

Why Sin is So Serious

James 4:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹² There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

Introduction

One of the common objections by Atheist regarding the God of the Bible is how he judges Sin. It is believed that it is overly harsh to bring the death penalty on someone for one act of disobedience about eating from one tree in the garden of Eden. It may be conceded that Adam and Eve did do wrong. They did not obey what God said, but instead did the exact opposite of what God commanded..... But to punish them by cursing the work of their hands forever, and bringing pain in child birth forever and in effect guarantee marital conflict forever... and above all of this to bring spiritual and physical pain, sorrow and death on them and their children forever is just plain wrong and unjust and evil.

And a second objection is like the first... How can God punish people in Hell forever for a temporal amount of sin? How is it just for a God to punish men and women in hell who have only sinned 70 or 80 years and yet they are punished forever and ever for all eternity . Or how can a finite amount of sin bring an infinite amount of punishment.

Some have never murdered someone or committed crimes listed in our legal system that should bring death.

So how can a decent person who has lived a good life be punished forever.

Both of these objections seem at first on the surface to create insurmountable problems. But they are just surface. There is much more to this than it initially states.

It is true that God did pronounce capital punishment on Adam and Eve for their one act of disobedience. The sin that occurred in a moment was given and eternal punishment.

And it is true that men live a finite amount of time on this earth and commit a finite amount of sin on earth and it is given an infinite and eternal amount of punishment, never to be stopped, repealed or lessened.

And if you have ever struggled to understand this, you are not the first.

Clark Pinnock wrote in 1990,

I was led to question the traditional belief in everlasting conscious torment because of moral revulsion and broader theological considerations, not first of all on scriptural grounds. It just does not make any sense to say that a God of love will torture people forever for sins done in the context of a finite life . . . It's time for evangelicals to come out and say that the biblical and morally appropriate doctrine of hell is annihilation, not everlasting torment.¹

John Stott wrote,

Emotionally, I find the concept [of eternal conscious torment] intolerable and do not understand how people can live with it without either cauterizing their feelings or cracking under the strain . . .

1. Clark Pinnock and Delwin Brown, *Theological Crossfire: An Evangelical/Liberal Dialogue*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), pp. 226–227. ↩
2. David Edwards, *Evangelical Essentials*, with a Response from John Stott, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), pp. 314–320. ↩

Both Pinnock and Stott opted for a growing a more popular view of annihilationism. You simply go out of existence.

This, by the way, is always a popular view when there is the growing presence of liberalism and exaltation of man and devaluing of God.

The better man looks in his own eyes the less belief there is in the justice of punishment of sin. And the lower God is in the eyes of man, the less holy He is in the mind of man.

So the conclusion will be, what right does this God have to punish man forever who is not really that bad.

This kind of thinking is the product of evolutionary thought coupled with an unbiblical world view of God.

It is the mix of soup that we swim in every day.

Large populations of people have been influenced by evolutionary thought, that says you are just a product of a chance collision of atoms. You are swamp mud that has become vertical and learned how to walk. You live You die. That's it. NO more No less. What ever you do or don't do matters. If you lie, cheat and steal, so what. Your just a meaningless bag of mostly water anyway. So there is no ultimate judge, No ultimate accountability. No reason for anything and not life after this. So eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.

Then you have the children who have grown up in the public school system and the universities and have been taught over and over again that evolution is true but have had a spattering of Bible education

over the years but have not been taught the God of the Bible, but rather a god of their own imagination.

A God of love, who is not a God who has wrath for sin. A god who laughs at the indiscretions of your youth. He really does not care how you live. This is the god of much of contemporary evangelicalism. He is the Good ole boy god. The man upstairs. He's the santa clause god of the south. He knows when you are sleeping, He knows when you are awake, he knows if you have been naughty or nice, so be good for goodness sake. How sweet.

The reason we even begin to have questions about the matter of eternal punishment for a finite amount of sin, is simply because we have been so conditioned by our culture and our educational systems that we no longer think sin is that sinful or that it is really that bad. I mean, if it is not hurting anyone else, what does it matter.

