

James 2:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

Analysis

But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. If you show partiality (prosōpolēmphteite, προσωποληπτεῖτε), you commit sin (hamartian ergazesthe, ἁμαρτίαν ἐργάζεσθε) and are convicted as transgressors. Favoritism is not a minor faux pas but a legal offense before God. The law exposes partiality as rebellion against His justice.

James underscores the seriousness of social sins often minimized. Reformed believers emphasize total depravity, acknowledging that prejudice springs from deeply sinful hearts requiring grace.

Historical Context

Jewish communities prized justice, yet Roman patronage normalized bias. James declares that favoritism violates God's law just as much as more obvious sins. Paul's critique of Peter in Antioch demonstrates shared apostolic concern.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Do you treat favoritism as sin worthy of repentance?
2. How can your community confront systemic partiality?
3. Who needs to hear confession or receive restitution from you?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δὲ	προσωποληπτεῖτε,	ἁμαρτίαν	ἐργάζεσθε
if	But	ye have respect to persons	sin	ye commit
G1487	G1161	G4380	G266	G2038
ἐλεγχόμενοι	ὑπὸ	τοῦ νόμου	ὥς	παραβάται
and are convinced	of	the law	as	transgressors
G1651	G5259	G3588	G3551	G5613
				G3848

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:15 (Parallel theme): Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

John 8:9 (Parallel theme): And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.