

# James - 5W/H Questions

Intro- These are given to help lead a discussion of James or to do your own personal study.

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## James 1:1-12 5W/H QUESTIONS

Jas 1:1+ James, a bond-servant ([doulos](#)) of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed ([diaspora](#)) abroad: Greetings ([chairo](#)).

**WHO IS THE AUTHOR?**

**HOW DOES HE IDENTIFY HIMSELF? WHAT IS A BONDSERVANT?** No rights of his own, exists to do his Master's will, etc

**WHAT IS THE IDEA OF A BONDSERVANT** ([doulos](#))? "No rights" One's will subsumed in will of his master, etc

**WHAT IS UNSUAL ABOUT JAMES' SELF IDENTIFICATION? (CLUE: Who is he related to?)**

Most writers think he was the half-brother of Jesus

**WHO ARE THE RECIPIENTS?** 12 tribes

**WHO IS THAT REFERRING TO?** Jews

**WHAT IS UNUSUAL ABOUT THAT DESIGNATION?** Includes the 10 "lost" tribes exiled into Assyria in 722 BC! None of them are lost to God! (See also "a great persecution" Acts 8:1+).

**WHAT IS THEIR CONDITION?** Dispersed abroad

**WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?** Scattered among the Gentiles.

**WHY WERE THEY DISPERSED?** God dispersed them (and some went voluntarily).

**WHAT IS JAMES' SALUTATION?** Greetings

**WHAT IS THE GREEK WORD?** [chairo](#) = rejoice

**WHAT MIGHT THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE FOLLOWING SUBJECT?** "consider it all joy ([chara](#))"

Jas 1:2+ **Consider** ([hegeomai](#) - [aorist imperative](#)) it all joy ([chara](#)), my brethren ([adelphos](#)), when you encounter ([peripipto](#)) various ([poikilos](#)) trials ([peirasmos](#)),

**WHAT IS THE COMMAND?** Command ([aorist imperative](#) = "Just Do It!") – the idea is every time a new trial comes, they were to obey this command.

**HOW MUCH JOY?** All joy (**WHAT IS IMPLICATION?** Every trial is an opportunity to express joy!)

**HOW DOES JAMES ADDRESS THEM AND WHAT IS IMPLIED?** My brethren ~ believing Jews (cf Jas 1:9)

**WHAT IS THE "TIME SENSITIVE WORD" IN THIS VERSE?** "When" – in other words not say "IF" but "WHEN" implying trials were guaranteed to come!

**WHAT IS THE GREEK WORD FOR “TRIALS”?** [peirasmos](#) from [peirazo](#) – means to test, prove, examine. It is a "neutral word" with no negative connotation by itself. Think of a coin - temptations and trials are two sides of the same coin as in Jas 1:2 and Jas 1:13 (peirazo). Source of trial – TRIALS from God are to build us up. TRIALS from our flesh or Satan are tear us down.

- Satan tempts us to bring out the worst in us
- God tests us to bring out the best, always seeking to make us more like His Son.

**WHAT IS THE IDEA OF “VARIOUS ([poikilos](#)) TRIALS”?** Variegated. “Many colored.” All shapes, sizes, etc, little, big, etc. (cf use in 1Pe 1:6 - "various trials" and 1Pe 4:10 - "manifold grace" - upshot every trial has just the right amount of grace to endure the trial.)

Jas 1:3+ knowing ([ginosko](#)) that the testing ([dokimion](#)) of your faith ([pistis](#)) produces ([katergazomai](#) - present tense) endurance ([hupomone](#)).

**BETTER TRANSLATED - NIV** “Because you know...” indicating this is an explanation (ESV is similar)

**WHAT IS THE REASON (explanation) FOR THE COMMAND TO BE JOYFUL IN TRIALS?** You know it has a spiritual benefit specifically producing endurance. Trials test ([dokimion](#)) our faith, not to break us, but to make us (strengthen our faith, give endurance).

(SIMILAR QUESTION) **WHAT IS THE VALUE OF TESTS OF YOUR FAITH?** endurance

**WHAT IS THE GREEK WORD FOR ENDURANCE?** [hupomone](#) = Literally means “remain ([meno](#)) under (hupo).” Not a grim resignation or a passive “grin and bear it” acceptance but a triumphant facing of difficult circumstances knowing that even out of the test God promises good.

**Morris** on [hupomone](#): "It is the attitude of the soldier who in the thick of battle is not dismayed but fights on stoutly whatever the difficulties."

**Ray Pritchard** - The word “**testing**” refers to the process by which gold ore was purified. In order to separate the gold from the dross, the ore was placed in a furnace and heated until it melted. The dross rose to the surface and was skimmed off, leaving only pure gold. That’s a picture of what God is up to in our “fiery trials.” We all have to undergo some “furnace time” sooner or later. And some of us will spend an extended time in the furnace of affliction. But the result is the pure gold of Christlike character. Job spoke of this experience when he declared of the Lord, “He knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). What is God trying to do when he allows his children to go through hard trials and deep suffering? There are several answers to that question.

**First**, God wants to purge us of sin and to purify us of iniquity.

**Second**, God uses suffering to test our faith. Will you still obey God in the darkness? Will you serve God when things aren’t going your way? Will you hold on to the truth when you feel like giving up?

**Third**, God uses times of difficulty to humble us. When things are going well, we tend to get puffed up about our accomplishments. But let the darkness fall and we are on our knees crying out to God.

**Fourth**, God definitely uses hard times to prepare us to minister to others. He comforts us so that we may comfort others. I know many Christians whose greatest ministry has come from sharing with others how God helped them through a time of crisis.

**Fifth**, I believe God uses hard times to prepare us for a new understanding of his character. In the furnace we discover God’s goodness in a way we had never experienced it before.

Until your faith is put to the test, it remains theoretical. You never know what you believe until hard times come. Then you find out, for better or for worse. ([Full sermon](#))

Jas 1:4+ And **let** endurance ([hupomone](#)) **have** ([present imperative](#)) its perfect ([teleios](#)) result ([ergon](#)), so that ([hina](#) - term of purpose/result) you may be perfect ([teleios](#)) and complete ([holokleros](#)), lacking ([leipo](#) - present tense) in nothing.

**AMPLIFIED** - let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, SO THAT

(introduces result) you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [in your faith], lacking in nothing.

## WHAT IS THE RESULT OF BEARING UP UNDER THE TRIAL TRUSTING GOD IS IN CONTROL?

(1) You may be perfect (Greek – [teleios](#) from [telos](#) – goal) - This is NOT sinless perfection but speaks of growth in spiritual maturity.

(2) Complete (Gk – [holokleros](#) = complete in all parts, all Christian virtues or graces). One writer says “That which retains all that was initially allotted to it and wanting nothing for its wholeness. It expresses the perfection of man before the fall”

**Barclay** writes that **holokleros** means "entire, perfect in every part. It is used of the animal which is fit to be offered to God and of the priest who is fit to serve him. It means that the animal or the person has no disfiguring and disqualifying blemishes. Gradually this unswerving constancy removes the weaknesses and the imperfections from a man's character. Daily it enables him to conquer old sins, to shed old blemishes and to gain new virtues, until in the end he becomes entirely fit for the service of God and of his fellow-men. ([James 1](#))

(3) lacking in nothing (SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING)

**WHAT IS THE IDEA OF THE RESULT THAT YOU MAY BE PERFECT ([teleios](#)) IN JAMES 1:4?** It does not mean sinless! Perfect is best understood as “mature.”

Compare the following uses of [teleios](#):

Ephesians 4:13+ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **mature ([teleios](#))** man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Phil 3:12+ Not that I have already obtained it or have already **become perfect** (VERB – [teleioo](#)), but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

## IN CONTEXT WHAT ARE SOME THINGS A BELIEVER MIGHT BE DEFICIENT IN?

- Wisdom (Jas 1:5),
- Faith (that wavers, is tossed about) (Jas 1:6-8);
- Proper view of the value of humility and riches (Jas 1:9-11).

**GREAT TRUTH ABOUT GOD TO RECALL NEXT TIME WE ARE IN A TRIAL** - When God puts us in the furnace, He always keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat.--Warren Wiersbe

## CROSS REFERENCES RELATED TO JAMES 1:2-4

Romans 5:1-5+ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also **exult** (NIV, NLT = “REJOICE”) in our **tribulations** ([thlipsis](#) - literally pressure = difficult circumstances), **knowing** (cf “know that the testing of your faith...” Jas 1:3) that tribulation brings about **perseverance** ([hupomone](#) as in James); 4 and perseverance, **proven character** ([dokime](#) cf "perfect, complete, lacking nothing"); and proven character ([dokime](#)), hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who was given to us.

**WHAT SIMILARITIES (at least 5) DO YOU SEE IN RO 5:3-5 AND JAMES 1:2-4?** See yellow highlights – (1) rejoice, (2) pressuring circumstances, (3) knowing something good will result (4) perseverance ([hupomone](#)) and (5) proven character (cf perfect, complete, lacking nothing)

1 Peter 1:6-9+ In this you **greatly rejoice** ([agalliao](#) = “JUMP FOR JOY”), even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by **various** ([poikilos](#)) **trials** ([peirasmos](#)), 7 so that the proof ([dokimon](#)) of your **faith** ([pistis](#)), being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though **tested** ([dokimazo](#)) by fire, may be found to **result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ**; (Second Coming) 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

**WHAT SIMILARITIES DO YOU SEE IN 1 PETER 1:6-9 AND JAMES 1:2-3?**

Note “**in this**” refers to the preceding (v3 born again, v4 an imperishable inheritance, v5 protected until glorification) Some will think this refers to trials but John MacArthur says “In this refers back to the preceding passage (1:3–5) (AS DO MOST COMMENTARIES).

- (1) Trials are necessary
- (2) They have a time limit (“a little while”) (This should encourage us to persevere).
- (3) Cause real distress
- (4) Are various (like Jas 1:2) – same Greek word “[poikilos](#)”
- (5) Of inestimable value - Suffering refines our faith = fire tested (removes the impurities) (2) Such a tested faith will be rewarded by praise, glory and honor

1 Peter 4:12-13+ Beloved, **do not be surprised** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) at the **fiery ordeal** among you, which comes upon you for your **testing** ([peirasmos](#)) , as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ (Ro 8:17, Php 3:10, Mt 5:11), keep on rejoicing ([chairō](#)), so that also at the revelation of His glory (Second Coming) you may **rejoice** ([chairō](#)) **with exultation** ([agalliao](#)).

#### WHAT SIMILARITIES DO YOU SEE IN 1 PETER 4:12-13 AND JAMES 1:2-3?

- (1) Do not be caught off guard -- Fiery ordeal is guaranteed like Jas 1:2-3
- (2) It is for testing ([peirasmos](#)) like Jas 1:2-3
- (3) Keep rejoicing ([chairō](#)) now – you are participating in the sufferings of Christ
- (4) You will rejoice in future when His glory is revealed

**Other parallel passages** - Ro 8:17,18, Mt 5:10-12, 2Ti 3:12, Php 1:29, Acts 14:22, Acts 5:41, 2Co 4:17, 18

**Jas 1:5+ But if (1st Class condition = this is true ~ “Since”) any of you lacks ([leipo](#) - present tense) wisdom ([sophia](#)), let him ask ([aiteo](#)) of God, Who gives to all generously ([haplos](#)) and without reproach ([oneidizo](#)), and it will be given to him.**

**WHEN WE ARE ENVELOPED BY THE TRIAL, WHAT IS OFTEN OUR RESPONSE AND WHAT DO WE NEED?** “Why me Lord?” “Why now?” etc. We need Wisdom from above, not earthly wisdom (Jas 3:15-17+).

(SIMILAR) **WHAT ARE WE TO DO WHEN IN A TRIAL & CONFUSED, WEAK, UNCERTAIN AS TO HOW TO RESPOND?** Ask our Father

#### WHAT CHARACTERIZES GOD’S GIVING WHEN WE ASK IN FAITH?

- (1) generously, liberally
- (2) without reproach (He won’t rebuke us for asking!)

