

## Chapter Two

### 1 My brethren,

As the Holy Spirit moves to the topic, he inspired James to call them brethren. Whenever conduct is being rebuked, it is wise to begin on equal footing. The Spirit also did this with Stephen as He prepared to rebuke the Jews for their hard hearts.

*And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, Acts 7:2-3*

A rebuke is always softened when the person having to point out an error places himself on the same level. All of God's children are struggling with different aspects of perfection. Every rebuke is just a problem area that one brother is not yet aware of or has not found the motivation to do anything about. James is simply giving them an opportunity to see another area in which they need to grow.

*Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Phil 3:12-16*

**do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, (NKJV)**

**do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ (NAS)**

He begins with common ground for all Christians. We have all become convinced that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. We know He is now reigning over the nations and has glory and majesty. That faith is one of our dearest possessions, and we hold fast to it with all our being just as the Lord expects us to do. The term "hold" always emphasizes possession.

*"echo... . Transitively. 1. to have i. q. to hold; a. to have(hold) in the hand: ... b. in the sense of wearing... c. trop. to have (hold) possession of the mind; said of alarm, agitating emotions... d. to hold fast, keep... e. to have (in itself or as a consequence), comprise, involve... f... to regard, consider, hold as... 2. to have . q. to own, possess; a. external things such as pertain to property, riches, furniture, utensils, goods, food, etc. II. Intransitively. . . . to hold one's self to a thing, to lay hold of a thing, to adhere or cling to; to be closely joined to a person or thing... (Vine, W. E., op. cit., Volume 2 p. 223)*

*"echo... The verb has a great breadth of meaning: have, keep, possess; aor.: acquire, take possession; intrans.: be, be situated ..." (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament NT:2192)*

The possession of our faith requires first of all a mental commitment based on hearing (Rom.10:17) that leads us to a faith which is *"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* Heb 11:1-2. But since we hold that faith in Jesus, we also hold fast to all that He has revealed through the writings of the apostles and prophets. Thus this faith refers to the submission to all the commands in the gospel. The system of doctrines and morals which Jesus came to reveal. It belongs to Jesus for He is it's center and it's lawgiver. It is all their is to life to the people of God.

It is interesting that hear James uses this mental commitment to Jesus in a very unusual way. Since everyone who holds that faith is on an equal footing, we must not allow it to be tainted by any feelings or attitudes we have within ourselves concerning our fellow man. James warned here that our faith in Jesus is based upon more than just a simple relationship with Him. If we properly hold a faith in Jesus, then it requires that all areas in our life be in submission to Him. Specifically, we cannot hold a faith in Jesus and also have personal favoritism (prejudice, partiality, etc.)

**with partiality (NKJV) with {an attitude of} personal favoritism (NASB).**

This phrase is the heart of the entire section. It is crucial that each Christian understands what James is forbidding here. The term "partiality" is defined:

*"prosopolepsia... respect of persons... partiality, the fault of one who when called on to requite or to give judgment has respect to the outward circumstances of men and not to their intrinsic merits, and*

so prefers, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high-born, or powerful, to another who is destitute of such gifts..." (Thayer, Joseph Henry, op. cit. p. 551; 4382)

*prosopelempotes* denotes "a respecter of persons" (*prosopon*, "a face" or "person," *lambano*, "to lay hold of"), Acts 10:34. NT:4381

*prosopelempsia* ... denotes "respect of persons, partiality" (akin to No. 1), the fault of one who, when responsible to give judgment, has respect to the position, rank, popularity, or circumstances of men, instead of their intrinsic conditions, preferring the rich and powerful to those who are not so, Rom 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; James 2:1. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, NT 4382)

God has always been very clear about partiality, prejudice and respect that is based on criteria that has nothing to do with anything.

***'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. Lev. 19:15-16***

***You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's. Deut. 1:17***

***For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. Deut. 10:17-18***

***And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. Eph. 6:9-10***

***I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. 1Tim. 5:21-22***

The term centers on respect of persons, or upon showing partiality. There are two sides to this issue. The first is the positive side of giving better treatment due to outward appearances such as wealth, power, personality, beauty, or intelligence. The second which is equally evil is the negative side, prejudice against someone based upon a lack of wealth, power, personality, beauty, or intelligence.

Such prejudicial thinking either positive or negative is strictly forbidden to those who hold that faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such things should have no influence whatsoever upon us, and we should not offer or withhold the offer of the gospel, or our own hospitality and friendliness based upon them. They are of no value to God, all souls are His, and the soul is of the same value whether it belongs to a wealthy or poor man. We cannot show "partiality" when dealing with such people. In this context, James deals with a problem that centered on a brother being rich and poor. But it is actually much broader than that.

*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:27-29).*

Jew/Gentile, Slave/free, Male/Female are also areas of distinction made by some that are no longer to be taken into consideration.

*Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. Acts 10:34-35*

We have many of these same problems in today's society. We have only changed the names. We now call it discrimination and reverse discrimination. What we mean by these terms is the attitude that James describes toward the poor man. There are some who have partiality based upon skin color and national origin, language, financial status, etc. It is a sin for a Christian to be prejudiced in any way when it comes to holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **2 For if a man comes into your assembly**

The Holy Spirit now gives a concrete example of His concern. Whether this had actually happened in the group James is writing is difficult to know for certain, but that it has happened and will happen again is obvious. This is the only time in the NT that this term is used and translated for the church. It was the customary term for the synagogue. It shows that for the early Christians, the two terms were synonymous. What the Jews were doing before the church, the Christians continued to do. They were assembled together. The assembly here refers to the Christian's customary gathering together, which is a derivative of the term synagogue.

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own*

**assembling together**, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. Heb 10:23-25  
episunagoge... a. a gathering together in one place, ... b. (the religious) assembly (of Christians): Heb 10:25. (Thayer 1997)  
episunagoge... Heb 10:25: It is most natural to think of the congregation gathered for worship. ... egkatalaipo "to leave in the lurch" agrees with this, and so does the singular ..." (TDWNT; 1997)

Paul spoke in a similar way to the Corinthians.

Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you **come together as a church**, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20 Therefore when **you come together in one place**, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. ... Therefore, my brethren, when **you come together to eat**, wait for one another. 1Cor. 11:17-20, 33

So this visitor had entered into one of their weekly gatherings. They were assembled and had come together as a church to worship, serve, and honor God, and into the midst of this assembly two men enter. The only distinction between the two men is in their jewelry (or lack of it) and clothing.

**with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes,**

The first man has a gold ring, and is wearing fine clothes. He obviously has wealth, exterior glory, and the aura of one who is in a higher social class. It is important to note that at this time this is all they know about these two men is their outward appearance.

**and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,**

The second man is obviously poor and his clothes are dirty. He obviously has nothing. There is no exterior glory. He is only a poor man without recourse or power. The term poor helps appreciate the depths of his situation:

"*ptochos*... 1. in classical Greek from Homer down, *reduced to beggary, begging, mediant, asking alms*... 2. *poor, needy*, (Opp. to *plousios*)... in a broader sense, *destitute of wealth, influence, position, honors, lowly, afflicted*... 3. *univ. lacking in anything*... " (Thayer, 557; 4434)

This is a beggar, he is poor and needy, and he is destitute of any wealth, influence, or position. No matter what is done to this man or for this man, he has nothing with which to return it. He is completely destitute. Therefore he has no recourse no matter how he is treated.

**3 and you pay attention [pay special attention - NASB] to the one who is wearing the fine clothes,**

James then revealed the heart of the problem under consideration. Although we don't know if these are Christian's or unbelievers, it doesn't make any difference. One would be a soul needing saved while the other would be a brother in Christ, yet in both cases prejudice would be destructive and out of place. Because of these outward and essentially worthless (in the sight of God) things, the one man received better treatment and a better attitude from the congregation than the other. The term "special attention" is defined:

"*epiblepo*... *to turn the eyes upon, to look upon, gaze upon*... contextually, to look upon one with a feeling of admiration and respect, *to look up to, regard*, Jas. 2:3; ..." (Thayer, 236; 1914)  
*epiblepo* ... "to look upon" (epi, "upon"), is used in the NT of favorable regard, Luke 1:48, RV, "he hath looked upon" (KJV, "hath regarded"), of the low estate of the Virgin Mary; in 9:38, in a request to the Lord to "look" upon an afflicted son; in James 2:3, RV, "ye have regard" (KJV, "...respect"), of having a partial regard for the well-to-do. (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:1914)

James was very specific about this nature of the issue. These brethren with no other basis than the type of clothes and obvious wealth of the one and the conspicuous poverty of the other have decided to treat the wealthy man with greater respect and honor. They then make an open display of their favoritism.

**and say, "You sit here in a good place,"**

The attitude seen in the countenance is also found in the words and tone of voice. This man is treated with special favor. Since many Christians met in homes, this may have been the best chair in the house. None of this would be a problem if the poor man were treated the same way as they would then only be showing kindness to their visitors and strangers, but James now

paints a sordid picture.

**and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,”**

The poor man gets substandard treatment. He is not even offered a chair. He is told either to stand, or sit down near the feet of others. He is made to feel his poverty. If this occurred after the way the rich man was treated and in his hearing, then it would also be insulting. Such blatant favoritism based on wealth and prosperity is a very terrible example to all in the church.

**4 have you not shown partiality made distinctions [NAS] among yourselves,**

James now presents the indictment. The real problem with what they have done is they have made distinctions among themselves.

