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### The Case of the Short-Sighted Usher or What Partiality will do in a Life

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THE CASE OF THE SHORT-SIGHTED USHER

or

WHAT PARTIALITY WILL DO TO A LIFE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JAMES  
NUMBER 14  
JAMES 2:1-4

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JAMES 2:1-4 "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of 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 vile raiment; And ye 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 are become judges of evil thoughts?"

In order to understand the message of this second chapter of James, it is necessary that we understand certain concepts of truth. First, we must understand the meaning of JUSTIFICATION.

Justification really means vindication. There are three areas of vindication.

1. Vindication means God's provision.

This provision of God includes promotion, stability and God's continued blessing day after day. (David was allowed to serve for forty years as king of Israel because of this provision from God.)

2. Vindication is salvation.

Vindication is the point where we are saved. We are justified or vindicated by faith in Christ. We believe and are saved and at that moment God does 34 things for us and these things are permanent, and can never be taken away from us.

3. Vindication is production.

Now this has nothing to do with salvation. This is a vindication that comes after salvation. This vindication has to do with production in the Christian life. (Abraham was justified in Ur when he believed in Christ and was saved. Then the Bible says that he was justified 50 years later when he offered up Isaac, and this is the justification of production. Rahab, the harlot, was justified and saved when she heard of the amazing deliverance of the people from Egyptian bondage and at that point she believed in Christ. Then later she was justified when she hid the spies and saved them from destruction. This was the justification of production.)

An Outline Of This Chapter

Verses 1-16--Operational death.

Verses 17-20--The principle of vindication.

Verses 21-26--Illustrations of production vindication.

We are going to study a new doctrine in this chapter and this new doctrine is called "REVERSE PROCESS REVERSIONISM." Since this is a technical term for something that goes on all the time in the lives of believers and unbelievers, it will be necessary first to explain the doctrine of reversionism.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF REVERSIONISM

1. Definition Of Reversionism. (This is super back-sliding)
  - a. For the unbeliever  
 Reversion in an unbeliever comes when he deteriorates to the position of anarchy in his soul. 2 Peter 2:17-20  
 The process is like this--  
 He is exposed to false teaching and at first rejects it.  
 He then is exposed to the gospel and rejects it.  
 Then false doctrine comes back again and he this time accepts it.
  - b. For the believer.  
 Reversion in a believer goes like this. The believer goes from an edification complex in his soul, or a near edification complex in his soul, back to a total soul revolt. Jer. 9:15-16
2. How Reversionism Comes About In The Soul.  
 This is accomplished when the believer begins to neglect Bible doctrine and fails to function under grace perception. 1 Cor. 10:12
3. Three Bible Illustrations Of Reversionism.
  - a. The Mizpeh crowd of Jeremiah's day. They got all mixed up and started to offer sacrifices to the queen of heaven. In other words, became idol worshippers. Jeremiah 2:42-44
  - b. The Jews of Moses' day as they came out of Egypt and they kept looking back and longing for the leeks and garlick of Egypt. Exodus 17:3
  - c. The Corinthians in their attitude toward the message Paul delivered to them to correct their ways. 2 Cor. 10
4. The Definition of Reversionism.  
 This is found in Galatians 5:4 and is called "Falling from grace."  
GALATIANS 5:4 "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
5. Mental Attitude Sins.  
 Mental attitude sins contribute to reversionism more than anything else. HEBREWS 12:15 "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;"
6. How To Recover From Reversionism.  
 This involves rebound daily (the use of 1 John 1:9 every day) plus the intake of Bible doctrine constantly.  
HEBREWS 6:1-2 "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."
7. Reversionists Always Reject the Authority of God's Word.  
 This happened with Moses and with Isaiah and Jeremiah and with Paul. They kept on rejecting the authority of these great teachers:

8. The Bible gives us several phrases which describe reversionism.
  - a. The uncircumcised heart of Jeremiah 9:25-26
  - b. The unstable soul of 2 Peter 2:14
  - c. The tortured soul of 2 Peter 2:7-8
  
9. Reversionism produces national disintegration.  
Romans 1:29-32

From this study we can see that reversionism takes place in the believer and the unbeliever. In this passage that is before us here in James, we have what we call "Reverse Process Reversionism." This is the person who has once had an edification complex, he has once been faithful in learning Bible doctrine, and has once walked in the fullness of the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But for reasons of neglect and carelessness, he begins to fall away and reverses the process and falls back into what the Bible calls in Galatians "falling from grace." Please notice, this does not mean falling from salvation. No one can fall from salvation.

Now we are going to see this doctrine illustrated in the case of the short-sighted usher in our study.

We see this going on every day. People will hurt those they love the most, and will shower affection on someone they really don't care for at all, just so they can "get even" with someone they really love. Illustration Eve was desperately in love with Adam but she pretended to fall for the line the serpent handed her and she ended up in a real jam and she is a perfect illustration of reverse process reversionism. Therefore let us look at this doctrine as it is illustrated in this usher.

JAMES 2:1 "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." The word for "brethren" is "adelphoi," the plural of adelphos and it means "my Jewish brethren." This refers to born again Jews. Let me say, first, that this verse is a miserable translation.