**HOW CERTAIN CAN WE BE THAT GOD WILL ANSWER?** It will be given

#### CROSS REFERENCES RELATED TO JAMES 1:5

Romans 11:33-36+ **Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!** How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? 35 Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? 36 For **from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.**

Daniel 2:20-23+ Daniel said, “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For **wisdom** and power belong to Him. 21 “It is He Who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; **He gives wisdom to wise men** And knowledge to men of understanding. 22 “It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. 23 “To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For **You have given me wisdom and power**; Even now You have made known to me what **we requested of You**, For You have made known to us the king’s matter.”

Job 12:13, 16 **With Him are wisdom** and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding. 16 “With Him are strength and sound wisdom, The misled and the misleader belong to Him.

All of these passages emphasize that God is the source of wisdom (even to deep to comprehend) and he gives to men when requested in faith (cf Da 2:17,18+).

Jas 1:6+ But he must ask ([aiteo](#)) in faith ([pistis](#)) without any doubting ([diakrino](#)), for ([gar](#) - term of explanation) the one who doubts ([diakrino](#) - present tense) is like the surf of the sea ([thalassa](#)), driven and tossed by the wind.

**WHAT CONDITION(S) MUST WE FULFILL FOR GOD TO ANSWER OUR PRAYER FOR WISDOM IN THE TRIAL?** Ask in faith without any doubting

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ASK IN FAITH?** Trust that He is good, He is sovereign (in control), His purposes for us in the trial are good

**WHY IS IT MANDATORY THAT WE ASK GOD FOR WISDOM IN FAITH ACCORDING TO HEBREWS 11:6+?**

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

- (1) It is impossible to please God
- (2) He will not reward the doubting person, in this case with divine wisdom.

**WHAT IS THE IDEA OF DOUBTING?** Not a momentary doubt we can all have, but the picture of one who continually doubts God ("one who doubts" is in present tense = the habit of their life).

**Doubt** - [diakrino](#) (from [diá](#) = separation, "thoroughly back and forth" + [kríno](#) = distinguish, decide, judge) in the context of James means being undecided within oneself - hesitate, waver, to be uncertain

**WHAT IS THE PICTURE (SIMILE) OF A PERSON WHO DOUBTS GOD?** Like surf driven, tossed by wind.

**WHAT DOES SURF DRIVEN, TOSSED BY WIND DEPICT REGARDING THE PERSON'S FAITH?** It wavers, vacillates, a divided heart, a wavering between trusting God and relying on one's own understanding or the world's wisdom.

Jas 1:7+ For that man ought not to expect ([hoiomai](#)) that he will receive ([lambano](#)) anything from the Lord,

**HOW DOES JAMES EXPLAIN THE "DANGER" OF DOUBTING FAITH?** They won't receive anything, and "anything" in this context refers to divine wisdom.

Jas 1:8+ being a double-minded ([dipsuchos](#)) man, unstable ([akatastatos](#)) in all his ways.

**NLT paraphrase** - Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

**HOW DOES JAMES DESCRIBE A MAN DOUBTING IN PRAYER?**

- (1) double minded ([dipsuchos](#) - "literally two souls") – WHAT DOES THAT PICTURE? Divided allegiance —torn between trusting God and trusting self. He attempts to serve God while trying to enjoy the world. He is drawn one direction for a while and then the other.
- (2) Unstable ([akatastatos](#)) in all his ways

**WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF UNSTABLE ON HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE?** "All his ways" describes one who cannot trust God wholeheartedly so that their instability spills into every area of their life -- relationships, moral choices, priorities, etc.

Jas 1:9+ But the brother ([adelphos](#)) of humble ([tapeinos](#)) circumstances is to glory ([kauchaomai](#)) in his high position ([hupsos/hypsos](#));

**TECHNICAL NOTE:** NASB begins with a "but" that usually would introduce a contrast with the previous passages. Almost every modern version does not have a "but."

**WHO IS CONTRASTED IN Jas 1:9-11 AND WHAT ARE 3 CONTRASTS?** (This is unrelated to the "but" at the beginning of Jas 1:9)

- (1) Poor (humble circumstances) // rich
- (2) Brother (probably believer) // man (not specified but in context probably a rich believer)
- (3) high position // will fade away

**NOW KEEPING THE CONTEXT IN MIND TRIALS, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE “TRIAL” IN V9-11?** Riches, money, wealth

**WHAT IS THE HIGH POSITION OF THE BROTHER?** He is a believer and is possessor of spiritual riches that more than counter his material poverty.

**WHAT DOES 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 SAY THAT RELATES TO A BROTHER OF HUMBLE CIRCUMSTANCES?**

1 Corinthians 1:26-31+ For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.”

The brethren of humble circumstances were chosen by God to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast because they are in Christ Jesus (believers, saved) by God's work and it is in Him they are to boast.

### CROSS REFERENCES

Acts 2:44-45+ And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.

Acts 4:32-35+ And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

The upshot is that the first church in Jerusalem was composed of rich and poor brethren.

Jas 1:10+ and the rich man ([plousios](#)) *is to glory* in his humiliation ([tapeinos](#)), because (term of explanation) like flowering grass he will pass away ([parerchomai](#)).

**WHY SHOULD RICH BOAST IN HIS HUMILIATION?** Because like flowering grass he will pass away (which he goes on to explain)

Jas 1:11+ For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

**HOW DOES HE EXPLAIN “FLOWERING GRASS?”** (1) Sun – scorching wind (2) withers grass (3) flower falls (4) beauty is destroyed

**HOW DOES JAMES APPLY THIS PICTURE TO THE RICH MAN?** “SO TOO” - in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

**WHAT CAN WE DEDUCE AS THE TRUTH ABOUT TEMPORAL RICHES?** WILL FADE AWAY

Jas 1:12+ Blessed ([makarios](#)) is a man who perseveres ([hupomeno](#) = present tense = as one's lifestyle) under trial ([peirasmos](#)); for once he has been approved ([dokimos](#)), he will receive the crown ([stephanos](#)) of life ([zoe](#)) which the Lord has promised ([epaggello](#)) to those who love ([agapao](#)) Him.

**WHAT IS THE REWARD FOR THE MAN (RICH OR POOR) WHO PERSEVERES UNDER TRIAL?** He will be blessed

## HOW DOES HE EXPLAIN THE BLESSING?

**WHO RECEIVES IT?** The one who has been **approved** = Greek means passed the test

**WHAT IS IT?** Crown of life

**WHAT DID THEIR PERSEVERANCE IN TRIALS SHOW REGARDING THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD?** Their love for Him – they obeyed the command to consider it all joy – and as Jesus taught in Jn 14:15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

## HOW WOULD JAMES 1:2-12 ENCOURAGE/MOTIVATE HIS JEWISH READERS?

James 1:12-27

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### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS (SOME REPETITION):

**WHAT MAN IS BLESSED?**

**WHAT IS ONE BLESSING HE WILL RECEIVE IN CONTEXT? WHEN WILL HE RECEIVE IT?**

**WHAT MOTIVATION IS THERE FOR A MAN TO PERSEVERE UNDER TRIAL?**

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### QUESTIONS ON MATTHEW 5 PARALLEL PASSAGES

Matthew 5:10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**WHO IS BLESSING FOR?** persecuted, insulted, recipients of evil slander

**WHY ARE THEY PERSECUTED?** for sake of righteousness, because of Christ in them

**WHAT COMMANDS IN LIGHT OF THESE AFFLICTIONS?** Rejoice and be glad (**WHAT DOES THAT SOUND LIKE?** Jas 1:2-4)

**WHAT IS THE REWARD MENTIONED?** Kingdom of heaven, reward in heaven

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**QUESTIONS ON CROWN** - all use the Greek [stephanos](#) (not diadema = for a king - Rev 19:12) = prize for victory in public games as symbol of honor. Woven of oak, ivy, myrtle, olive leaves or flowers. In this life it may be that the Christian's loyalty to Christ will bring him a crown of thorns, but in the life to come it will surely bring him the crown of glory. The cross before the crown!

### WHAT CROWN AND WHY GIVEN IN EACH OF FOLLOWING PASSAGES?

1 Cor 9:24-27+ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable **wreath** ([stephanos](#)), but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified ([adokimos](#) = not passing the text).

1 Th 2:19-20+ For who is our hope or joy or **crown** ([stephanos](#)) **of exultation**? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? (SECOND COMING) 20 For you are our glory and joy. (Same as "crown" in Php 4:1+)

2 Ti 4:8+ in the future there is laid up for me the **crown** ([stephanos](#)) **of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day (SECOND COMING); and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

1 Pe 5:1-4+ Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears (SECOND COMING), you will receive the unfading **crown** ([stephanos](#)) of glory.

Rev 2:10+ **Do not fear** what you are about to suffer. **Behold**, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give

you the **crown** ([stephanos](#)) of life.

Rev 3:11+ 'I am coming quickly (SECOND COMING); **hold fast** what you have, so that no one will take your **crown** ([stephanos](#)).

Rev 4:10-11+ the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their **crowns** ([stephanos](#)) before the throne, saying, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

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#### D L Moody - Five crowns for believers:—

1. A crown of life, for endurance. James 1:12; Rev. 2:10.
2. A crown of righteousness, for the good fight of faith. 2 Tim. 4:8.
3. A crown of rejoicing, for winning souls. 1 Thess. 2:19.
4. A crown of glory, for those who edify the church, and for feeding souls. 1 Pet. 5:4.
5. A crown of reward, for those who successfully run the race. 1 Cor. 9:25.

**Jas 1:13+ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.**

**FIRST, WHAT IS THE "KEY WORD" IN THIS PASSAGE?** "tempt/tempted"

**WHAT IS JAMES GIVING HERE - A SUGGESTION OR A COMMAND?**

It is a command in [present imperative with a negative](#) which can mean either stop an action already in progress or do not begin to say this about God!

**WHAT DO YOU DEDUCE FROM THE "TIME SENSITIVE" WORD "WHEN" IN THE PHRASE "WHEN HE IS TEMPTED"?**

It is not "IF" BUT "**WHEN**" so rest assured temptation is an absolute certainty.

1 Peter 2:11+ says "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." The verb **wage war** is in the present tense indicating that "fleshly lusts" are always crouching at the door of our heart (cf Ge 4:7+) ready to leap on us, especially if we are unprepared (HOW IS BEST WAY TO BE PREPARED? Begin your day in the Word of Truth and then walk by that truth empowered by the Spirit Who will continually enable you to put "to death the deeds of the body" (Ro 8:13+).

**WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO US IF WE DO NOT SEE THE TRIAL AS FROM OR ALLOWED BY GOD?**

It may become a temptation to sin, but clearly that was not God's purpose for the trial. Also we may seek to blame, murmur or grumble against God and that is sin (Nu 14:27), and so the trial sent for our good results in us committing sin instead of growing in Christlikeness! A truth we must never forget is that EVERY trial potentially brings a temptation.

**SPURGEON** - *God tries men, but the motive of a **trial** is that which differences it from a **temptation**. In a **temptation** we try a man with a view of inducing him to do wrong; but God **tries** men to best them, that they may, by finding out their weakness, be saved from doing wrong. **He never inclines a heart to evil.***

**Satan tempts to bring out the bad;**

**God tests to bring out the good.**

-- W H Griffith

**WHY IS THE STATEMENT "I AM BEING TEMPTED BY GOD" IMPOSSIBLE?** (two reasons identified by the hinge word "**FOR**" [[gar](#)] marking a "term of explanation")

(1) **God cannot be tempted** ([apeirastos](#)) **by evil**— His very nature is that evil has **absolutely** no attraction, appeal, or influence upon Him because He is perfectly holy. Think of evil as "iron filings." God's nature has no "magnet" to attract the "iron filings."

(2) **He Himself does not tempt anyone**— because His nature is holy (set apart), utterly pure, He never

solicits or entices people to sin.