*“dia-krino... 1. to separate, make a distinction, discriminate... like the Lat. distinguo, used emphatically to distinguish or separate a person or thing from the rest, in effect i. q. to prefer, yield to him the preference or honor: tina, I Cor 4:7... 2. to learn by discrimination, to try, decide... ”*  
(Thayer, NT:1252)

The term selected by the Spirit is not an evil term. It is right or wrong based on the criteria used to “*make a distinction, or discriminate.*” They did not use Scripture. They had not consulted God’s word so it was originating from themselves. If God has not made any distinctions then it is wrong for His children to create them. It follows the same path Jesus condemned concerning traditions of men. God has made no distinctions based upon poverty or wealth. As a matter of fact, after Peter’s vision in Acts 10, Peter drew a far-reaching inspired conclusion about this matter:

*Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. Acts 10:34-35*

God has no partiality. There is no such thing to God as male or female, bond or free, wealthy or poor, high or low social standing, nor does the country one is born in, the language they speak, or the color of their skin. God has no partiality. Each man has a soul and every soul has the same worth regardless of the outward packaging we might see. A soul’s worth to God is based on fear - respect and reverence and working righteousness by treating others fairly and justly. There are not other criteria and to make them puts us into a position no Christian should ever want to be:

**and become judges**

By thinking and passing judgement in the manner described above, James used a verb of being to describe what they had actually changed themselves into and made of themselves by this conduct.

*“ginomai... 1. to become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, receive being... to be borne... of the origin of all things... (Thayer, NT: 1096)*

They had gone from being submissive servants of God doing only His will and they had now come into existence as judges.

*krites... a judge; 1. univ one who passes or arrogates to himself, judgement on anything... in a forensic sense, of the one who tries and decides a case... of a Roman procurator administering justice,... of God passing judgement on the character and deeds of man, and rewarding accordingly... “ (Thayer, 362; 2923)*

This is a solemn charge because Jesus made it very clear that no Christian wants to be a judge.

*“Do not judge lest you be judged. 2 “For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Matt 7:1-2*

*“And do not judge and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Luke 6:37*

True disciples allow God to pass all judgments and they simply follow His guidelines. When God judges murder to be a sin, we are not judging, but passing God’s judgment and agreeing with Him. When James returns to this later in the book, he too will condemn this activity.

*Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another? Jas. 4:11-12*

There is only one lawgiver and so there can only be one judge. We dare not pass judgment on any one based on our own set of rules. Yet although the judging itself is wrong, in this case

there is a second problem.

### **with evil thoughts?**

They have become judges with "evil thoughts." Their thought processing had led to this charge.

*"dialogismos ... the thinking of a man deliberating with himself; hence 1. a thought, inward reasoning... the reasoning of those who think themselves to be wise... 2. a deliberating, questioning, about what is true: Lk. 24:38;..."* (Thayer, p. 139; 1261).

By making a false distinction regarding a wealthy had poor man, the Spirit was able to reveal that their was some evil deliberations going on. If they only wanted to do God's will, then they would have allowed God's own words to direct them, but by making a favorable judgment for the wealthy, they left themselves open to the charge of other more sinister motives, like greed, or the pride of life. If we do not use God's own stated judgements, we will always leave ourselves open to the charge of "evil" thoughts.

*"poneros... 1. full of labors. annoyances, hardships; a. pressed and harassed by labors; 2. bad, of a bad nature or condition; a. in a physical sense... b. in an ethical sense, evil, wicked, bad, etc. substantively hoi poneroi. the wicked, bad men, ... ho poneros is used pre-eminently of the devil, the evil one..."* (Thayer, p. 530-531; 4190)

Such thinking is of a bad nature and condition. They were the type of judges that God has universally condemned throughout the Scriptures.

### **5 Listen, my beloved brethren:**

He wants them to carefully consider what he is about to say as it will have great bearing on the gravity of what they are doing. The term "listen" is in the imperative mode and would have been understood by the readers as a command. This was something that needed to be heard.,

*"akouo... to hear I. absol. 1. to be endowed with the faculty of hearing (not deaf)... 2. to attend to (use of the faculty of hearing), consider what is or has been said... 3. trop. to understand, perceive the sense of what is said..."* (Thayer, p. 22-23; 191)

James demanded that they attend carefully and consider, understand and perceive what he is about to say. They are to pay special attention to the following truths that they might be made free from the sinful nature of the conduct they were currently involved in.

These are hard sayings and need to be carefully considered. They say things that are not elsewhere revealed, but they say them in a complicated way that requires careful consideration.

### **Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?**

Does this mean God has not chosen the rich? Was this a decision God made, or was it by His choices that this was the only group that was interested? Throughout the Scriptures we see examples of wealthy people who are faithfully serving God. Even Jesus only expressed the difficulty involved.

*Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." 22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. 23 Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?" 27 But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." Mark 10:23-27*

Yet it cannot be denied that the outcome of God's choices of faith, sacrifice, humility, love and care and concern for others has led to the truth that James revealed above. Truly, for the most part, the gospel appeals to the poor of this world more than it does to the rich.