We have reclassified sins as sicknesses thereby making us the victim of sin rather than the perpetrator of the evil.

Then to add fuel to the fire, the evangelical culture is woefully ignorant of the God the Bible.

A.W Pink wrote in his book, "The Sovereignty of God"

“How different is the God of the Bible from the God of modern Christendom! The conception of Deity which prevails most widely today, even among those who profess to give heed to the Scriptures, is a miserable caricature, a blasphemous travesty of the Truth. The God of the twentieth century is a helpless, effeminate being who commands the respect of no really thoughtful man. The God of the popular mind is the creation of maudlin sentimentality. The God of many a present-day pulpit is an object of pity rather than of awe-inspiring reverence. ”

Excerpt From
The Sovereignty of God (Unabridged)
A. W. Pink
<https://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewBook?id=0>
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Years and years, turning to decades of shallow sermons with very little Theology proper, that is teaching the Biblical character of God has left the church disabled at best and paralyzed at worse to think righty about sin and it's severity and the Holiness of God and it's Justice.

Imagine if for a moment that Pinnock and Scott were right, and there is no eternal punishment for sin, but only annihilation, and the time comes finally for Adolf Hitler to stand before God for all of the atrocities he committed against humanity. All the

men women and children that he purposely transported to the death camps to be starved, murdered and experimented upon. With all his blasphemous demonic spewing pouring out of his mouth. His consistent rejection, rebellion and defiance of the God of heaven. His desire to usurp the throne of God and place himself there as the one who can determine whether you live or die. A hate filled man desirous of the pain of others to satisfy his lust for power.

And now he is brought before the throne of God only to hear that he will no longer exist.

Wow!! Hitler would say, that is exactly what I was hoping for. I mean I believe in evolution and that taught me that I would die and there would be nothing, so it didn't matter what evil I did. But now standing before you God, I know you exist, but I end up in the same place, Non existent. Thank you so much.

Your heart should be screaming for justice. This man should pay for his sins. He should be punished for his murders.

Annihilation is not the answer. It is an escape hatch from the severity of sin and the Holy justice of God. Annihilationism removes you completely from all pain, all remorse, all regret, all punishment.

Think of it like this. 150 years ago, you did not exist. Do you remember any pain, sorrow, regret, remorse or reminder of your rejection of the glory of God? NO... the same would be for the annihilated one.

Annihilationism takes sin and unbelief from its rightful place of high treason, and makes it a misdemeanor.

So what about God punishing men and women in hell forever for a limited lifetime of sin and why did Adam and Eve receive such a severe punishment for one sin?

Well it is not that hard to understand when you have a Biblical view of God and an biblical view of sin. It is not so much what sin you commit that is the issue but rather who you sin against the determines the degree of punishment.

For instance.

Take lying as an example.

If you lie to your friend, you may not receive any punishment or you might lose that friend.

If you lie to your parents you may receive a spanking as a child.

If you lie to a police officer, depending on what you are lying about, you could be arrested and face jail time.

If you lie to the judge you could go to prison. They are all lies, but the person lied too base on there position and authority can increase the punishment.

Now take all of those who are sinners you have lied to. The friend, the parent, the police officer and the judge are all sinners. Not perfect, infact sinners themselves.

But now take that same lie and lie to God. The highest authority, the Perfect and holy God who always dispenses justice rightly.

No you have sinned against the Greatest and Holiest Authority. -- which will mean the most severe punishment

A second point that needs to be noted is that if someone is punished in Hell forever for there sins, it is offten argued that they are being punished for a finite amount of sin. 70 or 80 years, so how can it be forever.

Well, what is not usually pointed out is... just because you die as a unbeliever and go to hell, does not mean you stop sinning. You are still an unredeemed person. You have not been transformed into a new creature as a Christian has. You live as a sinner, you die as a sinner, and you continue as sinner in a state of rebellion and sin.

In fact, often Jesus refers to Hell as a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The gnashing of teeth comes from the rebellion and hatred of God still in the heart of the sinners. So the punishment never stops because the rebellion never ceases.

