

James 4:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

Analysis

There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another? There is one Lawgiver and Judge (nomothetēs, νομοθέτης) able to save and destroy. Who are you to judge your neighbor? James re-centers authority in God alone.

Reformed theology affirms God's sole prerogative to justify or condemn. Believers must resist arrogating divine prerogatives through harsh judgments.

Historical Context

Legal squabbles in Jewish diaspora synagogues often involved litigating status. James reminds Christians that final judgment belongs to God, discouraging factional tribunals. Paul's admonition in Romans 14 resonates.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Where do you usurp God's role as judge?

2. How can God's sovereignty free you from harsh criticism?
3. What does it look like to correct others without condemning them?

Interlinear Text

εἷς	ἐστιν	τὸν	νομοθέτης	τὸν	δυνάμενος	σῶσαι	καὶ
one	There is	who	lawgiver	who	is able	to save	and
G1520	G2076	G3588	G3550	G3588	G1410	G4982	G2532
ἀπολέσαι·	σὺ	τίς	εἶ	ὃς	κρίνεις	τὸν	ἕτερον
to destroy	thou	who	art		that judgest	who	another
G622	G4771	G5101	G1488	G3739	G2919	G3588	G2087

Additional Cross-References

Romans 14:4 (Judgment): Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Romans 2:1 (Judgment): Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

Matthew 10:28 (Parallel theme): And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Isaiah 33:22 (Salvation): For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.

Hebrews 7:25 (Salvation): Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

James 5:9 (Judgment): Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Romans 14:13 (Judgment): Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Job 38:2 (Word): Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Romans 9:20 (Parallel theme): Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Luke 12:5 (Parallel theme): But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

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