Their attitude is just the opposite of the verdict that God has passed on wealth. From deep within the pages of the Old Covenant, God warned His people that wealth was a very dangerous possession to those who loved Him. After watching generation after generation of man, God became stronger and stronger in his condemnation of those who loved wealth, who coveted it and who possessed it. Consider Jeremiah's words:

*23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in*

*his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24 But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD. (Jer 9:23-24).*

Those who have no riches do not find it difficult to and glory in them. Hence the Holy Spirit can say here that God chose the other class. Poverty tends to make people more prepared to accept God's absolute standards. James simply draws on the is point to show that their judgement and God's judgement were the exact opposite. By their conduct they found themselves in direct contradiction to God's revealed will.

### **6 But you have dishonored the poor man.**

By the time James had written this letter, it should have become obvious that they poor man was actually a much better prospect for the obedience of the gospel that the wealthy man. But these brethren had allowed their prejudice to blind them.

By their conduct they had insulted and hurt the feelings of the poor man, placing a serious stumbling block in the way. The term "dishonor" is defined:

*"atimazo... to make atimos, to dishonor, insult, treat with contumely, whether in word, in deed, or in thought..." (Thayer, 83; 818)*

*"atimazo... hold in no honour, to esteem lightly, dishonour, slight, (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT 818)*

The very qualities that God most desired, and found in the poor, these Christians treated with dishonor, and insulted. This is not a good commentary on their likeness to God and their setting of priorities.

### **Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?**

Once again, we need to listen carefully to these words and carefully consider them. James is not counseling them to immediately conclude that this wealthy man should be mistreated because this is how the wealthy have treated them. If we took his words in this way we would still be guilty of being evil judges. We can't judge hearts.

*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. 1Cor. 4:5*

We don't know anything before the time. Only after events transpire can we know if this particular wealthy man is going to be like this. James is only seeking to level the two men by broadening out the criteria a little further. Instead of only looking at the clothing and rings, the brethren need to take a wiser and more spiritually motivated perspective. Both men are to be worked with, but the percentages are with the poor man and preclude any foolish prejudice in the direction of the wealthy. As a class, the wealthy are described here.

Those who with wealth and power have often despised Christians. Their humble ways, their righteous preaching, their godly demeanor has for some reason been considered an insult by them. The wealthy often "oppress" God's people.

*"katadunasteuo... to exercise harsh control over one, to use one's power against one... to oppress one..." (Thayer, 331; 2616)*

*katadunasteuo "to exercise power over" (kata, "down," dunastes, "a potentate": dunamai "to have power"), "to oppress," (Vine's Expository Dictionary, NT:2616)*

This is just a fact, something so obvious that James doesn't even need to prove it. These are the sad and true facts about class. The wealthy as a class have little respect or time for God or His people.

### **7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?**

Once again, it is important to remember that neither James nor the Holy Spirit are speaking of this one individual rich man here. We are only speaking of the classes of rich and poor and how they ought to affect our judgment of each individual. Yet as a class the rich often blaspheme the noble name.

*"blasphemeo... to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate ... Passive ... to be evil spoken of, reviled, railed at... Spec. of those who by contemptuous speech intentionally come short of the reverence due to God or to sacred things..." (Thayer, p. 102; 987)*

*blasphemeo "to speak slanderously, impiously, profanely" (blapto, "to injure," and pheme, "a*

saying") ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT 987)

So the Holy Spirit has given three reasons here why Christians should not consider wealthy people as great simply because they are rich. Once again, it is important to remember He is speaking of class, not individuals. There are individuals who were wealthy. Men like Joseph of Arimathea was rich and also a good man who sought to help Jesus.

But speaking as a class the truth is:

- 1 God selected qualities that are mostly found in poor people, His gospel appeals to them, and He welcomes them.
- 2 They oppress and persecute Christians.
- 3 They blaspheme your noble name (probably the name Christian).

These truth are not designed to dishonor the rich. Only to set things equal and counteract the foolish human notion that those with wealth deserve to be treated better than everyone else.

**8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;**

Since there are two sides to this event, James breaks them down. If they want to hide behind the royal law in their treatment of the wealthy man, and if they are truly acting under the motive of loving your neighbor as yourself, that would be a good thing. But when we add the treatment of the poor man, it all falls apart. How could they hide behind the royal law in their treatment of the wealthy man and still explain the despicable way they had treated him? Our minds are very good at rationalization, and it would be easy to reason in such a manner in regard to the treatment of the wealthy man. But when we carefully examine our treatment of the poor man a more base and sinister motive arises. This is a law that cuts both ways. It can't just be applied to one man and then set aside with another.

Why does James refer to this as a "royal" law (there is not direct article here so there is no reason to call it "**the**" royal law), according to the Scripture?

*basilikos ... of or belonging to a king, kingly, royal, regal; ...* (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:937)

What is in the Scriptures that justifies James stating that it is according to the Scriptures that this is a royal law? Three passages help us to give a scriptural answer as to why this law is royal and regal among the other laws. First and most important is the answer Jesus gave when asked which was the "greatest" and "first" of all the commands in the law.