The Command

The Concern

I. The Command

11 Do not speak evil of one another,

Katalaleō (**speak against**) appears only here and in 1 Peter 2:12 and 3:16. Along with the related nouns *katalalia* (“slander”; 2 Cor. 12:20; 1 Pet. 2:1) and *katalalous* (“slanderers”; Rom. 1:30), it refers to mindless, thoughtless, careless, critical, derogatory, untrue speech directed against others.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 221). Moody Press.

Apparently the reference is to the major way in which their “fights and quarrels” (v. 1) expressed themselves. The compound verb literally means to “speak down on” (compare the common expression “running each other down”) and is broader than “slander” in the NIV rendering. Basically meaning to “speak evil of,” Wolff notes that such evil speaking “includes (1) willful false accusations, (2) exaggerations of faults that are real, (3) needless repetition of real faults, (4) slander.”

The Greek word literally means “speak against” another. It might either mean to speak against someone *truly* or to speak evil *falsely*. To gossip is to take a true story where it should not go. To slander is to create and spread false stories. Both gossip and slander are sins and cause real harm.

Dorioni, D. M. (2007). [James](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Dorioni, Eds.; p. 156). P&R Publishing.

I. The Command

Slander occurs whenever someone says something ...about someone else that results, intentionally or unintentionally, in damaging that someone else’s

reputation. And when it occurs, it becomes a divisive, discouraging, and confusing weight that often affects numerous people — sometimes many, many people. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/lay-aside-the-weight-of-slander>

It can be anything that is shared about a brother or sister to someone else that is true or false with the intent or the result of changing the perception of that person in a negative or evil way

What is slander? In 1886, Joseph Roux described it this way: “A verdict of guilty pronounced in the absence of the accused, with closed doors, without defense or appeal, by an interested and prejudiced judge.”

Slander is preceded by another sin: judging others. The Lord Jesus has told us not to do this (*Matthew* 7:1-5). When we judge others, we think we are something and they are nothing. *Galatians* 6:3-4 warns us against this, for we should not think we are something when we are nothing. When we judge others, we take the role of God and pass judgment on another fellow sinner. Martin Luther once wrote, “To avoid this vice we should all note that no one is allowed to publicly judge and reprove his neighbor,

although he may see him sin...for there is a great difference between these two things, knowing sin and judging sin. You may indeed know it, but you are not to judge it...now if I rush in, judging and passing sentence, I fall into a sin which is greater than his.” Judgment belongs to God alone, and even God is merciful. Therefore, God tells His forgiven people to show mercy too, for “Mercy triumphs over judgment” (*James 2:13b*). <https://familyshieldministries.com/witnessing-articles/slander-sin-can-destroy-lives/>

II. The Concern

The Concern comes in James’ statements on just how serious it is to slander. He makes his concern clear by an escalation of seriousness. Moving from the brothers, to the law, and then to God.

1. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand who you are slandering.

11 Do not speak evil of one another, **brethren**. He who speaks evil of **a brother** and judges his **brother**, speaks evil of the law and judges the law....

This is the Bride of Christ you are slandering. This is one for whom Christ died that you are maligning and ruining the reputation of.

2. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand what you are slandering.

¹¹ Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

If you slander you,

speak evil of the law and judge the law

This is true of every sin. But slander is particularly evil in that it sets your words against the Words of God. It declares your statements about the character of a person as superior to the Law of God.

___ Quarrels over most issues usually end up including personal attacks and judgmental attitudes.

Moo, D. J. (2000). [The letter of James](#) (p. 198). Eerdmans; Apollos.

v 11 He who speaks evil of a brother **and** judges his brother, speaks evil of the law **and** judges the law

“Anyone who speaks” (*ho katalalōn*), an articular **present participle**, denotes that his derogatory speech is characteristic or habitual. It “does not refer to an occasional slip of the tongue, but to habitual slipping, to constant criticizing and judging.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

The **conjunction “or”** may be disjunctive to denote a separate and distinct activity, but it is better to take it as conjunctive to denote that it is the same activity viewed from a different angle.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

This is in accord with the fact that both participles are under the government of one article. With “judges” the thought shifts from his malicious activity against a brother to his condemnation of “his brother.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

Because of the slander and through the means of slander, you move from a wrongful representation of a brother to a condemnation of that brother. You have determined that he is evil or has done some evil and treat him as such.

