

(3) Eph. 6:9 -- "And ye masters, do the same things unto them (your servants), forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

The thrust here appears to be fairly straightforward. Christian masters are warned not to treat their servants in a manner that is displeasing to God, for when God judges the deeds of men, the fact that masters occupied a superordinate social and economic level in this life will be completely extraneous to the issue of whether their earthly deeds were righteous or unrighteous. The fact that a man was a master will not in itself influence God's judgment one iota.

(4) Col. 3:25 -- "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

In verses 22-24 we discover that servants are being addressed in this passage. Here servants are exhorted to do their work as unto the Lord, and are warned not to serve their masters in a manner that is displeasing to God. Their status as servants does not give them a license to do wrong. When God judges the deeds of men, the fact that servants occupied a subordinate social and economic level in this life will be completely extraneous to the issue of whether their earthly deeds were righteous or unrighteous. The fact that a man was a servant will not in itself influence God's judgment one bit.

(5) James 2:1-4, 8-9 -- "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in raiment; And yet you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and art become judges of evil thoughts?" . . . "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; But if ye have respect to persons ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

To begin with, verse 1 is very difficult to translate. One need only check the AV, the Douay Version, the Confraternity Version, the New Jerusalem Bible, The New American Bible, Goodspeed, the RSV, the NEB, the Williams Translation, the NASB, the NIV, and a number of commentators to discover the truth of this judgment! However, translating the present imperative as most grammarians advise, we can make a reasonably good attempt. James tells his readers, "My brothers, stop holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory in connection with respect of persons!" The thrust seems to be that faith in Christ and respect of persons do not harmonize, and therefore these brethren should not try to hold both faith and this attitude which is condemned throughout Scriptural as sinful.

The Illustration in verses 2-3 beautifully illustrates the principle of the evil of making judgments about persons on the basis of extraneous considerations. James says that people who do this become like judges who allow evil considerations to pervert their judgment.

in verses 8-9 James adds an idea. Those who love their neighbors as themselves (according to the royal law) do well. But those who discriminate among their neighbors on the basis of such extraneous considerations as to whether those persons are rich or poor, and then love