**Jas 1:14+ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.**

**WHO IS RESPONSIBLE WHEN IT COMES TO TEMPTATION?** (might draw attention to the pronouns at the beginning and end of the sentence = "each one" and "his own" lusts). So the one to "blame" is each of us individually, our own lust = this lust is belongs uniquely to each person. This is important to understand because **WHAT DOES THIS TRUTH EXCLUDE (e.g., regarding circumstances, etc)?** It excludes our external circumstances, other people's influence, Satan's activity, the world's attractions, etc. Those things may "catalyze" this process leading to sin but they are not the root cause.

**WHAT IS LUST IN THIS CONTEXT?** strong desires coming from our fallen flesh (our "own lust") which is directed toward something, which can be either positive or negative. In the context on James 1:14, **lust** is a powerful inner craving directed toward something evil, something God has forbideen.

**Amplified** - But every person is tempted when he is **drawn away, enticed and baited** by his own evil desire (lust, passions).

**ESV** - But each person is tempted when he is **lured** and **enticed** by his own desire.

**WHAT ARE THE TWO WAYS TEMPTATION CAN WORK ON OUR LUST?** (1) Carry us away and (2) entice us.

**WHAT IS THE PICTURE OF THESE TWO GREEK WORDS?**

(1) **Carried away** - (**exelko** from **ek** = out or away + **hélko** = draw) means to draw out, drag forth, draw away. It pictures a fish being drawn out of safe water by bait, or an animal being lured out of its den into a trap.

(2) **Enticed** (**deleazo** from **delear** = a bait) means to to beguile, entice by blandishments, a fishing/hunting term — to be caught by bait, to be trapped. The idea is to catch by use of bait as does a trapper (bait in a trap or snare) or fisherman who lures prey from their place of hiding. Evil desires act as a bait to "hook" us and get us in trouble. Lust hides the hook so to speak! The point is that no temptation appears as temptation but always seems more alluring and promising than it proves to be.

**Summary:** Your inner craving (lust) spots an object → begins moving toward it → gets hooked

**Jas 1:15+ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.**

Note "**Then**" marks progression and "**when**" is a time sensitive word.

**WHAT IS THE METAPHOR JAMES USES HERE? WHAT HAPPENS TO LUST ONCE IT HAS BEEN HOOKED BY THE BAIT?** It conceives. "Lust gets pregnant, and has a baby: sin!" (Msg)

**TAKEAWAY** - The further down the chain you go, the harder it is to stop. The time to fight is at the luring stage, when desire first spots its object, not after conception has occurred!

**WHAT DOES THIS PICTURE SAY ABOUT OUR ABILITY TO WITHDRAW FROM THE BAIT AT THIS STAGE?** It is too late! The baby cannot be "unconceived!"

**WHAT IS THE PROCESS JAMES DESCRIBES BEGINNING WITH TEMPTATION?** tempted >carried away/enticed >lust conceives > births sin > brings death not life. Or see the table below.

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	METAPHOR
Lust Spots Object	Desire is aroused	Bait is seen
Lured and enticed	Will begins to follow desire	Hook is set
Desire conceives	Will & desire unite in a choice	Conception

Gives birth to sin	The act is committed	Birth
Sin fully grown	Pattern of sin established	Maturity
Brings forth death	Eternal Consequence	Death

**Jas 1:16+ Do not be deceived ([planao](#)), my beloved ([agapetos](#)) brethren.**

**NOTE:** The reason for this command at this point is not easy to discern and there is some difference in the commentaries.

**WHAT IS THE COMMAND?** **Do not be deceived** ([planao](#) - [present imperative with a negative](#) = Stop action in progress or Do not begin to be led astray or to wander from the truth)

**WHAT MIGHT THE READERS BE DECEIVED BY?** Thinking that God is source of temptation (but see NOTE below).

**WHY IS THE COMMAND IN PRESENT TENSE (CALLS FOR CONTINUOUS ATTENTION)?** We need to be continually be alert for danger of falling into this trap of deception about temptations and blaming God.

**HOW DOES JAMES SOFTEN THE COMMAND?** Calls them (1) **beloved** and (2) his **brethren** (members of God's family)

**NOTE:** Some consider this command to function as a hinge between the preceding section (do not be deceived about the source and consequences of sin) and the following section speaking of the goodness of God and His good gifts ("*beware of casting suspicion on God and His beneficent activities. The verse has a transitional function and, like a bridge, provides connections in both directions, but what has gone before seems primarily in view*" - Hiebert)

**Jas 1:17+ Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.**

**HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE GOD'S GIFTS?** (1) good (2) perfect -- Scripture is unambiguous that there is **no genuinely good thing** that does not ultimately originate from God.

**HOW MIGHT THIS EXPLAIN WHY GOD COULD NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR TEMPTATIONS?** He is the source of good, not evil, perfect gifts not temptations to sin.

*A trial may be God's good gift in disguise.*

**WHAT DOES THE TITLE "FATHER OF LIGHTS" INDICATE ABOUT GOD?** It was a common Jewish description for God as the Creator of all the lights-the sun, moon and stars. He is our Father and an earthly fathers do not give bad gifts to their children.

**HOW DOES GOD DIFFER FROM THE LIGHTS HE CREATED?** (1) no variation (2) no shifting shadow. - created lights vary and cause shadows. (The sun has its spots, the moon wanes, the stars fall)

**WHAT DIVINE ATTRIBUTE DOES JAMES DESCRIBE?** Immutability (See [Immutable](#))

**WHAT WOULD REMEMBERING THIS TRUTH ABOUT GOD BE AN ANTIDOTE FOR** (cf Preceding Passages)? deception in v16

JAMES 1:17 IS AN ANTIDOTE FOR...

- Deception about God in trials -- He is unchangeably good; trials are gifts in disguise
- Blaming God -- He gives only good gifts; evil traces to our own lusts
- Ingratitude -- Every blessing without exception comes from Him
- Doubting God's consistency -- No variation, no shifting shadow — ever
- Complaining and murmuring -- Every needful thing for holiness and happiness comes from Him

- Fear and anxiety -- His character and purposes toward you have not changed

Jas 1:18+ In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that (term of purpose/result) we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

**WHAT IS JAMES DESCRIBING?** born again, regeneration, new birth

**WHERE HAVE WE JUST SEEN THIS IDEA OF "BROUGHT FORTH" (in a contrast)?** Jas 1:15 "brings forth death" - same verb *apokueo* in both passages giving a dramatic contrast between LIFE and DEATH.

**WHY WERE WE BROUGHT FORTH?** It was God's will - He was the Initiator, man was the beneficiary.

**WHAT AGENT/VEHICLE DID GOD USE TO BRING US FORTH?** His word of truth (WHAT IS THAT? = the Gospel)

**WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF HIS BRINGING US FORTH?** that we would be first fruits

**WHAT IS THE UNDERLYING IDEA OF FIRST FRUITS?** In ancient Israel it was first portion of offering was set aside specifically for Lord. Hence first fruits is used of persons consecrated to God. We Belong to God, Totally and Permanently. Firstfruits also symbolized a pledge or down payment and promise of the future entire harvest, all the saved in future ages.

**NOTE:** The primary meaning of **firstfruits** in the OT was that it was holy to the LORD, set apart, belonging to God alone. The term *aparchē* was used of persons consecrated to God for all time. When God brings us forth by the word of truth and calls us first fruits, He is declaring: *You are Mine. You have been consecrated. You are not your own.*

Jas 1:19+ This you **know**, my beloved brethren. But everyone must **be** (present imperative) quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

**TECHNICAL NOTE:** "This you know" is better rendered as a **command** - ESV = "**Know** this", NLT = "**take note** of this." NET = "**Understand** this." Also, most of the other modern versions omit the conjunction "**but**" (in NASB) so that this is not likely to be a contrast.

**HOW DOES JAMES ADDRESS THE READERS AGAIN?** my beloved brethren (WHY? Soften the effect of the following command).

**WHAT IS THE IMPLICATION OF "MY BELOVED BRETHREN?" THAT IS, WHO ARE THEY?** believers, those brought forth by word of truth

**WHAT IS THE COMMAND** (actually 3 commands) **JAMES WANTS HIS BRETHREN TO UNDERSTAND? BE** (present imperative = calling for this to be their lifestyle) quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger

**IN CONTEXT** (don't yank it out of context), **TO WHAT DOES "QUICK TO HEAR" REFER, i.e., TO HEAR WHAT?** In context to hear the Word of truth. The Word that gave birth to the new life must continue to nourish and govern the new life. You cannot hear that word if you are speaking or if you are angry.

Jas 1:20+ for (term of explanation) the anger (**orge**) of man does not achieve (**ergazomai**) the righteousness (**dikaiousune**) of God.

**WHY DOES JAMES GIVE THE COMMAND ABOUT ANGER (orge)?** (Remember "for" introduces an explanation) it does achieve righteousness of God

Jas 1:21+ Therefore (term of conclusion), putting aside (**apotithemi**) all filthiness (**rhuparia**) and all that remains of wickedness (**kakia**), in humility **receive** (**dechomai** - **orist imperative**) the word implanted (**emphutos**), which is able (**dunamai** - present tense) to save (**sozo**) your souls (**psuche**).

**WHO IS JAMES ADDRESSING, BELIEVERS OR NON-BELIEVERS?** context of "my beloved brethren" supports he is addressing believers.

**WHAT ARE JAMES' INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING HOW ONE SHOULD RECEIVE THE WORD?** (1) putting aside all filthiness (2) all wickedness (3) humbly receive the Word

**WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF THE WORD SO RECEIVED?** It has the intrinsic power to "save your souls."

**WHAT DOES THIS REFER TO PRIMARILY IN CONTEXT, TO PAST TENSE SALVATION (JUSTIFICATION) OR PRESENT TENSE SALVATION (SANCTIFICATION)?** If we accept James is addressing them as "my beloved brethren" implying they were believers, this would refer to sanctification. Additional support for this interpretation is the fact that an unsaved, unregenerate man would not even have the power to cast off filthiness and wickedness.

However, given the probability that some of the readers were not saved, for those hearers the salvation would refer to justification.

Jas 1:22+ But **prove** (present imperative) yourselves doers (poietes) of the word (logos), and not merely hearers (akroates) who delude (paralogizomai - present tense) themselves.

**WHAT IS JAMES COMMAND AND CAUTION?** **Prove** yourself to be doers, not just hearers of the Word.

**WHAT IS THE IMPLICATION OF THE FACT THAT PROVE IS IN THE PRESENT IMPERATIVE?** calls for this to be a believer's habitual practice.

**IN ESSENCE WHAT IS HE CALLING FOR THE READERS TO MANIFEST?** Obedience or "works" -- he will dive more deeply into faith and works in chapter 2.

**WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO OBEY?** if you talk and do not walk the truth you are deluding yourself.

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DELUDE YOURSELF?** The verb means to mislead your own mind with false reasoning, so thoroughly that you obscure the truth.

**Warren Wiersbe** quote - "Many people have the mistaken idea that hearing a good sermon or Bible study is what makes them grow and get God's blessing. It is not the hearing but the doing that brings the blessing. Too many Christians mark their Bibles, but their Bibles never mark them! If you think you are spiritual because you hear the Word, then you are only kidding yourself."

Jas 1:23+ For (hoti - term of explanation) if anyone is a hearer (akroates) of the word (logos) and not a doer (poietes), he is like a man who looks (katanoeo - present tense - intensive/attentive scrutiny) at his natural face in a mirror;

**HOW DOES JAMES ILLUSTRATE A HEARER WHO IS NOT A DOER?** describes a man looking at himself in a mirror

Jas 1:24+ for once he has looked (katanoeo) at himself and gone away, he has immediately (eutheos) forgotten (epilanthanomai) what kind of person he was.

**HOW DOES JAMES MIRROR ILLUSTRATION DEPICT A HEARER OF THE WORD WHO IS NOT A DOER?** when he goes away from the "mirror" of the word he becomes forgetful of what he saw about himself in the mirror. The Greek verb for "forgotten" means COMPLETELY forgotten!