When you slander/judge a person, you are claiming “they have failed to do something they should have done, or they are doing something they shouldn’t do.” (Allister Begg). And this is usually without all the facts, jumping to judgement, a misrepresentation of the truth.

Allister Begg,

Slander and passing judgment are almost inseparable sins: when we speak against our brother, we inevitably judge him.

Slander is preceded by another sin: judging others. The Lord Jesus has told us not to do this (*Matthew 7:1-5*). When we judge others, we think we are something and they are nothing. *Galatians 6:3-4* warns us against this, for we should not think we are something when we are nothing. When we judge others, we take the role of God and pass judgment on another fellow sinner. Martin Luther once wrote,

“To avoid this vice we should all note that no one is allowed to publicly judge and reprove his neighbor, although he may see him sin...for there is a great difference between these two things, knowing sin and judging sin. You may indeed know it, but you are not to judge it...now if I rush in, judging and passing sentence, I fall into a sin which is greater than his.” Judgment belongs to God alone, and even God is merciful. Therefore, God tells His forgiven people to show mercy too, for “Mercy triumphs over judgment” (*James 2:13b*). <https://familyshieldministries.com/witnessing-articles/slander-sin-can-destroy-lives/>

“Speaks against the law and judges it” (*katalalei nomou kai krinei nomon*, “speaks against [the] law and judges [the] law”) unveils the deep meaning of the reprehensible practice. James might have condemned it as a revelation of personal lovelessness; instead, he related it to “the law” and, beyond that, to God. Both occurrences of “the law” are without the article here, thus keeping the thought purely qualitative.

the law governing the Christian life that James has already spoken of as “the perfect law, the law of liberty” (1:25) and “the royal law,” that is, the law of Christian love (2:8). Now he thinks of it simply as having the force of “law” for believers. Its characteristic quality is that they must love their neighbor as themselves

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

Leviticus 19:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the Lord.

Matthew 22:36–40 (NKJV)

³⁶ “Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?”

³⁷ Jesus said to him, “ ‘*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*’ ³⁸ This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹ And *the* second *is* like it: ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Romans 13:8–10 (NKJV)

⁸ Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For

the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there *is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

Galatians 5:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*”¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Slander is not love and it is not the fulfillment of the law. Rather it is the antithesis of Love and the total disregarding of the law.

In fact this is true of sin in General. Jesus said, If you Love me, you will keep my commandments. And if you go back to Exodus 20 and read thru the 10 commandments. All of them can be fulfilled if you love God and love your neighbor.

1. You won't have any other gods, because you love the one true God.

2. You will not make an idol because you Love God

3. You won't take the name of the Lord in vain, because you love Him and will not blaspheme him.

4. You will honor the Lord's day because you love him.

You are not motivated by fear, but by Love. You don't do this because you feel threatened but rather you are motivated to do it because you Love him and you really want to do it to please Him

And because you love your neighbor has yourself,

1. You will honor your mother and father, because you love them. You will not desire to dishonor and disobey

2. You will not murder because you love your neighbor and wish him no harm

3. You love your spouse therefore you will not commit adultery.

4. You love your neighbor so you will not take what is his.

5 You love and desire good for your neighbor so you will not slander his name and bear false witness.

6. Because you love, you will want the best for your neighbor, not covet what God has blessed him with,

rather you will rejoice with him for what God has given Him.

Love is the fulfillment of the Law.

But SIN is

a setting oneself above the law. You and your evaluation become the standard by which someone is judged. You become a law unto your self.

You become your own standard. You defame and diminish and extinguish the Law of God in your Life.

You show utter disregard for the divine standard.

This is the nature of this sin of slander and the nature of every single sin.

IT is a violates Law

It says in effect, as a sinner that I am superior to that law. Every sin is a sin of pride. It is a self exaltation above the law of God. You will not have any restraint on me, I will not submit to you inferior standard.

