

James 2:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Analysis

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. Whoever keeps the whole law yet stumbles (ptaiē, πταιή) in one point is guilty of all. The law is a unified expression of God's character; breaking part violates the whole. This undercuts self-justification that tolerates favoritism while boasting in other virtues.

Reformed theology affirms the law's spiritual unity and our inability to keep it perfectly. James reminds believers that selective obedience is hypocrisy; we need mercy and must extend it to others.

Historical Context

Jewish teachers sometimes categorized laws by weight; James insists that the moral law stands as a whole. This resonates with Paul's teaching in Galatians 3 that failing at one point puts us under a curse apart from Christ. Diaspora believers tempted to minimize certain sins needed this warning.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Where do you excuse selective obedience in your life?
2. How does the unity of God's law point you to Christ?
3. What area of obedience have you neglected because you excel elsewhere?

Interlinear Text

ὅστις γὰρ ὅλον τὸν νόμον τηρήσει, πταίσει δὲ
whosoever **For** **the whole** G3588 **law** **shall keep** **offend** **and yet**
G3748 G1063 G3650 G3551 G5083 G4417 G1161

ἐν ἐνί γέγονεν πάντων ἔνοχος
in **one** **point he is** **of all** **guilty**
G1722 G1520 G1096 G3956 G1777

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 3:10 (Word): For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Deuteronomy 27:26 (Word): Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.