When we read the Bible, we need to let it read us!

**HOW QUICKLY DOES A HEARER WHO IS NOT A "DOER" FORGET THE WORD HE HAS JUST HEARD (OR READ)?** Immediately!!! Like our saying "in one ear and out the other!"

**WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?** Looking at the Word is not enough!

**The Word seen (or heard) MUST be put into practice to exert it's sanctifying effect on our soul!**

Jas 1:25+ But one who looks intently ([parakupto](#)) at the perfect ([teleios](#)) law, the *law* of liberty ([eleutheria](#) - set free) , and abides ([parameno](#)) by it, not having become a forgetful hearer ([akroates](#)) but an effectual ([ergon](#)) doer ([poietes](#)), this man will be blessed ([makarios](#)) in what he does.

**WHAT IS THE "MIRROR" (so to speak) IN THIS VERSE?** perfect law, law of liberty (Word of God)

Cf 2Co 3:18+ But we all, with unveiled face, **beholding as in a mirror** the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory (progressive sanctification by the Spirit using the Word implanted!), just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Paul shifts the metaphor from self-examination to transformation.

**WHY DOES HE CALL IT PERFECT?** (Ps 19:7) It is inerrant and sufficient -- giving us everything we need for life and godliness

**HOW IS THIS A PARADOXICAL STATEMENT - IN OTHER WORDS WHAT DO WE NORMALLY THINK OF LAW DOING TO OUR FREEDOM?**

**WHY DOES HE CALL IT "LAW OF LIBERTY"?** when we obey we experience true freedom in Christ. We now have the power to obey (Ezek 36:27+)

**John MacArthur** on "liberty" - "*James focused on its redemptive power in freeing believers from the bondage of sin and then freeing them to righteous obedience* (John 8:34–36 Ro 6:16–18)"

**WHAT ACTIONS DOES JAMES CALL FOR?** (1) look intently, (2) abide by the law (See it and obey it, like hearers who are doers).

**WHAT CONTRAST DOES JAMES USE TO SHOW THE IMPORTANCE OF DOING?** not a forgetful hearer, an effectual doer

**WHAT IS THE REWARD FOR ABIDING BY THE LAW OF LIBERTY AND DOING IT?** **blessed** in what he does (Also he experiences true liberty or freedom. True freedom is living as we should, not as we please. Freedom from dominion of sinful appetites and passions. Freedom in Christ is not the right to do as one pleases but the power to please God by doing what is right!)

Jas 1:26+ If anyone thinks ([dokeo](#)) himself to be religious([threskos](#)), and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives ([apatao](#) - present tense) his own heart ([kardia](#)), this man's religion ([threskeia](#)) is worthless ([mataios](#)).

**WHAT IS THE DANGER JAMES DESCRIBES?** For someone to think they are being **religious**

**HOW CAN YOU SPOT SOMEONE WHO THINKS HE IS RELIGIOUS?** does not bridle his tongue

**WHAT IS THIS MAN ACTUALLY DOING TO HIMSELF?** deceiving his own heart

**WHAT HAVE WE SEEN EARLIER ABOUT WHAT CAN DECEIVE OR DELUDE SOMEONE?** hearer, not doer

**WHAT VALUE IS HIS SO-CALLED RELIGION?** worthless

Jas 1:27+ Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

**WHAT IS THE CONTRAST IN THIS PASSAGE?** pure and undefiled religion versus sham, worthless religion

**WHO IS THE FINAL ARBITER OF THE VALUE OF ONE'S RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR?** our God and Father Who is watching

**WHAT DOES PURE, UNDEFILED RELIGION LOOK LIKE?** (1) visit orphans and widows in distress (2) keep from being stained by the world

**HOW WOULD THE WORLD STAIN US?** godless talk, ungodly entertainment, etc (Social Media is largely ungodly and stains many people including believers!)

## 5W/H QUESTIONS

**Jas 2:1+ My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.**

The epistle of James is one of the most practical books in the New Testament. Written by James, the half-brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church, it addresses Jewish believers of the Diaspora (James 1:1). James has a singular passion: authentic, living faith must produce visible, tangible fruit. His letter relentlessly presses the question — does your faith actually work?

**HOW DOES JAMES ADDRESS HIS READERS? WHAT IS THE IMPLICATION?** believers (WHY DO YOU SAY THAT FROM PREVIOUS CONTEXT? - He had called them "my beloved brethren" - Jas 1:2, 16, 19)

**NOTE** - Greek for brethren is adelphos = literally from same womb - here same Spirit births and same Father - the point is that James is addressing a "family issue," one occurring in the household of God. Remarkably, this exact phrase "**my brethren**" appears only 22 times in all of Scripture, and 8 of those occurrences are in James alone. This is a family issue — and James addresses it with a pastor's heart, not a judge's bench.

**HOW DO YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN THEY ARE BELIEVERS?** he says they have faith in our (shared) glorious Lord Jesus Christ

**WHAT IS JAMES DOING, GIVING A SUGGESTION OR A COMMAND?** present imperative with a negative

**WHAT DOES HIS INDICATE ABOUT WHERE FAVORITISM WAS ALREADY A PRACTICED HABIT AMONG BELIEVERS?** Command to stop an action in progress (or not to begin this action). To profess faith in Jesus while practicing partiality is a direct contradiction of everything Jesus embodied.

**WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE JAMES IS PROHIBITING?** personal favoritism

**WHAT IS THE GREEK WORD FOR FAVORITISM (IF YOU LOOKED IT UP)?** prosopolepsia from prósopon = face + lambáno = receive. Literally it meant to "receive a face" or "face taker" "accept a face" ~ respecter of persons. This compound noun does not appear in secular Greek.

Note - Although **favoritism** is at end of English sentence, it is near the beginning in Greek - **WHAT DOES THAT PLACEMENT SIGNIFY?** it is the way a word or term was emphasized in Greek. James signals that this is the controlling concern of the entire passage. The term derives from the LXX rendering of the Hebrew idiom *panim nasa* ("to lift up the face"), used of an Oriental judge who, when he favorably received someone, would literally allow that person to lift their face from the bowed-down greeting position.

**NOW BACK TO THE TITLE JAMES GIVES JESUS --**

**FIRST Note the possessive pronoun "our"!** **WHAT DOES THAT TEACH?** He is their possession further indicated James is speaking to them as believers.

**HOW DOES THE TITLE "Lord of glory" SERVE AS A REBUKE TO ALL IMPARTIALITY?** Since all humans pale equally before His majesty? (cf. Psalm 24:7–10; John 1:14; Hebrews 1:3) Paul Apple says "Once we truly see how 'glorious' Christ is, there will be no room for distinctions on the human plane because we all pale in comparison to the glory of Christ." When Christ's surpassing glory is seen rightly, all human distinctions of wealth, class, and status shrink to nothing.

**HOW DOES THE TITLE "THE LORD OF GLORY" (ESV = "Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory") REINFORCE JAMES' COMMAND AGAINST PARTIALITY? IN OTHER WORDS, WHEN WE TRULY SEE HOW GLORIOUS CHRIST IS, WHEN HIS GLORY IS SEEN RIGHTLY, WHAT DOES THE DO TO ALL HUMAN DISTINCTIONS OF WEALTH, CLASS AND SOCIAL STANDING?** Simply put the fade into insignificance before His majesty!

*Looking up to Jesus prevents us from looking down on others.*

**Paul Apple** writes, *"Proper View of Christ Leads to a Proper View of Others.....Once we truly see how 'glorious' Christ is, there will be no room for distinctions on the human plane because we all pale in comparison to the glory of Christ."*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus*

*Look full in His wonderful face*

*And the things of earth will grow strangely dim*

## **EXCURSUS ON RICHES**

Ecc 5:19 riches - gift of God (Riches are a gift, not a goal)

Lk 12:15-21 beware of greed; life not = possessions; fool stores up treasure but not rich toward God

Lk 16:13-14 cannot serve God and wealth

Mt 19:24 - It is extremely difficult for a rich person to enter God's kingdom.

Pr 11:4 - Riches cannot save in judgment; trust in wealth fails, but righteousness delivers and prospers.

Pr 11:28- Trust in riches fails; righteous will flourish

Pr 23:4-5- Do not toil obsessively for wealth; it is fleeting like an eagle in flight. (Wealth is fleeting).

Ecc 5:10- Love of money leads to dissatisfaction; it is vanity.

Mk 4:18-19- Wealth can choke the Word and prevent spiritual growth (or salvation). (Material desire can block God's Word)

1Ti 6:9-10- Love of money = danger – Leads to temptations, ruin, and wandering from faith.

1Ti 6:17-19- Instruct the rich not to be arrogant or rely on uncertain wealth; instead, they should be rich in good deeds, generous, and ready to share, storing up treasures in heaven. (Be rich in good works – Generosity and God-centered living store eternal treasure)

**SUMMARY** - Riches themselves aren't evil, but attachment to them can lead to spiritual danger. There is a balance of enjoying God's gifts versus being enslaved by them. Receive wealth as a gift, don't pursue it as a god; don't trust it, don't love it, don't serve it; use it generously for God's purposes, because it is temporary, spiritually dangerous, and cannot save.

**Jas 2:2+ For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,**

James begins with a "hinge word," FOR which always signifies **WHAT?** he is explaining a previous thought.

**HOW DOES JAMES BEGIN TO EXPLAIN ATTITUDE OF PERSONAL FAVORITISM?** he gives a hypothetical illustration

**RECALL THESE WERE JEWISH BELIEVERS -- SO THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR WITH THE OT. WHAT DID THE OT TEACH ABOUT FAVORITISM?**

Leviticus 19:15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment; **you shall not be partial to the poor** nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly.

Deuteronomy 1:17 (Moses speaking) '**You shall not show partiality in judgment** you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.

Deuteronomy 16:18-20 You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 "You shall not distort justice; **you shall not be partial**, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. 20 "Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Jewish readers who prided themselves on knowing the Torah would have recognized immediately that what James was prohibiting in the church was precisely what God had prohibited in Israel for over a thousand years.

**WHAT DO THE FOLLOWING TEACH ABOUT PARTIALITY WITH GOD?** Clearly God shows no partiality!

Acts 10:34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,

Romans 2:11 For there is no partiality with God.

**WHAT IS THE IMPLICATION/APPLICATION?**

**IF GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY WHAT ATTITUDE SHOULD HIS CHILDREN HAVE?**

**WHERE IS THIS FAVORITISM OCCURRING?** the assembly (WHAT'S THAT? Greek is synagoge = place of assembly in this case Christian assembly (Only place in NT the "church" is called by the name synagogue).

**WHAT IS THE CONTRAST?** Man with gold ring, finely dressed, rich man VERSUS poor man in dirty clothes

**CULTURAL NOTE:** In the first-century Roman world, wealthy individuals often wore multiple gold rings on their fingers as conspicuous displays of social status — some would rent rings for public occasions to appear wealthier than they were and some historical sources describe individuals wearing as many as six rings per hand, with jewels on multiple fingers.

**Fine** is [lampros](#) (from lampō = to shine) means literally shining, bright, brilliant, resplendent. James presents a striking contrast with **dirty**, clothing stained with the grime of hard physical labor. One man's clothing radiates, the other's man's clothing is soiled.

*. . . many people go to church,  
As everyone knows;  
Some go to close their eyes,  
And some to eye their clothes.*

**WHAT IS JAMES FOCUSING ON, THE EXTERNAL OR THE INTERNAL?** clothes, rings - external accoutrements

(SIMILAR QUESTION) **WHAT IS THE INSTINCTIVE HUMAN TENDENCY IN JUDGING OTHERS?** outward appearance = to assess value based on visible wealth.

