

James 4:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Analysis

Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. You do not know what tomorrow brings. Life is a vapor (atmis, ἀτμίς) that appears briefly and vanishes. James urges eternal perspective, countering arrogance with mortality awareness.

Reformed eschatology stresses brevity of life and urgency of obedience. Recognizing vapor-like existence fosters humility and generosity.

Historical Context

In a world without modern medicine, mortality was evident, yet wealth fostered illusions of control. James reminds diaspora merchants that pandemics, persecution, and travel dangers could end plans instantly.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does remembering life's brevity reshape your priorities?
2. What unfinished reconciliations or obediences must occur now?
3. How can you steward today's vapor for eternal impact?

Interlinear Text

οἵτινες οὐκ ἐπίστασθε ή ή αὔριον
Whereas not ye know what shall be on what shall be on the morrow
G3748 G3756 G1987 G3588 G3588 G839

ποία γὰρ ή ζωὴ ὑμῶν· ἀτμὶς γὰρ ἔστιν
what For what shall be on life is your a vapour For It is
G4169 G1063 G3588 G2222 G5216 G822 G1063 G2076

ή πρὸς ὀλίγον φαινομένη ἔπειτα δὲ
what shall be on that a little time appeareth for then and
G3588 G4314 G3641 G5316 G1899 G1161

ἀφανιζομένη
vanisheth away
G853

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 1:24 (Parallel theme): For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

Psalms 39:5 (Parallel theme): Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

1 John 2:17 (Parallel theme): And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Psalms 102:3 (Parallel theme): For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.

Psalms 89:47 (Parallel theme): Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?

James 1:10 (Parallel theme): But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

1 Peter 4:7 (Parallel theme): But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

Isaiah 38:12 (Parallel theme): Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

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