

## Epistle of Ya'akov ~ 4:11-17

### Warning Against Weariness ~ Part 2

We continue to explore what **Ya'akov** warns us about growing weary. **Ya'akov** returns to the specific worldly behavior his readers are following ~ violent speech (see also 3:1–12). He either addresses social stratification within the **Messianic** community or, more likely, uses **brothers** in its more common Jewish sense of 'fellow Jews. **Jewish** revolutionaries had already begun killing aristocrats, and inflammatory rhetoric was certainly even more common. His general principle was standard **Tanakh** and **Jewish** wisdom opposing slander, which many of his readers may not have been considering in this context. The law declared **God's** love for **Isra'el** and commanded His people to love one another; to slander a fellow **Jew** was thus to disrespect the law.<sup>1</sup>

***11 Brothers, stop speaking against each other! Whoever speaks against a brother or judges a brother is speaking against Torah and judging Torah. And if you judge Torah, you are not a doer of what Torah says, but a judge. 12 There is but one Giver of Torah; He is also the Judge, with the power to deliver and to destroy. Who do you think you are, judging your fellow human being?***

**Stop speaking against each other!** One who **speaks against or judges a brother** is arrogating to himself the position of **a judge**, that is, of **God**, who has **the power to deliver and to destroy**. The most important part of the **Torah** is, **Love your neighbor as yourself** (Leviticus 19:18). In saying this, the **Torah** does not distinguish the righteous neighbor from the wicked one. **Yeshua** taught that the neighbor could be a **Samaritan**, that is, someone who is usually the object of adverse prejudgment.

***13 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such-and-such a city, stay there a year trading and make a profit!"***

John MacArthur opines that: **Ya'akov** does not condemn wise business planning, but rather planning that leaves out **God**. The people so depicted are practical atheists, living their lives and making their plans as if **God** did not exist. Such conduct is inconsistent with genuine saving faith, which submits to **God**.<sup>2</sup>

***14 You don't even know if you will be alive tomorrow! For all you are is a mist that appears for a little while and then disappears. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If Adonai wants it to happen, we will live" to do this or that. 16 But as it is, in your arrogance you boast. All such boasting is evil.***

Well, verse 14 is a real downer, but true nevertheless! However, planning is an important ingredient of today's managerial society, but it is easy for planners to forget that they stand only as **God** permits - not only their plans, but they themselves. Hence, **If Adonai wants it to happen, we will live to do this or that**. If we don't live, what good will the plans do? **Don't boast about tomorrow, for you don't know what the day may bring** ~ Proverbs 27:1).

***17 So then, anyone who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it is committing a sin.*** ~ Ya'akov 4:11-17 (CJB)

**Anyone who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it is committing a sin** of omission far more serious than the sin of those who are uninformed - as is clear from Luke 2:47–48, 2 Kefa 2:21. Romans 14:23 makes a related yet distinct point. In this specific situation the sin is to announce plans as if we could control all the circumstances, failing to acknowledge that **God** is in charge and our plans depend on his will.

In our next post, we learn more from **Ya'akov** as we dig into what he says about **Warning to the Rich**.

<sup>1</sup> Keener, C. S. (1993). **The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament**: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006). **The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible**. Thomas Nelson Publishers.