**FOR THOSE WHO STUDIED LIFE OF DAVID, HOW DID WE SEE GOD TELLING SAMUEL TO SELECT A KING FROM JESSE'S SONS?** 1Sa 16:7

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE OF BELIEVERS AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS?** At the foot of the cross, all believers stand on exactly the same ground. There is no difference in our guilt before God. There is no difference in the way of salvation. There is no difference in our standing before God (all are equally justified and accepted). There is no difference in our access to God. Every believer has direct access to the Father through Jesus Christ. No Christian has a more privileged position before God than another. There is no difference in our value to Christ for the same blood purchased every believer. Bruce Barton notes that in the early church "masters sat beside their slaves during worship; sometimes a slave was the leader of the assembly."

*"Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling."*

**Jas 2:3+ and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You **sit** here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You **stand** over there, or **sit down** by my footstool,"**

**HOW DID THEY SHOW FAVORITISM IN THIS VERSE?** (1) pay special attention (rare verb [epiblepo](#) = to pay close attention to, show special respect for) (2) preferential seating = good place (e.g., near pulpit or in an elevated, conspicuous seat) (3) stand or sit by (literally under) my footstool which means he was not even offered a seat

**EXTRA X-REF** - Matthew 23:6+ "They (PHARISEES) love the place of honor at banquets and **the chief seats in the synagogues,**

**WHAT IS THE PICTURE OF **STAND** OR **SIT DOWN** BY MY FOOTSTOOL?** The poor man is either forced to stand while others sit, or allowed to sit only on the floor beside someone's footstool, being assigned the lowest, most humiliating place in the assembly. It symbolizes treating him as socially inferior, unworthy of honor (Jas 2:6), and less valuable than the rich man. **The contrast is**

**striking!** They were assigning value to people based on their economic condition rather than their equality before God.

**EXTRA - ILLUSTRATION OF FAVORITISM** - In his autobiography, Mahatma Gandhi wrote that during his student days he read the Gospels seriously and considered converting to Christianity. He believed that in the teachings of Jesus he could find the solution to the caste system that was dividing the people of India. So one Sunday he decided to attend services at a nearby church and talk to the minister about becoming a Christian. When he entered the sanctuary, however, the usher refused to give him a seat and suggested that he go worship with his own people. Gandhi left the church and never returned. "If Christians have *caste differences* also," he said, "I might as well remain a Hindu."

**Jas 2:4+ have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?**

**WHAT ARE JAMES' ACCUSATIONS IN THE FORM OF RHETORICAL QUESTIONS (2)?** (1) made distinctions among yourselves, (2) become judges with evil motives -- James is charging them with both discrimination and wrong judgment.

**WHAT ANSWER IS EXPECTED TO BOTH QUESTIONS?** an affirmative reply

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN "MADE DISTINCTIONS"?** (THIS DESCRIBES THEIR **ACTION**) - divided people into categories of worth based on external factors such as wealth, appearance, and social status rather than viewing them as God does.

**WHAT ABOUT JUDGES WITH EVIL MOTIVES?** (THIS DESCRIBES THEIR HEART **ATTITUDE** BEHIND THE ACTION) -- conveys the idea of judges whose reasoning is corrupted by evil thoughts. In showing favoritism they in effect were like a judge who "rendered verdicts" based on worldly standards ("The rich man can help us." "The wealthy man is more important." "The poor man has little to offer.") rather than being led by love or God's standards.

James 4:11-12+ **AGAIN DEALS WITH JUDGES** - Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. 12There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

*The seating arrangement was merely the visible symptom but their evil reasoning behind it was the real problem.*

**Jas 2:5+ Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?**

**HOW DOES JAMES BALANCE HIS SHARP COMMAND TO LISTEN WITH PASTORAL WARMTH?** my beloved brethren (James corrects them as family members objects of divine and brotherly love. James is signaling that what follows is loving correction from a fellow believer, not angry condemnation from an outsider.)

**NOTE:** **Listen** is in the [aorist imperative](#) calling for their immediate attention "Hear this! Give ear right now!" He immediately cushions it by calling them "beloved."

**WHAT DOCTRINE OF SALVATION DOES THIS VERSE TEACH?** Unconditional Election = choosing based solely on God's grace, not on the poverty or merit of those chosen.

**NOTE:** James does not say God chose all the poor, or only the poor. He says God chose from among the poor.

**WHO DID GOD CHOOSE?** the poor of this world

**NOTE:** God's sovereign election has frequently fallen upon those the world scorns. This is not a theology of poverty earning favor with God, but a rebuke that the congregation was honoring those God had not chosen while dishonoring those He may well have. James is not teaching that poverty saves. Rather, God frequently chooses those whom the world overlooks.

**WHAT WAS THEIR DESTINY?**

(1) **to be rich in faith (NOW)** - James is not saying that poverty earns faith or that faith is a reward for being poor. Rather, God's electing grace results in a richness of faith.

(2) **heirs of the kingdom** (NOW AND IN FUTURE) - This describes the believer's **present** legal standing and **future** inheritance. Thus the poor they are mistreating are heirs of God's kingdom!

**WHO WAS THE KINGDOM PROMISED TO?** to those who love Him

**WHERE HAVE WE SEEN THIS BEFORE** (Jas 1:12)? "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the **crown of life** which the Lord has promised to **those who love Him.**"

**WHAT IS THEIR LOVE EVIDENCE OF?** their genuine saving faith. Genuine love for God and men is inseparable from saving faith. Love does not earn the kingdom or secure salvation; rather, it is evidence of a living faith and a transformed heart.

**NOTE:** This is consistent with James' overall emphasis that genuine faith produces visible evidence. This fits perfectly with James' later argument "I will show you my faith by my works." (James 2:18)

**SUMMARY QUESTION - WHY DOES JAMES BRING UP GOD'S CHOICE OF THE POOR HERE?** To expose the inconsistency of honoring the rich and dishonoring the poor when God Himself has often chosen the poor to be rich in faith and heirs of His kingdom.

**NOTE:** In James, **love** is one of the visible evidences of genuine faith, just as **perseverance** under trials (James 1:12), **obedience** to the Word (James 1:22), and **mercy** toward others (James 2:13) are evidences of genuine faith.

**Jas 2:6+ But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who (present tense - continually) oppress you and personally (present tense - continually) drag you into court?**

**SUGGESTION** - Would read Jas 2:6-7 as a unit because there are 3 related rhetorical questions.

**WHAT IS THE CONTRAST JAMES IS HIGHLIGHTING?** The contrast is God chose the poor **BUT** you dishonored the poor! The point is clear that when a believer dishonors the poor, he is treating them essentially exactly the opposite of the way God treats them!

**WHAT ARE JAMES' RHETORICAL QUESTIONS?** include the third question in next verse

**NOTE:** In the ancient world there was a custom of **summary arrest**. If a creditor met a debtor on the street, he could seize him by the neck of his robe, nearly throttling him and literally drag him to the law courts. That is what the rich did to the poor!

**WHAT ANSWER IS EXPECTED TO ALL THREE QUESTIONS?** Affirmative replies to all the questions

**WHAT DO JAMES' RHETORICAL QUESTIONS REVEAL ABOUT THE RATIONALE OF SHOWING FAVORITISM TO THE RICH? IS IT RATIONAL?** The questions show the absurdity of favoritism of the rich man! It is not even rational or logical because the very ones the believers honored in the assembly were the ones who mistreated believers!

**WHAT IS THE IRONY OF THE WAY THEY TREATED THE POOR** (Clue - how did God treat the poor in Jas 2:5)? The irony is God made the poor rich and heirs to a kingdom!

**Jas 2:7+ Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?**

**WHAT IS JAMES' THIRD RHETORICAL QUESTION TO THE BELIEVERS SHOWING FAVORITISM?** don't the rich blaspheme the fair name.

**WHAT IS THE FAIR NAME?** the glorious Lord Jesus Christ

**NLT** paraphrases it - "Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble Name you bear?"

**WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE RICH HE IS DESCRIBING HERE - SPECIFICALLY REGARDING WHETHER THEY ARE BELIEVERS OR NOT?** They are most likely unbelievers, they are blaspheming the Name by which a man is saved.

**WHAT IS THE NAME BY WHICH THEY HAD BEEN CALLED?** Christian Greek word is Christianos from **Christos** (Christ) = "Anointed One," the Messiah and **-ianos** = a suffix meaning "belonging to" or "adherent of." Thus a Christianos was literally: "a person belonging to Christ", "a follower of Christ" "one identified with Christ"

**Jas 2:8+ If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well.**

**NOTE: THIS VERSE IS EASY TO MISINTERPRET, BECAUSE IT WAS NOT SOMETHING THE BELIEVERS WERE FULFILLING!**

**THE AMPLIFIED VERSION MIGHT HELP** - If, however, you are [really] fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself [that is, if you have an unselfish concern for others and do things for their benefit]" you are doing well.

**WHAT WEREN'T THEY DOING WELL?** loving their neighbor as yourself

**WHO WOULD THEIR "NEIGHBOR" BE IN Jas 2:1?** The poor man!

**HOW WERE THEY NOT LOVING THEIR NEIGHBOR?** by showing partiality

Therefore in this verse James is not praising them but he is exposing them because they were favoring the rich (Jas 2:1ff), dishonoring the poor (Jas 2:6) and being partial in judgment (Jas 2:4) This is the absolute antithesis of loving your neighbor as yourself! You cannot simultaneously honor one person and despise another based on wealth and claim to be fulfilling the royal law.

**WHAT IS THE ROYAL LAW FROM THE CONTEXT?** The direct answer is "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," Jesus taught it Mk 12:28-31+ quoting Lev 19:18+, so it should have been very familiar to the Jewish readers.

**READ: (if you have time)**

Mark 12:28-31+ (Mt 22:37-40+) One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 31 "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Leviticus 19:18+ 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself**; I am the LORD.

*When we love others as we naturally love ourselves,  
we fulfill the royal law.*

**WHY IT IS CALLED THE "ROYAL LAW" IS DEBATED BUT WITH THIS CAVEAT WHAT DO YOU THINK?** Some considerations they may mention - It is royal because (1) it comes from the King, (2) it is supreme and governs all other relational duties, (3) it summarizes the entire second table of the Law

In sum "If your treatment of others really reflects the **royal law** of love, then fine, you are doing well. But does your favoritism actually fulfill that law?" The implied answer is No.

## **CROSS REFERENCES**

**HOW IMPORTANT WAS THE ROYAL LAW IN COMPARISON TO THE 10 COMMANDMENTS** (Ex 20:1-17+)? READ Ro 13:8-10+

Romans 13:8-10+ **Owe** nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up (ED: literally "gathered under one head") in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

**WHAT IS PAUL MENTIONING IN V9?** 4 of the 10 commandments and adds "if there is any other."

**WHAT DO ALL THE COMMANDS LISTED HAVE IN COMMON - WHO DO THEY DEAL WITH?** interpersonal relations

**WHAT IS PAUL TEACHING ABOUT THE LAW - HOW IS IT SUMMED UP?** All summed up in the call to **love you neighbor as yourself** (note all these are personal interactions). **So if I truly love my neighbor like I love myself, what will I not do?** Not commit adultery, murder, steal, covet what your neighbor has.

In James 2 the issue is favoritism toward the rich and mistreatment of the poor. James says that if they are

truly obeying the royal law, they will treat both rich and poor with genuine love. Partiality violates the royal law because it fails to love one's neighbor as oneself.

## **EXCURSUS ON RELATIONSHIP OF JEWISH BELIEVERS TO THE LAW**

**WHAT DOES PAUL TEACH ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE BELIEVERS TO THE LAW?** dead to the law (v4)

Romans 7:4-6 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

**SO WHY WAS JAMES TALKING TO THEM ABOUT THE LAW IF THEY WERE DEAD TO THE LAW? HOW SHOULD BELIEVERS LIVE IF THEY ARE DEAD TO THE LAW? CAN THEY NOW BE LAWLESS?** the answer of course is "no" but if you have time, you might want to work through the following Scriptures (I have added a couple)

Mt 5:17-20 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Ro 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?

