

1 Peter 2:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Analysis

Peter commands exemplary conduct among pagans. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles" (tēn anastrophēn hymōn en tois ethnesin echontes kalēn)—maintain excellent behavior among unbelievers. The purpose: "that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (hina en hō katalalousia hymōn hōs kakopoiōn ek tōn kalōn ergōn epoopteuontes doxasōsi ton theon en hēmera episkopēs). Good works silence slander and may lead to conversion ("glorify God in day of visitation").

Historical Context

Christians faced false accusations: atheism (rejecting pagan gods), cannibalism (misunderstanding communion), incest (calling each other 'brother' and 'sister'), disloyalty to Rome. Peter's instruction: let conduct disprove slander. 'Day of visitation' likely means when God visits hearts in salvation, though could refer to judgment day. Early apologists like Justin Martyr emphasized Christian morality to counter pagan accusations.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What false accusations or negative perceptions do unbelievers have about Christians, and how can your conduct disprove them?
2. How can 'good works' done in Christ's name lead unbelievers to glorify God?

Interlinear Text

τὴν	ἀναστροφὴν	ὑμῶν	ἐν	τοῖς	ἔθνεσιν	ἔχοντες	
G3588	conversation	you	among	G3588	the Gentiles	Having	
	G391	G5216	G1722		G1484	G2192	
καλῶν	ἵνα	ἐν	ᾧ	καταλαλοῦσιν	ὑμῶν	ὡς	κακοποιῶν
honest	that	among	G3739	they speak against	you	as	evildoers
G2570	G2443	G1722		G2635	G5216	G5613	G2555
ἐκ	τῶν	καλῶν	ἔργων	ἐποπτεύσαντες	δοξάσωσιν	τὸν	
by	G3588	honest	works	which they shall behold	glorify	G3588	
G1537		G2570	G2041	G2029	G1392		
θεὸν	ἐν	ἡμέρᾳ	ἐπισκοπῆς				
God	among	the day	of visitation				
G2316	G1722	G2250	G1984				

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 3:16 (Evil): Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

Matthew 5:16 (Good): Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

2 Corinthians 8:21 (Parallel theme): Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

1 Thessalonians 4:12 (Parallel theme): That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

1 Timothy 4:12 (Parallel theme): Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

James 3:13 (Good): Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

Philippians 1:27 (Parallel theme): Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

2 Corinthians 1:12 (References God): For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

2 Peter 3:11 (References God): Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

Romans 13:13 (Parallel theme): Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.