I know what God said, but this is what I'm saying and what I'm doing regardless of what God says.

And if you think God is in charge. You are so wrong. I am in charge and I will do what I want to do.

PERIOD.

You are ascending the steps of heaven, walking into the throne room of God and saying to Him. I will not have this God rule over me.

It is unworthy of my attention, unworthy of my affection and unworthy of my submission. We are a law unto ourselves.

You have set yourself up as the that law

When you willfully and wrongfully represent or misrepresent a brother to another person in slander, you are in effect saying, “ God your law does not matter. I can do what I want to do, say what I want to say. Determine what I want to determine. Judge what I want to judge. Condemn what I want to condemn.

“All law demands obedience and deliberate transgression says in effect that the law is bad, too strict perhaps, and that our standard is superior.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

His practice as a Christian suggests that presumably he claims to be acting according to higher principles.

“However high and orthodox our view of God’s law

might be,” Moo remarks, “a failure actually to do it says to the world that we do not *in fact* put much (stock in it)me

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 243). BMH Books.

The vicious speaking against a brother is a violation of this law of love

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 242). BMH Books.

v.11c But if you judge the law,
you are not a doer of the law but
a judge.

“When you judge” (*ei*, “if” with the indicative) introduces a **first class conditional** construction that assumes the condition is true to fact. But in now using the second person singular verb, “you,” James confronts his readers individually. He calls upon the guilty readers individually to judge themselves in light of the statement being made.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 243). BMH Books.

In judging the law as not worthy to be obeyed. You set yourself as superior to the law and as a judge

with greater and superior law to the Law of Love by God.

In thus setting himself above the law, he usurps the office of the judge whose function is to determine whether a man's actions come under the authority of a certain law. In effect, he proposes that he is qualified to enact a better law. He is usurping the prerogatives of the divine Lawgiver.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 243). BMH Books.

Alister Begg,

When we are tempted to pass judgment, an honest look at our own sinfulness should cause us to pause. The more we know our own hearts, the more gracious we become towards others

Matthew 7:1–5 (NKJV)

7 “Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother's

eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?
⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye

John 7:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

Slander is a self determined, independent judgement of the truth based on true or false and incomplete information or a self determined, independent judgement based on lies.

It is a self-assertive, setting oneself up as judge and jury based on a law that you believe better represents the Law of God. You become the law. The standard by which someone is condemned.

v.11c But if you judge the law,
you are not a doer of the law but
a judge.

You are not the one anymore doing the law,
 trying to live the law, but rather, You have ascended

to the Bench, placed on your black robe, taken the gavel in your hands and are condemning others based on your interpretation of the law. Only one knows all the truth and that is God, but you have ascended to a place that you believe you know the truth and that you know the motives of that heart, and can access them with 100% accuracy, so that you can't pronounce a correct sentence or judgment.

I. The Command

II. The Concern

1. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand who you are slandering.

2. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand what you are slandering.

3. You are willing to Slander because you do not really understand Sovereign you are slandering.

12 *There is one Lawgiver*, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

James 4:12 (LSB)

12 There is *only one Lawgiver and Judge*, the One who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you who judge your neighbor?

Let such arrogance face the solemn reality: God alone is the ultimate source of all law and authority

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [*James*](#) (Revised Edition, p. 243). BMH Books.

Who do you think you are. There are vacancies on the Bench in God's Courtroom. There is no other judge. He isn't retiring. There are no job offers. And it is impossible for you to be the kind of Judge God is.

He is Sovereign — He answers to know one.

He is Ruler — He can carry out his judgments

His is Omniscience — Nothing is hidden from his sight. It doesn't matter whether you say you will tell the truth, so help you God. He will see every lie, every deceit. Every sin. IN Thought. Word or deed.

God not only authored the Law; He also administers the Law. He serves as both the executive and judicial branches of the divine government. God is King; He institutes and declares His Law. God is Judge; He upholds and enforces His Law

Blue, J. R. (1985). [James](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 831). Victor Books.

Slander is a way of putting yourself above another person and acting as their judge.