**Grace is never a license to sin.**

Ro 6:12-14 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 (EXTRA) For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under (THE DOMINION OF THE) law but under grace.

Being dead to the law does not mean freedom **from** righteousness BUT actually means freedom **for** righteousness, now enabled by the Spirit rather than compelled keeping a set of laws.

Paul's rhetorical "May it never be!" (μὴ γένοιτο) is the strongest Greek negative available. Those who died to sin cannot logically continue living in it. The imperative is clear: do not let sin reign... present yourselves to God as instruments of righteousness. Being "not under the dominion of law but under grace" (v.14) means sin no longer has legal claim over you — not that behavior no longer matters.

Ro 8:3-4 For what the Law (Mosaic Law) could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit enables us to fulfill what the Law could not produce. The Mosaic Law was unable to produce righteousness because of the weakness of the flesh. The moral demand of the Law is not erased; it is now written on the heart and empowered by the Spirit (cf. Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:27).

**IN SUM** - Believers are dead to the law but never lawless. The believer is freed from the Law as a condemning, sin-provoking, external code (Ro 7:5, 8). The believer now fulfills the Law's requirement from the inside out, by walking in the Spirit, Who gives us the desire and the power to walk in a way that pleases the Lord (cf Php 2:13NLT)

**Jas 2:9+ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.**

**HOW DOES JAMES SHOW THE SERIOUSNESS OF FAVORITISM?** (1) committing sin and (2) transgressing the law. Thus favoritism is not merely a failure to do good; it is an actual violation of God's law.

**WHAT DOES CONVICTED BY THE LAW MEAN?** The law acts like a prosecuting attorney (and jury) and renders its verdict. Instead of being acquitted, the person showing favoritism is found guilty.

**Jas 2:10+ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.**

**HOW DOES HE ELABORATE ON WHY SHOWING PARTIALITY IS SO SERIOUS?** basically James is showing that God's law is a unified whole.

**EXPLANATION** - His point is not that every sin is equally heinous in its consequences, but that every sin constitutes an act of disobedience against the same God who gave the entire Law. A helpful **illustration** is a windowpane. If a person breaks only one corner of the pane, he has not shattered every part of the glass, but he has nevertheless broken the entire window. The same analogy applies to the breaking of a single link on a chain.

**D L Moody** - THE ten commandments are not ten different laws; they are one law. If I am being held up in the air by a chain with ten links and I break one of them, down I come, just as surely as if I break the whole ten.

Or consider your situation if you had fallen over the edge of a very high cliff and were clinging to a chain for dear life. How many links of that chain must break before you would plummet to your death?

**Jas 2:11+ For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.**

**WHAT DOES HE USE TO ILLUSTRATE HIS POINT?** 2 of 10 commandments (6th and 7th) in the second table of the Law, and both deal with personal relationships.

**WHAT DO WE NORMALLY THINK OF THESE TWO SINS COMPARED TO FAVORITISM?** we think of them as more serious or heinous sins. Most people would not put favoritism in the same moral category as adultery or murder.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ONLY COMMIT ONE OF THESE?** Still a transgressor of the law. To keep one while breaking the other does not make you "half a transgressor." You are a transgressor, full stop!

**WHAT IS HIS POINT ABOUT THE SIN OF FAVORITISM?** Sin is sin and you do not get to rank them or excuse "lesser" sins because the Law is a unified whole. Even if a believer is exemplary in a dozen other areas, the practice of **favoritism** constitutes a real sin against God's law.

**Jas 2:12+ So **speak** and so **act** as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.**

**WHAT COMMANDS DOES HE GIVE?** **speak** and **act**. In other words let your lips match your life (your actions). Both commands are in the present tense calling for continual action. Faith that is genuine must express itself in both speech and behavior.

**WHAT DOES THIS REMIND YOU OF IN CHAPTER 1?** James 1:22 - Be doers and not merely hearers. James again joins words and actions together. True religion is not merely hearing God's Word but obeying it.

**WHAT IS THE MOTIVE FOR OBEYING THESE COMMANDS?** you will be judged! The certainty of future evaluation should motivate present obedience. This is an allusion to the Bema or Judgment Seat of Christ, not for condemnation but for reward (2Co 5:10).

**Burdick** - Since he is speaking to believers, the judgment to which he refers must be the judgment of believers at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10).

**WHAT WILL THEY BE JUDGED BY?** the law of liberty

**Charles Swindoll** - Speak not and act not out of natural, superficial, cultural conditioning. To speak and act that way makes believers into lawbreakers, subjecting them to God's discipline. Believers will never fall under condemnation by God (Ro 8:1), but they will be judged and rewarded on how they conduct themselves in this

life. James reveals the standard by which all believers will be judged: "by the law of liberty" (Jas. 2:12). In the context of 2:8–11, we know the law James had in mind—the liberating, royal law that excludes all prejudice and puts away all partiality—"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ([Insights on James, 1 & 2 Peter - Page 52](#))

**WHY DOES THIS NAME "LAW OF LIBERTY" APPEAR TO BE A CONTRADICTION?** Law is something that usually restricts freedom.

**THE LAW OF LIBERTY** (eleutheria)? (clue ask them why is it called "law" and why is it called "liberty"?) It is called a **law** because it contains God's authoritative commands. It is called **liberty** because believers now have the Spirit and can obey the Law resulting in true freedom rather than bondage. The law is freedom in that by submitting to Christ a person is set free from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:2) and transformed to a life of service and love.

*Do this and live, the law commands,  
but gives me neither feet nor hands.  
A better word the Gospel brings.  
It bids me fly and gives me wings.*

**John MacArthur** feels "The Gospel is the **law of liberty** because it frees those who place their faith in Jesus Christ from the bondage, judgment, and punishment of sin and brings them ultimately to eternal freedom and glory."

**Brian Bell - Law of liberty** is "Not **freedom** from the obligations of moral law; it is **freedom** to fulfill the just requirements of the law."

Freedom is not the **right** to do as we **please**.  
Freedom is the **power** to do as we **should**.

### CROSS REFERENCES

James 1:25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty (eleutheria), and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

John 8:31-32 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free (eleutheroo)."

John 12:47-48 If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

The very words of Jesus that could have saved the rejector become the instrument of his condemnation.

THE LAW OF MOSES	THE LAW OF CHRIST
Brings bondage	Brings liberty
Weak through the flesh	Powerful by the Spirit
Written on stone	Written on the heart

**Jas 2:13+ For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.**

**NOTE:** Remember the context is James is addressing believers "My brethren" in James 2:1. The question is not eternal punishment but judgment at the Bema Seat where believers will be judged and rewarded, or rewards will be lost.

**HOW DOES HE EXPLAIN THE JUDGMENT ON THOSE WHO SHOW NO MERCY?** their judgment will be merciless

**HOW DOES THIS FIT WITH THE TOPIC HE HAS BEEN EXPLAINING?** Favoritism is fundamentally unmerciful - those believers who showed partiality to some and discriminated against others, in effect were showing no mercy to the poor.

**WHAT DOES "MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGMENT" MEAN?** The believer who has received God's mercy and extends that

mercy to others need not fear a merciless judgment. So if we show mercy to the downtrodden, that will be used in our defense at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Instead of being judged we will be rewarded.

**GOTQUESTIONS** - **"Mercy triumphs over judgment."** The idea is that mercy "glories" or "boasts" against judgment, knowing that, where mercy and judgment seem to conflict, mercy wins. The good news for every child of God in Christ is that God's mercy toward us will triumph over His judgment of us (see Romans 8:1). Our sins may argue against us, but Christ is our loving Advocate who argues for us and prevents us from receiving the judgment we deserve. We, in turn, display God's type of mercy toward others.

If you are a person who habitually, repeatedly fails to show compassion/mercy to your fellow man, then, simply, soberly stated, you are utterly destitute of Christian character. You are lost and will receive no mercy at the Great White Throne Judgment. On the other hand the children of God will imitate their Father and are energized by His Spirit to show mercy and shun partiality (Of course none of us will ever be perfect in not showing partiality -- it is not about perfection but about direction). We are never more like our Lord than when show mercy (and love). And to reiterate, because we have the indwelling Holy Spirit of God, it is impossible for a believer not to show mercy/compassion to some degree. As stated, we will never do it perfectly, but to NEVER do it signifies that such a person has never been born again!

## James 2:14-26

### 5W/H QUESTIONS

**Jas 2:14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?**

**BEFORE WE BEGIN THIS SECTION JAMES 2:14-26, WHAT KEY WORDS DID YOU OBSERVE?** faith, works, justified (use, useless/show)

**WHERE HAS JAMES TALKED ABOUT FAITH?** Jas 1:3, Jas 1:6, Jas 2:1, Jas 2:5.

**WHERE HAS JAMES TALKED ABOUT WORKS?** Jas 1:22-25 ("doers", "effectual doer"), Jas 1:27 ("visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world."), Jas 2:1-14 (not showing personal favoritism)

**One technical note** - The KJV has "*can faith save him?*" That is very misleading because James is not speaking of whether faith can save a sinner, but is specifically addressing the quality of one's faith. Thus the other versions translate it "that faith" (NASB, ESV, NJB), "this kind of faith" (NET), "such faith," (NIV).

**WHO IS JAMES ADDRESSING?** "My brethren" — What does this reveal about James' audience?

James is addressing professing believers within the Christian community. Throughout the epistle he repeatedly uses terms such as "my brethren," "beloved brethren," and "brothers," indicating that his primary audience consists of those who identify with Christ. However, as in many congregations, not every professing believer necessarily possesses genuine saving faith.

**WHAT DOES THE PERSON CLAIM TO HAVE? What does he profess to possess, and what is conspicuously absent from his life?**

James deliberately writes that a man **SAYS** he has faith to spotlight the gap between their claim and the reality. He does not affirm that the claim is true. In other words the issue is verbal PROFESSION unbacked by WORKS.

The emphasis falls on the profession rather than the possession of faith. James is examining whether the claim is genuine.

**WHAT IS IMPLIED BY THE PHRASE "IF SOMEONE SAYS HE HAS FAITH?"** (focus on the verb "says") The person claims to have faith. James does not say that this person actually has saving faith, but that he claims to have it.

**WHAT KIND OF FAITH -- IS JAMES CONDEMNING FAITH ITSELF OR A KIND OF FAITH?** James is not condemning genuine saving faith. He is exposing a barren, inactive, and merely professed faith that produces no evidence of spiritual life. Throughout Scripture, salvation is by faith alone ("*sola fide*") in Christ Alone, but the faith that saves is never alone but always produces spiritual fruit.

**WHAT VITAL SPIRITUAL ISSUE IS JAMES ADDRESSING?** James is addressing the relationship between one's profession of faith and the evidence that backs up that claim to faith. A profession without evidence raises serious questions about the reality of that profession.

**WHAT IS JAMES ASKING ABOUT THE VALUE OF FAITH WITHOUT WORKS? What benefit is there in a faith that produces no observable fruit?** James' implied answer is: none. A profession of faith that never expresses itself in action is of no spiritual value. Such a faith cannot save.

**WHAT TEST OF GENUINE FAITH IS JAMES INTRODUCING? How do works reveal whether a profession of faith is genuine or merely empty?** works = visible evidence of invisible faith

**John MacArthur** points out that "Some of the righteous and godly works James has already mentioned are endurance (1:3), perseverance under trial (1:12), purity of life (1:21), obedience to Scripture (1:22–23), compassion for the needy (1:27), and impartiality (2:1–9). Later he mentions such things as acts of compassion (2:15), control of the tongue (3:2–12), humility (4:6, 10), truthfulness (4:11), and patience (5:8)."

**HOW DOES THIS VERSE CONNECT WITH "DOERS OF THE WORD" IN JAMES 1:22?** James 1:22 commands believers to be doers of the Word and not merely hearers. James 2:14-26 expands that principle. A faith that hears truth but never acts upon it is self-deceived.