*"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Mt. 22:36*

*"Which is the first commandment of all?" Mark 12:28*

Since in Jesus' answer He selected two laws and said some very important things about both of them. Clearly, He considered these two to be special. While the first and great commandment is the "Love the Lord your God," the second is "like it," and on these two commands all the other laws in law of Moses hang under or upon. Jesus also said that there are no laws "greater" than these two laws. Since they are the two greatest laws, they can now be called "royal" or regal.

*Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38 This is the **first and great commandment**. 39 And **the second is like it**: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.**" Mt. 22:36-40*

*Jesus answered him, "**The first of all the commandments is**: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. 31 And **the second, like it**, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is **no other commandment greater than these.**" Mk. 12:29-31*

When the Holy Spirit was writing to the Galatians, He summed up the entire law with the same law James used here. It is not difficult to see why, since even God can be considered our neighbor.

*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Gal. 5:14-15*

Which is exactly the point that John made. The reason this law is so critically important is because if you are not loving your neighbor whom you can see, how can you really love God whom you can't see?

*If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his*

brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. 1Jn. 4:20-21

So this is a royal law because it includes all laws and because it is linked to the first and foremost law! So while the Spirit through James admitted the possibility that they were fulfilling a royal law to the rich. If that is what they are doing, then of course they are doing “well.”

*kalos*... adv. *beautifully, finely, excellently, well*... a. rightly, so that there shall be no room for blame... *kalos right! well!* an expression of approval... b *excellently, nobly, commendably c. honorably, in honor*... (Thayer p 323; 2573)

But there was fatal flaw in their reasoning regarding the poor man, since he too is a neighbor.

## 9 But if you show partiality, you commit sin

This term translated “*but*” is generally used to oppose a previous statement. This will negate their justification and prove them to be transgressors.

“*de*... a particle adversative, distinctive, disjunctive, *but, moreover*... It is used 1. univ. by way of opposition and distinction; it is added to statements opp. to a preceding statement... 3. after negative sentences, *but, but rather*... 4. It is joined to terms which are repeated with a certain emphasis, and with such additions as tend to explain and establish them more exactly;... 5. It serves to mark a transition to something new... 6. It introduces explanations and separates them from the things to be explained... 7. After a parenthesis or an explanation which had led away from the subject under discussion, it serves to take up the discourse again... 8. it introduces the apodosis and, as it were, opposes it to the protasis... (Thayer, p. 126; 1161)

They were not really treating the rich man well to fulfill the royal law (evidenced by the fact that they are not treating both people the same), then it is really partiality. This was a term that emphasized the basis of treatment on the face or specific information about the person and not the facts or circumstances. Thus it means to show favoritism or be partial toward, giving preferential treatment.

*prosoptomemteo* ... (an idiom, literally 'to accept a face'): to make unjust distinctions between people by treating one person better than another - 'to show favoritism, to be partial, partiality.' ... James 2:9 'if you treat one person better than another, you are guilty of sin' (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT 4380).

If there is even the slightest amount of that in our dealings with others then it negates the previous claim about a “royal” law.

This is an important test to apply to many realms of life. We can fool ourselves into thinking that what we are doing to some people is a result of our fulfillment of God’s command to love all men, but if we do not do it across the board, consistently to everyone, then we must admit that it is not really a fulfillment of something good. James actually uses a term that means to “work and labor” at something.

“*ergazomai*... 1. absol. a. *to work, labor, do work*: it is opposed to inactivity or idleness... b. *to trade, to make gains by trading* ... 2. trans. a. (*to work* l. e.) *to do, work out*... with acc. of virtues or vices, (*to work* l. e.) *to exercise, perform, commit*... b. *to work for, earn by working, to acquire*...” (Thayer, p. 247; 2038)

There was a thin line of rationalization by which they had attempted to justify, but the end result was the same. You can’t use one Scripture against another. Since all the other laws hang on the one they sought to use to justify their conduct, the laws that forbid partiality also hung from it and negated their argument. Changing it all to just working at sin and not working at keeping the royal law.

## and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

They stood convicted. James had “shown them their sin and now summoned them to repent.” They were convicted and exposed in their own minds. It was up to them whether they took care of it through repentance, or waited for exposure and rebuke.

“*elencho*,... 1. to convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted,...by conviction to bring to light, to expose... used of the exposure and confutation of false teachers of Christianity, Titus 1:9,13...” (Thayer, p. 202-203; 1651)

*elencho* 1. Though the NT usage is simple and straightforward, outside the NT it is very complicated. In Homer *elencho* still means “to scorn,” “to bring into contempt.” Later it means a. “to

shame" by exposure, opposition, etc.; b. "to blame"; c. "to expose," "to resist"; then d. "to interpret," "to expound"; and finally e. "to investigate." 2. The use of *elencho* in the NT is restricted. ... It means "to show someone his sin and to summon him to repentance." (Kittel, NT:1651)

Which law was James speaking of? Was he simply speaking of the Old Covenant? Obviously not exclusively. They had indeed violated laws in the Law of Moses.

