

25. Without legal authority to do so, they impose regulations and demand submission to mandates which circumvent the Constitution, some of which border on Drācōnian.

Drācō (7th century BC), Athenian lawgiver whose harsh legal code punished both trivial and serious crimes in Athens with death—hence the continued use of the word *dracōnian* to describe repressive legal measures.

Draco's code, which is generally dated 621, was not the first reduction of Athenian law to writing, but it may have been the first comprehensive code or a revision prompted by some particular crisis. Draco's code was later regarded as intolerably harsh, punishing trivial crimes with death; it was probably unsatisfactory to contemporaries, since Solon, who was the archon in 594 BC, later repealed Draco's code and published new laws.¹

Draconian \Drā-kō-nē-an\ [Draco (Athenian lawgiver)] relating to, or characteristic of Draco or the severe code of laws held to have been framed by him. Cruel, severe.²

26. The people James is criticizing are proponents of lawlessness. In violating biblical principles, they have become lawless. The Royal Law has been long since removed from their consciences. As a result, their tongues have been set free to slander fellow believers with vile accusations while they freely violate divine standards from Scripture.
27. Yet, these divine standards are what underwrite the positive believer's advance to the sophisticated spiritual life. This is certainly not the case with those being discussed by James in verse 11, which, so far, reads this way:

James 4:11a Stop slandering [καταλαλέω (*katalalēō*)] fellow members [ἀδελφός (*adelphós*): i.e., "neighbors"] of the royal family of God. The one who slanders another believer, or judges another believer ...

1. If the first two charges are true: they slander fellow believers and judge fellow believers, then it follows that they also slander the law and judge the law.

¹ "Draco," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 2010), 4:207.

² *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. "Draconian."



2. We have already treated the issue of slandering believers with the verb, **καταλαλέω (katalalēō)**.
3. Now the next problem is judging a fellow believer. This takes us to the present active indicative of **κρίνω (krínō)**. It is bad enough to slander a fellow believer, but now they take it to the summum bonum of arrogance by judging the law.
4. So, what law is being judged by these people. Is it the civil laws of Judea, the Law of Torah, the imperative moods of the New Testament? However, James takes a phrase from the Pentateuch, specifically from Moses who quotes the Lord's comments to him in:

Leviticus 19:18 **'You [Moses] shall not take vengeance, nor bear a grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.'**

Doctrine of the Lifestyle of Wisdom

A. Rapport with God Must Precede Rapport with People

1. An ever-enlarging number of citizens in Client Nation America presently prioritize rapport with people over rapport with God, even worse among them are many who reject the existence of God and instead focus on themselves more than anyone else.
2. The emphasis of far too many is to influence others into following them in their cosmic rationales while waging hostile assaults toward those who have developed rapport with God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
3. There are divine priorities that must be recognized if any person is to have meaningful relationships with other people. This is an imperative that is recognized in two problem-solving devices: (7) personal love for God and (8) unconditional love for all mankind.
4. John gives us a clue to divine priorities related to rapport with God and rapport with people:

1 John 4:19 **We love because He loved us first.**

This establishes precedence that is required for love to have meaning and impact. How God loves us provides instruction regarding how we are to love people.

5. Problem-solving device number 7 is Personal Love for God. This is the only form of love that possesses virtue because only God possesses absolute virtue.

6. English dictionaries define virtue in human terms with emphasis on **morality** which is defined as, “The quality of that which conforms to right ideals or principles of human conduct.”³ These definitions come fundamentally short of defining the character of God.
7. There are other English words to improve on the definitions of “virtue” and “morality.” Let’s give some a hearing:
Rectitude: “Undeviating adherence to moral standards; uprightness. Correctness of judgment or procedure.”⁴
Rectitude: “Conduct according to moral principles; strict honesty. Syn. justice, integrity, uprightness.”⁵
Rectitude: “Moral straightness or uprightness; goodness, integrity; virtue, righteousness.”⁶
Probity: “Moral excellence, integrity, rectitude, uprightness, honesty, sincerity.”⁷
8. Among these four references we find terms and synonyms that we use in our studies to define divine essence: “Correctness of judgment and procedure,” “justice,” “integrity,” and “righteousness.”
9. These English terms are incorporated into our efforts to define God’s absolute perfection especially in His relationship with us. We assign these ideas to Him in our feeble efforts to communicate, in human terms, the infinite Divinity we worship.
10. As we humbly aspire to define who and what God is, we have come to choose the words noted above. In His dealings with us, we are confident that He executes “correctness of judgment and procedure.”
11. Three of the words mentioned above define the Integrity of God by which He correctly deals with us: He judges us based on His justice which constitutes one-half of His integrity the other half being His absolute righteousness.
12. We refer to this arrangement as the Personal Love of God directed toward us under His policy of grace. Thus, the love of God is the integrity of God and the integrity of God is the love of God.
13. We must learn from Scripture how we can coordinate our souls with the integrity of God which He manifests toward us. Our ability to coordinate with God requires of us to coordinate our souls with Him through His Word.

³ *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, 2d ed. (1953), s.v. “morality.”

⁴ *Ibid.*, s.v., “rectitude.”

⁵ *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language: Unabridged*, 2d ed. (1962), s.v. “rectitude.”

⁶ *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), s.v., “rectitude.”

⁷ *Ibid.*, s.v. “probity.”



14. The ultimate commandment is the *Shema*, the Hebrew word for, “Hear this!” It leads off Moses’ remarks in:

Deuteronomy 6:5 “Hear [שמע (Shama)],
O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!

v. 5 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

15. This is considered to be the ultimate commandment preceding all others. The Lord quotes this commandment in Matthew 22:37 and in the following verse calls it the “great and foremost commandment” in verse 38. Then, He follows this up by quoting what He refers to as the second most important commandment in:

Matthew 22:39 “The second is like it,
‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

v. 40 “On these two commandments depend the whole law and the Prophets [i.e., the Tanakh (see also Luke 24:44)⁸].”

16. Verse 39 is called The Golden Rule, a human title for the Royal Law, and therefore not found in Scripture. James’ term, the Royal Law, is separate from these and thus a law of its own.
17. The Ten Commandments are spiritual and establishment guidelines designed to provide freedom and privacy for the human race, the exception being the fourth commandment in the Church Age when every day is a Sabbath day.
18. The phrase, “you shall love,” is the future active indicative of the verb *ἀγαπάω (agapáō)*. The indicative mood with the future tense is an “imperatival future” which is sometimes used for a command, almost always in Old Testament quotations. In this case, James quotes the Lord’s instructions to Moses in:

Leviticus 19:18b ‘... you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.’

19. The Royal Law expands this Levitical commandment in numerous passages of the New Testament: Matthew 19:19; 22:39–40; Mark 12:31; John 13:34–35; 15:12, 17; Romans 12:10; 13:8–10; Galatians 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 2:17, 1 John 3:11, 14, 23; 4:7, 11; and 2 John 5–6, plus our passage in James 2:8. **Eleven** books; **7** writers. Counting Leviticus 19:18 as the original, it is cited **26** times in Scripture.

⁸ “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”