**WHAT IS THE CENTRAL QUESTION OF THIS ENTIRE SECTION (Jas 2:14-26)?** How can genuine faith be distinguished from a profession of faith? The central issue is not how a person is justified before God (Paul deals with that), but how genuine faith can be recognized. James argues that true faith inevitably manifests itself in works. Therefore, the distinguishing mark of genuine faith is not merely what one says, but how one lives. Living faith produces works; dead faith does not. James is not contrasting faith versus works. He is contrasting living faith versus dead faith, genuine faith versus empty profession, and a faith that works versus a faith that merely talks. His burden is that Christian behavior should validate Christian belief. As someone has aptly said: We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.

## EXCURSUS ON FAITH AND SALVATION

**NOTE:** This excursus is fairly long and you have to be careful to monitor your time to be certain you save time to discuss all the verses in James 2:14-26.

Romans 3:9-18 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "**THERE IS NONE** RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 **THERE IS NONE** WHO UNDERSTANDS, **THERE IS NONE** WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; 12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; **THERE IS NONE** WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." 13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; 14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; 15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, 16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, 17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN." 18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

**WHAT IS THE REPEATED PHRASE (NEGATIVE) IN Ro 3:9-18?** THERE IS NONE...

**WHAT IS THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE THAT ALL MEN LACK?** THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD

Ro 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

**HOW IS ALL THE PREVIOUS TRUTH SUMMED UP?** all sinned...all fall short

Ro 5:6-8 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God (present tense - continually) demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

**WHAT WAS THE SPIRITUAL STATUS OF ALL MEN WHO FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD?** helpless...ungodly...sinners

**WHAT IS THE DRAMATIC CONTRAST?** "BUT GOD" -- demonstrates His own love toward us. Christ died for us.

Eph 2:8-10 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that (or this - Gk touto - neuter) not of yourselves, [it is] the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast. 10 For we are His

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**HOW DID GOD EXPLAIN THAT WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, HE MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST** (Eph 2: 6ff)? by grace you have been saved through faith

**WHAT DOES "THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES...THE GIFT OF GOD" REFER TO (3 VIEWS)?** Some say "that" refers to (1) grace, some to (2) faith, and others to the (3) entire phrase of salvation (Grace + faith + the entire act of being saved). **Why is latter most widely held view?** "that" is neuter, and both grace and faith are feminine, so grammatically since both nouns do not match the third view is most widely held view. All of it sourced in God, so that boasting is completely excluded. Faith is not the human contribution that earns grace, for even the capacity to receive it is part of the gift.

**WHAT PART DID OUR WORKS PLAY IN OUR SALVATION?** nothing - not by works (or we would boast about it) (Might want to compare "work of God" in Jn 6:29)

**HOW DOES PAUL EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE OF OUR SALVATION?** "for" = term of explanation > created for good works!

Ro 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

**WHAT HAPPENED TO US WHEN WE FIRST BELIEVED IN CHRIST?** we were buried with Christ into death

**HOW DO SOME DENOMINATIONS DISTORT THE MEANING OF BAPTISM IN THIS VERSE?** They say we must be baptized in water and that act conveys some aspect of salvation. (**WHAT THEN WOULD BAPTISM BE?** a work!) There is no water in this verse. Baptism has the basic meaning of identification with. So we were "identified" with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

**WHAT IS IMPLIED THAT HAPPENED TO US THAT ENABLED TO WALK IN NEWNESS (new quality) OF LIFE?** Christ was raised to life and we were raised with Him

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new (kainos = qualitatively brand new, never existed before) creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

**WHEN DID GOD TRANSFER US FROM IN ADAM (all humanity is born in Adam) AND PLACE US IN CHRIST?** moment we placed our faith in Christ

**WHAT ARE THE OLD THINGS THAT PASSED AWAY WHEN WE WERE BORN AGAIN, PLACED IN CHRIST?** the guilt of all our sins past, present and future. Our old man/self died and sin's power was broken. Read Ro 6:6 "knowing this, that our **old self (man)** was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin"

1Co 6:9-11 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not **inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived**; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall **inherit the kingdom of God**. 11 And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

**WHAT DOES PHRASE "INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD" REFER TO?** salvation

**WHAT IS THE WARNING IN THE PRESENT TENSE IMPERATIVE?** Stop being deceived as some were, presumably because of false teaching.

**WHAT WAS THE DECEPTION?** you can live habitually in the sins listed and still be saved and expect to go to heaven

**HOW DID THE SINNERS BECOME NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST?** washed (Titus 3:5 - "washing of regeneration")...sanctified...justified (declare righteous **NOT** "make righteous" = justification is a once for all act, not a process)

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) — convened directly to counter the Reformation — declared: Canon 11: "If anyone says that men are **justified** either by the sole imputation of the righteousness of Christ or by the sole remission of sins... let him be anathema."

**FYI** - Catholic theology teaches: Justification is a process, not a one-time declaration. Grace is infused (poured in) through the sacraments beginning with **baptism**, which is said to remove original sin and make the person righteous before God. Mortal sin can lose justification. Penance restores justification. The believer must cooperate with infused grace through good works and obedience to remain justified. Final justification is not certain until death/judgment because one could fall from grace through mortal sin.

Mt 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. 14 "For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

**WHAT ARE THE TWO CRITICAL ADJECTIVES REGARDING WHO WILL BE SAVED?** "many" (lost) and "few" (saved)!

Mt 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits.

**HOW DO YOU DISCERN A FALSE PROPHET?** fruits

Mt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.**'

**HOW JESUS SAY ONE IS GUARANTEED TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (SALVATION)?** does the will of the Father - note "**does**" is in the present tense indicating not perfection but direction of one's conduct.

**WHAT WILL THESE INDIVIDUALS CLAIM?** they had "works" = prophesied, cast out demons, performed many miracles

**WHAT IS THE VERDICT OF THE JUDGE JESUS?** **Depart** (to eternal punishment)

**WHY THIS VERDICT?** (1) He never knew them (intimacy, relationship) (2) They actually practice (ergazomai = work at it!!!) and in the present tense indicates this was not a sporadic sin but their lifestyle of sin. (Lawlessness = sin according to 1Jn 3:4 - "sin is lawlessness")

Mt 7:24 "Therefore **everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man**, who built his house upon the rock. 25 "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. 26 "And **everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man**, who built his house upon the sand. 27 "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall." 28 The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; 29 for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

**Jas 2:15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,**

**HOW DOES JAMES BEGIN TO ILLUSTRATE WORKS? WHO IS THE PERSON IN NEED?** brother or sister (professing believers) a member of the church family.

It is easier to ignore a stranger. To ignore a fellow believer in visible need — someone you worship with, pray with, call family — makes the failure of dead faith inexcusable

**WHAT ARE THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS?** without clothing, daily food. This is not about luxury but survival!

**HOW EASY IS IT TO SEE THIS NEED?** both needs are visible -- You can see someone is poorly clothed and you can generally see someone who is starving.

**Jas 2:16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?**

**WHAT IS THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF WORDS ALONE TO A PERSON IN SURVIVAL LEVEL NEED?** The answer is obvious which is exactly James' rhetorical point. Words without works in this example are useless!

**WHAT'S THE PERSON'S RESPONSE TO THE PERSON IN NEED?** useless

**WHAT IS MISSING THAT MAKES IT USELESS?** works

**WHAT DO THE SPEAKER'S TWO COMMANDS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE THAT HE IS FULLY AWARE OF?** these specific

commands (dealing with food and clothing) make it crystal clear he knows the man's needs!

### Jas 2:17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

**NLT:** So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. Faith that doesn't show itself by good deeds is no faith at all—it is dead and useless.

**WHAT CONDITION CAUSES JAMES TO DECLARE THEIR FAITH TO BE DEAD?** faith w/o works = dead faith

**WHY NOT DESCRIBE THE FAITH AS "WEAK" BUT AS DEAD?** **dead** means lifeless like a corpse that has the form of a person but no animating life. Similarly **dead** faith fails to demonstrate genuine spiritual life. Faith that never produces anything is not the living kind.

**WHAT DOES JAMES MEAN BY THE PHRASE "BEING BY ITSELF?"** faith in isolation from works is the problem. It is faith that exists only as mental assent or verbal profession isolated from any life change or observable spiritual fruit.

**LOOKING AT VV14-17 AS A UNIT, WHAT IS THE ONE THING JAMES SAYS THIS KIND OF FAITH CANNOT DO AND WHY?** cannot save, **WHY?** because it lacks works to show it is genuine saving faith.

**HOW DOES THIS PARALLEL "PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION" IN Jas 1:27? WHAT WERE THE "WORKS" IN Jas 1:27?** so they were not just hearing the word but doing the word demonstrating their faith was genuine. In short real religion had visible expression ("works") - visit orphans and widows.

**HOW DOES Jas 2:1-13 RELATE TO JAMES' DESCRIPTION OF FAITH AND WORKS? WHAT DID HE SAY ABOUT FAITH THAT RELATES TO THEIR WORKS (Read Jas 2:1)?** faith should be impartial

**EXTRA VERSE** - John gives a similar test of one's faith in 1 John 3:17-18: "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, **how does the love of God abide in him?** 18 Little children, **let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth**"

### Jas 2:18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; **show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.**"

**NOTE:** James 2:18 is one of the most grammatically and interpretively difficult verses in the entire epistle. The core problem is where does the objector's quote end? Where does James' response begin? The NAS version strings the clauses together making no attempt to resolve this issue. Most other versions (ESV, CSB, NIV, NLT) have the objector's statement in quotes followed by James' response. Here is the ESV...

**ESV** But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (Jam 2:18 ESV)

**WHO IS THE "SOMEONE" SPEAKING IN V18?** An imaginary objector James constructs to strengthen his argument.

The device is called a **diatribe** which is a Greco-Roman rhetorical technique where the writer invents an opponent, states their objection, then demolishes it. Paul uses the same device in Romans 9:19.

**WHAT FALSE ASSUMPTION UNDERLIES THE OBJECTOR'S ARGUMENT THAT SOME HAVE FAITH AND OTHERS HAVE WORKS?** His assumption is that **faith and works are separable gifts** as if one believer can legitimately have faith without works and another works without faith. This treats them as independent categories rather than what James insists they are --- inseparable realities in genuine salvation.

**WHAT CHALLENGE** (actually a command) **DOES JAMES ISSUE?** "**Show** me your faith without works."

**WHY IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE?** (might need to ask them something like "*Can a person's faith be seen by itself.*") It is impossible because faith is invisible and unverifiable (without works). Faith exists internally and cannot be observed directly. Works are the only external, verifiable evidence that faith exists. Asking for **faith without works** is like asking someone to show you wind without any movement. You cannot photograph the wind but you can see what the wind moves. (and of course you can feel it).

**WHY DOES JAMES SHIFT TO THE FIRST PERSON ("I WILL SHOW...") AND WHAT DOES THIS ADD?** It makes the argument

personal and not abstract or theoretical. James is not discussing someone else but is putting himself forward as the example. The force is: "*Don't argue with me abstractly but watch my life. My works are my proof.*" It turns the argument from debate into personal challenge and accountability.

**Jas 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.**

**WHAT DOES JAMES ACKNOWLEDGE IS TRUE OF THE PERSON ARGUING (or objecting) IN Jas 2:18?** he believes God is one

**WHAT DOCTRINE DO BOTH THE PERSON WITHOUT WORKS AND THE DEMONS BELIEVE?** (remember he is addressing a primarily Jewish audience) monotheism which Jews believe (Traditionally, orthodox observant Jews would recite the Shema at least twice daily - Dt 6:4 "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is **one!**").

**WHAT IS THE SENSE OF JAMES' STATEMENT "YOU DO WELL"** (NLT = "Good for you!")? he affirms their belief is correct and some feel he is adding a touch of sarcasm.

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN THE DEMONS SHUDDER?** this is their emotional response (shiver from fear or dread, be extremely afraid - used of hair standing up on end!) This is not mild discomfort but is visceral, involuntary terror. Demons do not merely acknowledge God intellectually but they are seized with dread. Demons know God is real, is one, is holy and their judgment is certain. They are in a sense better theologians than people who hold dead faith casually.