*"You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. Lev. 19:15*

But the New Covenant also would convict anyone who shows partiality as a transgressor?

*And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,<sup>35</sup> but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him. Acts 10:34-36*

*For there is no partiality with God. Rom. 2:11*

*But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)-- well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me. Gal. 2:6*

*And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. Eph. 6:9*

*For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. Col. 3:25*

*I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. 1Tim. 5:21*

Obviously both laws teach that God's people are transgressors if they show partiality. It is a trespass or stepping over the line into an area that no servant of God is allowed to be.

*parabates ... lit. and primarily, "one who stands beside," then, "one who oversteps the prescribed limit, a transgressor" (akin to *parabaino*, "to transgress," see above); (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:3848)*

Which law he is speaking of here is open to some interpretation, especially in light of the next verse where he is clearly speaking of the old Law. But it certainly makes more sense that it is the law of liberty, because they could no longer be convicted as transgressors under the Old Covenant.

### **10 For whoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point,**

James now used a "for - *gar* by the use of this particle, either the reason and cause of a foregoing statement is added, or some previous declaration is explained" revealing that the Holy Spirit wanted this to be seen as an explanation of the previous thought. The Old Covenant illustrated the principle that they were now violating under the law of liberty. As long as one is keeping the law, they were a law keeper, and they were also seen by God as being righteous. That was the very purpose for all the commands that were under the two royal ones. They helped identify and reveal true fairness and righteousness. Any violation of any of them would therefore create a serious problem.

*And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day. 25 Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.' Deut. 6:24-25*

Yet these truths come with a price. A single stumble in all their statutes and commandments brings the weight of the entire law. The term stumble presents all the statutes and commands of God as rocks or impediments to a path into sin that causes us to stumble and trip when the attitudes in our our minds and our conduct is no longer righteous.x

*"ptaio... 1. to cause one to stumble or fall... 2. to stumble... a. to err, to make a mistake, b. to fall into misery, become wretched..." (Thayer p 556; 4417)*

It only took one point, then something occurred the weight of which must be carefully assessed.

### **he is guilty of all.**

He became "guilty" of all. He is held under bond and obligation as guilty of then entire law. He is now worthy of the punishment that the law required.

*enochos... one who is held in anything, so that he cannot escape; bound, under obligation, subject to, liable... chiefly in a forensic sense, denoting the connection of a person either with his crime, or with the penalty or trial, or with that against whom or which he has offended; so. A. absol. guilty worthy or punishment... b. with gen of the things by violation of which guilt is contracted, guilty of*

anything..." (Thayer p. 217; 1777).

The law had to be kept perfectly, if one point of that law was broken then the person who broke that one point was now a transgressor and violator of that law in its entirety. The law of God is a unit and in order to be righteous, it must all be kept. If one point is not kept, then the person is no longer righteous. The weight of all the law rests upon the one who stumbles in one point. God had sought to explain this to Israel in Ezekiel, but they rejected it as unfair.

*"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: **'The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression;** as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of his righteousness in the day that he sins.' 13 **When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die.** Ezek. 33:12-14*

*"Yet **the children of your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.'** But it is their way which is not fair! 18 **When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it.** 19 But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it. 20 Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, I will judge every one of you according to his own ways." Ezek. 33:17-20*

*"But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? **All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.** Ezek. 18:24*

*"**Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.'** Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? 26 **When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies.** Ezek. 18:25-27*

When God finally revealed in the New Covenant that each sin is a debt requiring the payment of eternal death in hell, all of these words were made much clearer.

**11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.**

This does not even have to be explained. It is obvious. When a law is broken that brings the death penalty (as any one of the 10 commandments did), then if you kept all nine your entire life and broke only one at any time, you would be convicted as a transgressor of the law and put to death. It would not matter if you complained that you had kept the other 9 and only broke one. God's idea in giving the Law was that everyone must keep all of them for their entire life. A violation of any one of them led to the entire weight of the law and its penalty being placed on the life of that one man.

**12 So speak and so do, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.**

The illustration quickly gives way to the reality. James moved immediately to the true set of circumstances these brethren are now finding themselves under. With two commands in the present imperative mode he demands a new way of their continuous speaking and doing. With the terrible consequences of the violation of old law, they must be speaking and doing in a different manner under the "law of liberty."

*"houtu... in this manner, thus, so; 1. by virtue of its native demonstrative force it refers to what preceded; in the manner spoken of; in the way described; in the way it was once; in this manner; in such a manner; thus so... (Thayer, p. 468-469; 3779)*

Since it is "in this manner," the entire context rests on the "law of liberty," we need to try to understand what the Spirit means by this term. With Jesus death on the cross, all guilt for each sin was been paid the moment we obeyed the gospel and were "buried with Him in baptism." (Rom. 6:1-8; Eph 2:1-10; Col. 2:11-13). Now, when we stumble in one point, we still become guilty of all, but when we ask for forgiveness, the guilt is removed and we are freed and at liberty again. Yet after making this very point, Paul did about the same thing that James did here. We must not allow sin to reign, but must put it to death every time and everywhere we see it. We must be careful with both our words and our deeds.

