

## 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>

***<sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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 prejudice.

***<sup>13</sup> 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>

***<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, "If Adonai wants it to happen, we will live" to do this or that. <sup>16</sup> 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).

***<sup>17</sup> 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**.

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<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.