

# James 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

## Analysis

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**But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?** Yet James says, "ye have despised" (atimasate, ἡτιμάσατε) the poor. Ironically, the rich oppress (katadynasteuousin, καταδυναστεύουσιν) them and drag them (helkousin, ἔλκουσιν) into courts. Favoring abusers betrays family loyalty. The verbs evoke violence and legal exploitation common in agrarian economies.

James exposes how sinful partiality cozies up to those who harm the church. Reformed believers must discern alliances carefully lest we bless oppressors while neglecting victims.

## Historical Context

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Wealthy landowners controlled courts, exploiting day laborers (cf. 5:4). Diaspora Christians often faced lawsuits and confiscations. James, writing before AD 50, highlights real incidents so churches stop idolizing the rich.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. Where might you unknowingly honor those who harm the vulnerable?
2. How can you stand with the oppressed even at personal cost?
3. What changes could your church make to protect the poor from exploitation?

## Interlinear Text

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ὑμεῖς δὲ ἡτιμάσατε τὸν πτωχόν οὐχ οἱ πλούσιοι  
ye But have despised G3588 the poor not G3588 rich men  
G5210 G1161 G818 G4434 G3756 G4145

καταδυναστεύοντιν ὑμῶν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔλκουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς  
Do you and draw G1670 you before  
G2616 G5216 G2532 G846 G5209 G1519

κριτήρια  
the judgment seats  
G2922

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 17:5** (Parallel theme): Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

**Proverbs 14:31** (Parallel theme): He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

**1 Corinthians 11:22** (Parallel theme): What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

**Psalms 14:6** (Parallel theme): Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge.

**Acts 13:50** (Parallel theme): But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

**Acts 8:3** (Parallel theme): As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

**Acts 17:6** (Parallel theme): And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

**Psalms 10:14** (Parallel theme): Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

**Psalms 12:5** (Parallel theme): For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

**Proverbs 22:16** (Parallel theme): He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.