*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. Rom. 6:12-14  
For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Rom. 8:2-3*

Being free from the law of sin and death because of the grace and mercy of God, we need to be trying even harder than Israel ever did to remove these words and deeds from our lives. The law of liberty is no less binding and no less severe on its violators than the Old Law was. Wilful sin brings terrible consequences under the law of liberty.

*25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 For if we **sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.** 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of **how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?** 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." Heb. 10:25-30*

Do not be deceived, to whom much is given much is expected. The law of liberty is a much more wonderful law than the law of sin and death, but it is no less harsh and severe upon those who violate it's conditions.

### **13 For judgment is without mercy**

For the third time in four verses James again used a "for" which is the Greek term - *gar by the use of this particle, either the reason and cause of a foregoing statement is added, or some previous declaration is explained.* As the Holy Spirit now concludes this section and moves on to the next, He draws this as the final conclusion. Somehow, judgment with or without mercy is the reason, cause, and explanation of the entire section. Remembering the context, we have a poor man who was treated without mercy and therefore a rich man who received only preferential treatment of bias and partiality. There was no mercy for either. The poor man was judged wanting based on his poverty and told to sit under the footstool and the rich man was treated with great honor without any true basis. Both acts of partiality were clearly "*judgment without mercy.*" They left the impression that the Christians who had made such assessments were revealing how God felt when they were not. The only safe judgments Christians are allowed to make are the ones God has already made. If God has told us how to feel and conclude based on conduct or belief then we are safe to treat them exactly as God has commanded, but if God has said nothing about it and we are going out on our own, then we must use mercy instead of judgment.

It is important that we ask why mercy is lacking whenever partiality is shown. As noted above, Christians are bound by God's commands on how to treat others and therefore the treatment they give should be understood as the manner God sees them. Hence if the Christian treats someone in a way that gives them the wrong impression of their true spiritual condition, they are doing a terrible thing. God strongly condemned the false prophets and prophetesses in Israel because through their preaching those who should have been condemned were not and those who were righteous were treated with contempt. When that happened those who might have been turned from evil were left in sin, while the righteous who should have been strengthened were not.

*But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. Jer. 23:20*

*"Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life. 23 Therefore you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I am the Lord." Ezek. 13:22-23*

All of this has to be factored into all of the judgments we make. Our judgments must perfectly

mirror those of the Lord, giving mercy to those He wants to receive it exactly as He demanded. Once we understand these principles, then we can move to the much bigger picture. This passage is true in the context of what was described above, but Jesus used it in a much bigger context.

*“Do not judge lest you be judged. 2 “For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Mt. 7:1-2*

*“And do not judge and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. Lk. 6:37*

*“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Mt. 5:7*

*“Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?” Mt. 18:33*

These passages teach that our manner of judgment is not only seen as making us partial or impartial and thus righteous or unrighteous, but the coming day of judgment is greatly affected by each judgment that we make. Our judgment will be based on how we judged others. Jesus made that very clear when He said, *“For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.”* This is why Jesus included mercy as one of the weightier matters of the law, and demanded that we be merciful as our Heavenly Father is merciful.

*“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. Mt. 23:23*

*“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Lk. 1:50*

God will judge us with the same judgement we use in our judgment of others. If we judge harshly, He will judge us harshly. If we judge with mercy, He will judge with mercy. If we show great mercy, He will show us great mercy. But if we show no mercy then we will receive no mercy.

**merciless to the one who has shown no mercy;**

Judgement will be merciless. Mercy It will be completely absent from our judgement, like a vacuum it will all have been sucked away and by our own actions and decisions. This is the meaning when the alpha-privative is placed before the term mercy. God’s judgment will have absolutely no mercy if we have not shown mercy.

*aneleos* (an-el'e-os); This word contains the alpha privative (negation, See NT:1) with *eleos* (See NT:1656); found only in James 2:13: merciless, without mercy, without pity. (Strong's Numbers and Concordance. NT 314a)

*aneleos* ... pertaining to the lack of mercy or the refusal to be merciful - 'merciless, unmerciful.'

*aneleos* 'for he will be unmerciful when he judges the person who has not shown mercy' James 2:13. (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT 415a)

There is no way to misunderstand this. If we do not show mercy in our judgment then our judgment will have no mercy.

**mercy triumphs over judgment (NKJV, NAS, ESV) mercy glorieth (rejoiceth -KJV) against judgment. ASV**

This is a very difficult phrase to unravel, because of the term *“triumph”* *“glory”* or *“rejoice.”* Taken too far and mercy would overthrow judgment so that we could not deal with sin in the church. The term *“triumph”* met with different treatment for two reasons. First, it is not found in the original language, and second, it is only used three times in the NT and not enough to give us a clear ability to fully define it.

