

James 1:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

Analysis

For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. This person beholds himself, departs, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was. The verbs—beheld (katenoēsen, κατενόησεν), went away (apelthen, ἀπῆλθεν), forgot (epelatheto, ἐπελάθετο)—depict culpable negligence. Forgetfulness is moral, not mental; he chooses not to act on the revelation.

James exposes spiritual amnesia common in nominal religion. The gospel reveals our sin and Christ's provision; to walk away unchanged is to despise grace. Reformed piety emphasizes meditation and application to avoid such forgetfulness.

Historical Context

In oral cultures, memory work was prized. James's warning would sting those proud of memorizing Torah yet failing to obey. Paul similarly rebukes Corinthians for forgetting the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-2).

Persecuted believers could excuse disobedience due to pressure; James insists that forgetting identity leads to compromised witness.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What spiritual truths do you tend to forget soon after hearing them?
2. How can you build reminders into your routine to apply God's Word?
3. Who can hold you accountable to act on convictions before they fade?

Interlinear Text

κατενόησεν	γὰρ	έαυτὸν	καὶ	ἀπελήλυθεν	καὶ	εὐθέως
he beholdeth	For	himself	and	goeth his way	and	straightway
G2657	G1063	G1438	G2532	G565	G2532	G2112
ἐπελάθετο		όποῖος		ἢν		
forgetteth		what manner of man		he was		
G1950		G3697		G2258		

Additional Cross-References

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

Luke 7:39 (Parallel theme): Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

Luke 1:66 (Parallel theme): And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Matthew 8:27 (Parallel theme): But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

1 Thessalonians 1:5 (Parallel theme): For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Judges 8:18 (Parallel theme): Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king.

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