**WHAT IS THEIR STATE OF SALVATION?** unsaved

**WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM THE RESPONSE OF DEMONS ABOUT WHETHER CORRECT DOCTRINE AND EMOTION SAVE?** just as is the case with demons who are unsaved, humans are not saved by correct doctrine plus emotion.

**WHAT IS MISSING FROM THE BELIEF OF DEMONS WHO ARE FLAWLESS MONOTHEISTS?** While they may fall down before Jesus, they do not surrender to God or show Him loyalty but are in active opposition and rebellion to Him.

The demons do indeed recognize Christ's authority, confess His identity, and at times fall before Him (Mark 3:11). However, their recognition of Christ is not saving faith. It is compelled acknowledgment, not loving submission. They do not trust Him, obey Him, worship Him from the heart, or seek His glory. Rather, they remain in persistent rebellion against God and His purposes.

## DEMONS

Mk 1:23-24 And just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 saying, "What do we have to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

Mt 8:28-29 And when He had come to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; they were so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by that road. 29 And behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

(**EXTRA - THEY BOW BEFORE JESUS**) Mark 3:11 And whenever the unclean spirits beheld Him, **they would fall down before Him and cry out**, saying, "You are the Son of God!"

**WHAT DO THE DEMONS BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS?** He is the Holy One of God, the Son of God (which in effect shows they are not just "monotheistic"). They know Jesus will judge them ("torment us before the time").

**Jas 2:20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?**

**ESV** - Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?

**CSB** - Foolish man! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless?

**WHAT DOES HIS STATEMENT "ARE YOU WILLING TO RECOGNIZE"** (ESV - "Do you want to be shown"; CSB - "Are you willing

to learn") **IMPLY ABOUT WHY THIS PERSON DOES NOT ALREADY SEE THIS TRUTH?** It implies his willful refusal to see truth. In other words it is not a problem of the objector's intellect but a problem of his will.

This question anticipates the evidence of Abraham and Rahab he will present in Jas 2:21-25 -- It is as if James is saying: "If you are genuinely willing to look at the evidence here it comes"

**HOW DOES JAMES ADDRESS THE OBJECTOR?** foolish fellow

**WHY DOES HE CALL HIM A "FOOLISH FELLOW"** (literally "empty fellow")? **Foolish fellow** is literally "*empty man*". His logic and spiritual understanding are empty. He is an empty man with an "empty" faith!

**HOW DOES HE PRESS HOME THE NECESSITY OF WORKS? WHAT TRUTH DOES JAMES WANT HIS READER TO RECOGNIZE?** it is **useless** (argos = *a* = without + *ergon*= work) which means inactive, not working, unprofitable and unable to effect genuine salvation. **Argos** conveys the sense of fruitlessness or lack of productivity as illustrated by a fruit tree that fails to bear fruit.

### Jas 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

**WHAT IS IMPORTANT ABOUT THE WAY HE DESIGNATES ABRAHAM? (WHO IS HE ADDRESSING?** Jew = Jas 1:1 - 12 tribes scattered) our father -- By calling Abraham our father, James is essentially saying "This is your own heritage and you cannot dismiss this." James is using the objector's own hero against them, like saying "your own champion proves my point"

**WHAT IS THE EXPECTED ANSWER TO THE RHETORICAL QUESTION?** Affirmative - forcing the objector to concede the point from their own hero.

**WHEN WAS ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY WORKS?** Ge 22:1-14 when he obeyed God's instruction to sacrifice his son of promise

**WHAT WORK IS JAMES DESCRIBING?** Obedience to take him to Mt Moriah, willingness to place him on the altar and willingness to lift the knife to sacrifice him. All of these were visible evidence of Abraham's faith expressed almost 50 years earlier in Ge 15:6.

**WHEN WAS ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED ACCORDING TO GENESIS 15:6?**

"James will quote Genesis 15:6 in v.23 — how does the offering of Isaac in Genesis 22 relate to Abraham's faith in Genesis 15?"

How many years after Abraham was declared righteous in Genesis 15 did the offering of Isaac occur and why does this timing matter?"

"What does the word 'when' tell us about the relationship between Abraham's faith and his works — which came first?"

Why does James include the specific detail of the altar — what does it add to the picture of Abraham's obedience?" The altar detail shows the act was completed in intention — Abraham did not merely agree to obey, he went all the way to the point of sacrifice.

**HOW WAS ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY WORKS IF PAUL SAYS WE ARE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH?**

And the demonstrative sense (to show something) isn't a rarity Paul stumbled into once. He uses it again of Christ in 1 Timothy 3:16 — "vindicated in the spirit". It's common outside Paul too: Jesus says wisdom is "justified" by her deeds/children (Mt 11:19; Lk 7:35), and "by your words you will be justified" (Mt 12:37) both clearly demonstrative. So when James puts *dikaioō* to work in the "shown righteous" sense, he's using a well-attested meaning. Abraham's work showed him to be righteous.

## EXCURSUS ON WHAT PAUL TEACHES ABOUT JUSTIFICATION AND WORKS

Ro 3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus

Ro 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Ro 4:2-5 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness,

Gal 3:5-7 Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 6 Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.

**HOW DOES PAUL SAY A SINNER IS SAVED (JUSTIFIED)?** by faith, not works.

## RELATION OF WORKS AND FAITH

Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

Titus 2:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

Titus 3:8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

**HOW DO THESE VERSES SHOW PAUL AND JAMES ARE IN AGREEMENT?** They all show that works are associated with faith.

2Cor 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

**HOW COULD ONE FAIL THE TEST?** profess Christ but bring forth no fruit.

## JAMES AND HEBREWS

Heb 11:17-19+ By faith Abraham, when he was tested ([peirazo](#) - Ge 22:1+), offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." 19 He considered ([logizomai](#) = took into account, reasoned) that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.

**WHAT WAS GOD'S REQUEST OF ABRAHAM CALLED?** a test

**WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF A TEST IN Jas 1:2-4?** testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

**WHAT TRUTH DID ABRAHAM KNOW THAT ENABLED HIM TO "PASS THE TEST?"** God was able to resurrect his son Isaac

**Jas 2:22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;**

NLT - You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. (Jas 2:22NLT)

**WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT FAITH IS BY ITSELF INVISIBLE, BUT JAMES SAYS "YOU SEE THAT FAITH WAS WORKING WITH HIS WORKS." WHAT IS HE REFERRING TO THAT THE OBJECTOR SHOULD NOW CLEARLY "SEE"?** Abraham's example made his faith visible ("YOU SEE" - blepo means to look at something). In other words, his work made his faith visible.

**HOW DOES JAMES EXPLAIN ABRAHAM'S FAITH?** **working with his works** = identifies the cooperative relationship between faith and works

**WHAT DOES THE GREEK WORD FOR WORKING ([sunergeo](#) = work together. Eng = "synergy") TELL US ABOUT THE**

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS-- ARE THEY COMPETING OR COOPERATING?** faith and works are like two oars rowing a boat

**WHAT WAS THE CONCLUSION REGARDING ABRAHAM'S FAITH?** it was perfected, reached its goal. Verb **made perfect** ([teleioo](#) - related derived from [teleios](#) = "perfect" which is used twice in Jas 1:4+) means brought to completion or maturity, not "made flawless." The picture is that Abraham's faith and works operated together, reflecting the fulfillment of his faith. Synergy was like the seed (faith) coming to fruit (work).

**Jas 2:23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.**

**WHAT SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED THROUGH ABRAHAM'S OBDIENCE? WHAT DOES HE QUOTE?** Genesis 15:6

**WHAT DOES THAT SCRIPTURE TEACH ABOUT ABRAHAM'S FAITH?** it was reckoned (accounted) as righteousness

**WHAT IS ANOTHER WAY TO DESCRIBE RECKONED AS RIGHTEOUSNESS?** Abraham was Justified or declared righteous

**WHAT DOES JAMES MEAN THAT "THE SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED?" FIRST, WHAT SCRIPTURE IS HE REFERRING TO?**

Genesis 15:6. **WHEN WAS IT FULFILLED?** Genesis 22. Thus Abraham's later act of obedience fulfilled or verified the earlier declaration of his faith.

Genesis 15:6 (Abraham believed) was the **declaration** and Genesis 22 (Isaac offered) was the **demonstration** that brought Abraham's faith to its intended expression decades later. **Fulfilled** here means brought to its complete realization. The timeline shows James' whole point that real faith confirmed at the start was confirmed by works years later.

**WHAT DID ABRAHAM'S FAITH RESULT IN REGARD TO HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD?** The friend of God

**WHY WAS HE CALLED A FRIEND OF GOD?** The title "Friend of God" marks the relational reality that genuine faith produces. Friendship speaks of closeness, communion, and shared confidence, not merely position.

While Abraham bears the special biblical title **"the friend of God,"** the New Testament teaches that all obedient believers may enjoy a genuine friendship with God through Jesus Christ. The title is unique; the privilege is not.

(AS AN ASIDE) **WHAT ARE ALL UNSAVED MEN** (Ro 5:10)? enemies of God

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A simple timeline helps understand the meaning of **"fulfilled"** (Abraham's ages are estimates)...

Genesis 15:6 (Abraham about 85 years old)

- Abraham believes God's promise.
- God credits righteousness to him.
- Justification by faith.

Genesis 22 (Abraham about 115-125 years old)

- Abraham offers Isaac.
- His faith is demonstrated by his obedience.

James 2:23

- The later act of obedience fulfills or verifies the earlier declaration of faith.

**Jas 2:24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.**

**JAMES AGAIN USES "YOU SEE" (cf v22)- WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF THE REPETITION?** The repetition emphasizes that the truth James is teaching is observable and evident. In Jas 2:22 we see the process is visible and here the conclusion is visible.

In verse 22, the readers could see the process by which Abraham's faith was working together with his works

and being brought to maturity. In verse 24, they can see the conclusion drawn from that process: genuine faith is demonstrated and vindicated by works. Thus, in verse 22 the visible evidence is the working of faith, while in verse 24 the visible evidence is the result of that faith. James' point is that true faith is not hidden or merely claimed; it manifests itself in observable actions that reveal its reality.

**WHAT IS JAMES' CONCLUSION FROM THE EXAMPLE OF ABRAHAM ABOUT THE ROLE OF WORKS?** the works "justify" in the sense that they show/demonstrate his faith is genuine. Faith alone justifies, but the faith that justifies is never alone.

**Jas 2:25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?**

**WHO IS RAHAB, JEW OR GENTILE? WHAT WAS HER REPUTATION?** The pairing is deliberately jarring: the revered patriarch and a Gentile prostitute, the insider and the ultimate outsider.

**WHY MIGHT JAMES HAVE CHOSEN RAHAB?** It communicates that living faith isn't limited by background, status, or past but that anyone can have it. Rahab's faith-work was costly and risky (she endangered her life to shelter the spies and act on what she believed about Israel's God), which is exactly the point that faith that acts, even at great cost, is the real deal.

**HOW WAS RAHAB JUSTIFIED, BY WHAT WORKS? WHAT ACTIONS DID SHE TAKE TO DEMONSTRATE HER FAITH?** see above

**HOW IS RAHAB'S EXAMPLE SIMILAR TO ABRAHAM'S?** they both did something very costly, for Abraham it was offering his promised son, for Rahab it was willingness to hide the spies knowing if she was caught she would probably die.

**Jas 2:26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.**

**For** - term of explanation.

**HOW DOES JAMES EXPLAIN DEAD FAITH - WHAT PHYSICAL ANALOGY DOES HE USE?** body without spirit is dead. He is making a natural/physical analogy to explain a spiritual reality.

The analogy says works are to faith what the spirit is to the body, so it is the animating presence that proves there is actually life. A body without the spirit is a corpse. And faith without works is dead, like a corpse, thus lifeless. The comparison makes works the visible sign of an animated, living, saving faith.