

James 2:8-13

Favoritism, Royal Law, and Law of Liberty, Episode 2

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James 2:8-13 (NASB)

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

“He’s only *mostly* dead”

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

- Four uses for the word law
 - ① The Mosaic Law (i.e. the Law) – the 613 commands
 - ② The Torah (first 5 books of the Bible)
 - ③ The entire Old Testament (shortened from “the law and the prophets”)
 - ④ A principle, being a fundamental truth or a key point of influence or guidance
- The context indicates James is speaking of the 3rd use
- This law is a complete unit
 - Mystery of Prince Rupert’s drop
- How can any man keep the whole Law?

Best out of five?

11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

- The character of God is the basis of the Law
 - The character of God eternally remains the same
- Each aspect of the Law is significant
 - No laws were thrown in "just because"
- We humans are the ones that rank these morals laws
 - Is there such thing as a "little white murder"?
- Our ability to keep the Law depends on the source

Liberty for all

12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.

Greek (eleutheria – liberty)

freedom, generosity, independence; liberty to do or to omit things having no relationship to salvation

- *Zodhiates: Freedom as presented as a signal blessing of the economy of grace, which, in contrast with the OT economy, is represented as including independence from religious regulations and legal restrictions.*
- Paul, Peter, and James all spoke of liberty
 - Romans 8:21; 1 Corinthians 10:29; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 2:4; 5:1, 13; James 1:25; 2:12; 1 Peter 2:16; 2 Peter 2:19

The Law of Liberty/The Law of Christ

12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.

- Wuest: *In this manner be speaking and in this manner be doing, namely, as those who are about to be judged by a law of liberty*
- The “law of liberty” is “the word of God which means liberty”
 - Galatians 6:2; John 13:34; 1 Corinthians 9:21; 1 John 4:21
- John 8:31-32: *the truth will set you free*
- Hiebert on “judged”: *confronting the judge who will assess their character and conduct by the “law of liberty”*
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10
- There is a measuring stick for believers—it is the Grace of God
 - Galatians 5:14-16

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13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

Greek (krisis – judgment)

judgment given, sentence pronounced; sentence of condemnation, damnatory judgment, condemnation and punishment

Greek (eleos – mercy)

kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them; feeling of empathy

Greek (katakauchaomai – triumphs over)

to glory against, to exult over; boasts against

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13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

- Hiebert: *The practice of mercy toward others is the evidence that God's grace has produced a transformation in a person. Having himself received God's mercy, he will be able to stand in the judgment that would otherwise overwhelm him.*
- Compare to Matthew 6:14-15 and Matthew 18:23-35
- Paul later speaks on judging others: Romans 14:10-13
- A major theme in James is consistency
 - We should not be a “double-minded man”
 - We should not show partiality
- As with John, our love for the fellow saints is a high priority for James.