

James 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

Analysis

Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? By acting this way, believers become judges (kritai, κριταί) with evil thoughts (dialogismōn ponērōn, διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν). The verb "are ye not divided" (diakrithēte, διεκρίθητε) indicates wavering between God's standards and the world's. Partiality is a theological judgment, not mere etiquette.

James insists that sinful discrimination flows from corrupted reasoning. Reformed thought underscores that the renewed mind must align with God's impartial character; favoritism reveals double-mindedness.

Historical Context

Diaspora believers already faced judicial corruption from wealthy landowners (2:6). James warns that replicating such injustice inside the church makes them like the oppressors. Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 6 about lawsuits among believers echoes the need for righteous judging.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does favoritism reveal distorted thinking in you?
2. What steps can leaders take to ensure impartial decisions?
3. Where do you need to repent of acting as an unjust judge?

Interlinear Text

καὶ οὐ διεκρίθητε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐγένεσθε κριταὶ
and not Are ye in yourselves and are become judges
G2532 G3756 G1252 G1722 G1438 G2532 G1096 G2923

διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν
thoughts of evil
G1261 G4190

Additional Cross-References

John 7:24 (Judgment): Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

Job 34:19 (Parallel theme): How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.

James 4:11 (Judgment): Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

Psalms 82:2 (Judgment): How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

Psalms 58:1 (Judgment): Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?

Malachi 2:9 (Parallel theme): Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.

