parallel theme): That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Romans 11:20 (Parallel theme): Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

Matthew 22:16 (Parallel theme): And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

Galatians 2:6 (Parallel theme): But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org