

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 katanoēō 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

G3754

G2876

G3756

G4687

G3761

θερίζουσιν οἵς οὐκ ἔστιν ταμεῖον οὐδὲ ἀποθήκη καὶ

reap which neither have storehouse nor barn and

G2325

G3739

G3756

G2076

G5009

G3761

G596

G2532

ό θεὸς τρέφει αὐτούς· πόσῳ μᾶλλον ὑμεῖς 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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