You are not omniscience— yet you claim to know that person's heart.

You are not Sovereign - yet you claim to rule by your own law.

You are not the Lawgiver - yet your actions say your law is superior.

You are not the Judge — yet you believe your judgments are just.

You are sinner, with a deceitful heart, and very limited information, yet you can make so many conclusions about your brother.

How dare we usurp the throne of God in our arrogance and Pride.

You commit Deicide —- You kill God and take his place.

in the 1600's, Ralph Venning wrote this: "The sinfulness of sin not only appears from but consists in this, that it is contrary to God. Indeed, it is contrariety and enmity itself. Carnal men, or sinners,

are called by the name of enemies of God. But the carnal mind or sin is called enmity itself.

“Accordingly, it and its acts are expressed by names of enmity and acts of hostility, such as walking contrary to God, rebelling against God, rising up against God, striving and contending with God, despising God, hating God, resisting God, fighting God, blaspheming God. And in short, it is atheism, it is saying there is no God. It goes about to ungod God. It is God murder,”
<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/59-27/the-blasphemous-sin-of-defaming-others-part-2>

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is
able to save and to destroy. Who
 are you to judge another?

This unique and sovereign God is further identified as “the one who is able to save and destroy.” “The one who is **able**” (*ho dunamenos*), an articular present participle, stands in apposition to “One” as further establishing His uniqueness. He unfailingly possesses the ability to carry out His purposes, thus confirming His exclusive prerogatives as “Lawgiver and Judge.” As Lawgiver He declares His will for His

creatures, and as Judge He upholds and enforces His revealed will.

“To save and destroy”

σώζω *sōzō*; fut. *sōsō*, aor. pass. *esōthēn*, perf. pass. *sésōsmai*, from *sōs* (n.f.), safe, delivered. To save, deliver, make whole, preserve safe from danger, loss, destruction. Trans.:

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

20.31 ἀπόλλυμι^a; ἀπώλεια^a, ας *f*; λυμαίνομαι^b: to destroy or to cause the destruction of persons, objects, or institutions—‘to ruin, to destroy, destruction.’

Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). In [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 231). United Bible Societies.

summarizes God’s exercises of His sovereign power. The two aorist infinitives indicate that God’s decisions are effectively executed in any given situation. This ability belongs to God alone. The statement is general, and the two activities need not be limited as to their nature or time. They have a present application, but the eschatological verdict of God as Judge seems primarily in view.

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 244). BMH Books.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is
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are you to judge another

“But” sharpens the contrast between the sovereign God and this foolish individual who is usurping God’s right as the Judge. The use of the emphatic personal pronoun (*su*) underlines the contrast and increases the note of scorn. Burdick well remarks that James’s shattering bluntness is not intended “to rule out civil courts and judges. Instead, it is to root out the harsh, unkind, critical spirit that continually finds fault with others.”

“You to judge” (*ho krinōn*), an articular present participle standing in apposition to the emphatic pronoun, characterizes this individual as one who makes it his business to pass censorious judgment upon his “neighbor,” the one next to him. “Your neighbor” seems clearly intended to recall the law of love cited in 2:8, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 244). BMH Books.

For when we judge and condemn others, we appoint ourselves to a position over them. But what gives us the right to promote ourselves to that rank? Indeed,

to take the post of judge is to usurp a role that belongs to God himself

Doriani, D. M. (2007). [James](#) (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.; p. 154). P&R Publishing.

1 Corinthians 4:1–5 (NKJV)

4 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. ³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. ⁵ Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

In James 4

James 4:6 (NKJV)

*“God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble.”*

James 4:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

When we are honest with ourselves and the sin of our hearts and how wretched they are and how justifiably we ought to find ourselves in dock. We will be less prone to assume a position on the bench. But if we are deceitful in our own hearts, and lie about our position with God, and refuse to humble ourselves before him, then in exalting ourselves and defaming others, we find ourselves right in the heart of this passage.

“The knowledge of our own failings, makes us more and more hesitant about expressing any form of criticism of others. The man who knows himself, learns an increasing silence before other people’s faults” A. Begg