It should read like this--"Not in the sphere of partiality shall you have and hold faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glory."

So the key is "partiality" and the state of partiality illustrated reverse process reversionism on the part of this usher. "Have not" is "Echo" plus the negative and it means "do not have or hold." In other words, we are never to have or hold partiality in our minds. Doing this is the result of reverse process reversionism. When you go negative toward doctrine, then emptiness opens up in the soul and scar tissue begins to build up and then a real emotional revolt of the soul sets in. This is one of the things that always characterizes a psychotic person. This verse is actually saying this--You can't have and hold the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, the glory, and then crowd partiality into your soul along side that faith. These two don't go together. Partiality causes the wires to be crossed and a short circuit comes about. You can't hold doctrine in your mind and have partiality there at the same time. It is one or the other. If partiality comes in, then doctrine goes out. People can waste their whole lifetime like this. They can slip back and operate under this reverse process and build up a lot of scar tissue and the only thing that will deliver them is a major operation. The major operation must be performed by a good dose of Bible doctrine taken as prescribed by the Word of God.

We see this reverse process of reversionism operating all the time. A married man or woman decides that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, and the reverse process sets in and in one act of immorality, the whole edification complex is shattered. Just remember "Any old port in a storm" has severe punishment from God. You hurt yourself, you hurt others and you hurt those you love the most. This phrase here "with respect of persons" means partiality and is from the interesting greek word "prosopolepsia." It means giving your affection, your time, your love to someone who is really not the one you love. In our generation, dope addiction has caused countless thousands of young people to do this very thing. They wake up in the midst of their miserable state and realize they have missed the whole meaning of life. Quite often people who fall into this reversionism rush off to church and hope they can quickly make it up to God and hope everything will all balance out--but it won't. This passage is about life right where we live it and find it. In these next verses James is going to give an illustration of this doctrine of reverse process reversionism.

JAMES 2:2 "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 vile raiment;" This "if" is a third class condition plus the aorist, active, subjunctive of "eiserchomai" and that means that this usher didn't have to respond like he did, but his response was caused by his state of reversionism. The poor man in the study was actually the object of this usher's love, and this rich man had taken this usher to court and had treated him shamefully (as we will see later on in the story). The word for assembly is "sunagoge" and is the word from which we get synagogue.

"A man with a gold ring" comes from the greek words "aner chrusodaktolio" and it really means "the gold fingered man." They wore so many rings on each finger it looked like their hands were made of gold. In goodly apparel is equivalent to our expression today "he was dressed in very expensive threads." This man was quite wealthy and on one occasion, he had actually taken our usher to jail. He had treated him shamefully. But immediately when the usher saw him, he gave him undivided attention, bowed and scraped. So gold fingers is given all the attention and the poor man is ignored. The word for poor man is "ptochos" and it means not only short of cash but it means poverty stricken. The words "en rugaros" means his dress is dirty and defiled. It means vermin is on his dress. But this usher is his friend and he will certainly take care of him.

JAMES 2:3 "And ye 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:" The word for respect is "epiblepo" and it means to look on something and blink with approval. He regards him with great partiality. The word for "weareth" really means "Carrying" like you would carry a heavy weight. (don't let the word "gay" confuse you for we have added a new dimension to that word in our time. It here simply means attractive.) The usher says to this man "sit here", and is a present, middle, imperative of "kathemai" and it means keep on sitting here. The word for "here" is "hode" and it means a very special place. "A good place" is from "kalos" and means a place of honor.

In the meantime the poor man is standing waiting and to "ptochos" he said, "You stand there" and it is an aorist, active, imperative of "histemi." The usher had an elevated seat and he looked down at the poor man and said, "Sit down there."

Now let's get a correct translation of this verse.

"For if there should enter into your assembly a prominent man, a gold fingered nobleman in magnificent clothing, and at the same time, there enters a "ptochos" in filthy clothing, but you show partiality to the one wearing the magnificent clothing, and you say, 'be seated in this place honorably,' and then you say to "ptochos," 'you stand there beneath my footstool'..."

Now that is what we are calling "reverse process reversionism."

JAMES 2:4 "Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" Now we get the conclusion James gives to all this. The word partial here is an aorist, passive, indicative of "diakrino" and it means to discriminate. And this is not just ordinary discrimination, it is soul discrimination. It is soul failure. Your soul has failed you and it means "in the sphere of yourself." It is an idiom which reveals the thinking that is going on in your reversionistic soul. The question is so stated in greek that you know the answer is "Yes, I have!" He had judged his friend and had given preference to an enemy. Then it says, "And are become judged of evil thoughts." The word is "Ginomai" and it means to become something that you were not before. The word is "krites" and is the word from which we get critic. It means to become an evil judge in your soul.

So the verse says, "Were you not being partial in your mind and have you not become an unjust critic in your soul?" And the answer is, "Yes, I have."

The next verses will give God's warning for this kind of activity. God will present his answer from three viewpoints. He will present a doctrinal viewpoint, a common sense viewpoint, and a logical viewpoint. We will study these viewpoints in our next lesson.