

James 2:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Analysis

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. Believing God is one (heis estin ho Theos, εἷς ἐστιν ὁ Θεός) is orthodox monotheism, but even demons (daimonia, δαιμόνια) believe and shudder (phrissousin, φρίσσουσιν). Intellectual assent without obedience aligns us with demonic faith—accurate but unredeemed.

Reformed theology distinguishes notitia and assensus from fiducia: knowledge and assent must be joined with trusting reliance. Mere doctrinal correctness without transformation is demonic-level belief.

Historical Context

Jewish Shema confession (Deuteronomy 6:4) was recited daily. James warns that reciting truth without embodying love is worthless. Demons have sound theology yet oppose God. Paul similarly warns in Romans 2 that possessing the law while disobeying it brings judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Where might you possess orthodox beliefs without corresponding obedience?
2. How can you ensure doctrine fuels love, not pride?
3. What practices help convert knowledge into action?

Interlinear Text

σὺ	πιστεύουσιν	ὅτι	ὁ	θεός	εἷς	ἐστιν	καλῶς	ποιεῖς·
Thou	believe	that	<small>G3588</small>	God	one	there is	well	thou doest
<small>G4771</small>	<small>G4100</small>	<small>G3754</small>		<small>G2316</small>	<small>G1520</small>	<small>G2076</small>	<small>G2573</small>	<small>G4160</small>
καὶ	τὰ	δαιμόνια	πιστεύουσιν	καὶ	φρίσσουσιν			
also	<small>G3588</small>	the devils	believe	also	tremble			
<small>G2532</small>		<small>G1140</small>	<small>G4100</small>	<small>G2532</small>	<small>G5425</small>			

Additional Cross-References

Luke 4:34 (References God): Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

Mark 1:24 (References God): Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

Matthew 8:29 (References God): And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Acts 16:17 (References God): The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

Deuteronomy 6:4 (References God): Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

Isaiah 44:8 (References God): Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.

Mark 5:7 (References God): And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

Galatians 3:20 (References God): Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

Zechariah 14:9 (Parallel theme): And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Isaiah 46:9 (References God): Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,