

Luke 12:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Analysis

Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them (κατανοήσατε τοὺς κόρακας, katanoēsate tous korakas)—Jesus commands intense observation of ravens, birds deemed ritually unclean (Leviticus 11:15) yet sustained by divine providence. The verb katanoeō means "perceive fully, contemplate," not casual glancing. Ravens neither speirō (sow) nor therizō (reap)—agricultural terms emphasizing human labor and planning—yet ho theos trephei autous (God feeds them).

How much more are ye better than the fowls? (posō mallon hymeis diapherete tōn peteinōn)—The qal wahomer argument (light to heavy): if God cares for unclean birds with no eternal souls, how infinitely more will He sustain His image-bearers? This rhetorical question assumes human superiority in God's creative hierarchy (Genesis 1:26-28), challenging anxiety as practical atheism that denies providential care.

Historical Context

Luke 12:22-34 records Jesus' Sermon on Worry, delivered during His journey to Jerusalem (likely AD 29-30). Ravens were common scavengers in Palestine, known for resourcefulness yet lacking human agricultural systems. The Jewish audience would recognize the irony: God feeds even tamei (unclean) birds forbidden for consumption.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What specific anxieties in your life reveal functional atheism—living as if God's providence doesn't extend to your circumstances?
2. How does Jesus' choice of ravens (unclean birds) rather than sparrows (12:6) intensify His argument about God's comprehensive care?

Interlinear Text

κατανοήσατε	τοὺς	κόρακας	ὅτι	οὐκ	σπείρουσιν	οὐδὲ	
Consider	G3588	the ravens	for	neither	sow	nor	
G2657		G2876	G3754	G3756	G4687	G3761	
θερίζουσιν	οἷς	οὐκ	ἔστιν	ταμεῖον	οὐδὲ	ἀποθήκη	καὶ
reap	which	neither	have	storehouse	nor	barn	and
G2325	G3739	G3756	G2076	G5009	G3761	G596	G2532
ὁ	θεὸς	τρέφει	αὐτούς·	πόσῳ	μᾶλλον	ὕμεῖς	διαφέρετε
G3588	God	feedeth	them	how much	more	ye	are
	G2316	G5142	G846	G4214	G3123	G5210	G1308
τῶν	πετεινῶν						
G3588	the fowls						
	G4071						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 147:9 (Parallel theme): He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

Job 38:41 (References God): Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

Matthew 10:31 (Parallel theme): Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Luke 12:7 (Parallel theme): But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Job 35:11 (Parallel theme): Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

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