

James 1:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Analysis

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. James insists: become (ginesthe, γίνεσθε) doers (poiētai, ποιηταί) of the Word, not hearers (akroatai, ἀκροαταί) only, deceiving (paralogizomenoi, παραλογιζόμενοι) yourselves. Mere listening breeds self-delusion; obedience demonstrates genuine faith. The reflexive deception highlights how easily religious activity masks disobedience.

Reformed doctrine affirms justification by faith alone, yet the faith that justifies never remains alone. James confronts nominalism, showing that the implanted Word must be enacted. This anticipates chapter 2's discussion on faith and works.

Historical Context

Synagogue worship involved hearing Torah read weekly; diaspora Christians maintained similar patterns. James warns that inherited religiosity without obedience is worthless, echoing prophets like Isaiah. Paul likewise urges Romans to be doers of the law, not hearers only (Romans 2:13) when addressing Jewish hypocrisy.

The letter combats early antinomian distortions of Paul's gospel, clarifying that grace produces obedient doers empowered by the Spirit.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Where might you be deceiving yourself by hearing without doing?
2. What practical system helps you translate Scripture into obedience?
3. Who can encourage you to act on what God is teaching?

Interlinear Text

Γίνεσθε	δὲ	ποιηταὶ	λόγου	καὶ	μὴ	μόνον	ἀκροαταὶ
be ye	But	doers	of the word	and	not	only	hearers
G1096	G1161	G4163	G3056	G2532	G3361	G3440	G202

παραλογιζόμενοι	ἑαυτούς
deceiving	your own selves
G3884	G1438

Additional Cross-References

Romans 2:13 (Word): (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

John 13:17 (Parallel theme): If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

James 4:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

1 John 2:3 (Word): And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

Luke 11:28 (Word): But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

Matthew 12:50 (Parallel theme): For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Colossians 3:17 (Word): And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Revelation 22:7 (Parallel theme): Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

1 John 3:7 (Parallel theme): Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

James 1:26 (Parallel theme): If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

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