*katakauchaomai* ... a strengthened form of No. 1 (*kata*, intensive), signifies "to boast against, exult over," Rom 11:18, (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:2

*“katakauchaomai... prop. to glory against, to exult over, to boast one's self to the injury of(a person or thing... mercy boast itself superior to judgement, i.e. full of glad confidence has no fear of judgement...”* (Thayer, 331; 2620)

*katakauchaomai* ... to have greater power or potential than - 'to be more powerful than, to triumph over.' ... 'mercy is more powerful than judgment' or 'mercy triumphs over judgment' James 2:13.

(Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon, NT:2620 )

*katakauchaomai* ... a: to boast about something by downgrading something else - 'to boast against, to degrade.' ... 'you must not boast and in so doing degrade the branches' Rom 11:18. In many languages it may not be possible to use an expression such as 'to boast against.' (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon, NT:2620 )

*katakauchomai* ... is found only in biblical and Christian writings. It brings out strongly the element of comparative superiority expressed in boasting, "to boast in triumphant comparison with others." (Kittel, TWDNT; NT 2620)

Regardless of whether we understand the term as boast, triumph, comparative superiority, or "greater potential, it all works out to the same basic idea that mercy has a greater power and greater significance than judgment. But how we are to take it is obvious. Any understanding that mercy is greater than judgement that would nullify or lessen the power of the judgment day on the great day and even in every day life would be a misinterpretation.

Yet in times of doubt, mercy is always the better choice. We know this is true because God always demanded that if there was only one witness even if the guilt was known and easy to prove because of the veracity of that one witness, it was to be mercifully left to God. If there is any doubt of what to do it is always better to leave it to God to take care of on the day of judgment. If we take the scriptures just a pinch too far, it will be terrible on the day of judgment. When in doubt, leave it to God and leave them to make their own decisions.

*Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. Deut. 17:6*

*"One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. Deut. 19:15*

Second, When situations arise where two laws must collide, the best course is to show mercy and leave it to God. This is what got the Pharisees in trouble.

*Or have you not read in the law that **on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?** 6 Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. 7 **But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. Matt 12:5-7***

*Then He said to them, **"What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12 Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? **Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.**" Mt. 12:11-13***

*And the Pharisees said to Him, **"Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" 25 But He said to them, **"Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: 26 how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?" 27 And He said to them, **"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."** Mark 2:24-28*****

*Jesus answered and said to them, **"I did one work, and you all marvel. 22 **Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? 24 **Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.**" John 7:21-24*****

When the laws of father and mother and the laws of vows collided, the best choice was mercy. Jesus also condemned them for doing many other things like this.

*9 He said to them, **"All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, **'Honor your father and your mother';** and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, **"Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban" — ' (that is, a gift to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13 **making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. **And many such things you do.**" Mark 7:9-13*******

More to the point of what James is dealing with here is His condemnation of the Pharisees when they were falsely charging him almost exactly as the false assessments here:

*And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, **"Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, **"Those who are well have no*****

*need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."* Matt 9:11-13

Hence in many situations, the best choice is mercy. When we are not sure, we must err to the side of mercy because it will always triumph over judgment. But if there is no conflict and we must set aside God's judgment in order to show mercy, then it is folly to set it aside and call that mercy.

## Faith without works is dead

The Holy Spirit expressly revealed that some would fall away from the faith.

*But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; 3 forbidding to marry, (and commanding) to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth.*

*4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it be received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer. 1Tim. 4:1-5 (ASV)*

Although Paul, and later John and Peter, gave some details, many of the details of the falling away have only come out after the fact. This falling away that forbid marriage and commanded to abstain from meats was literally fulfilled by Roman Catholicism's celibacy of priests and nuns, and demand that meats be abstained from on Fridays. (It is interesting to note that they have already rejected the latter and are now in the process of re-evaluating the former). Yet we know from the history of the churches that the damage done by Catholicism was not simply to its followers, but also to the many denominations that now call themselves "Protestants." The influence of Catholicism on the Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian churches is clearly documented in history. Some influences like Infant baptism, kept them the same while others like the teachings of the Catholic church on works led Luther who was a priest to first seek to reform the church within and later after he was excommunicated to seek to reform it from without.

It was his battle with Johann Tetzel's selling of indulgences that led to a visit to the Pope and his excommunication from the Catholic church and the death sentence being passed upon him. From that time onward he worked tirelessly to prove that the Catholic church was in error on this point and that his own teaching that we are saved by faith alone was correct. At some point in that period, he concluded and wrote that in his early translation of the Bible into German:

Luthers Quotes:

**"Although it would be possible to SAVE the epistle by a gloss giving it a correct explanation of Justification here ascribed to works, it is impossible to deny that it does refer Moses word in Genesis: 15 (which speaks not of Abraham's works but of his faith , just as Paul makes plain in Romans 4) to Abraham's works. This defect proves that the epistle is not of Apostolic provenance."** (Luther, Preface to the Epistle of St. James, German Translation of Bible, 1522)

**"In sum, he wished to guard against those who depended on faith without going on to works, but he [St. James] had neither the spirit nor the thought nor the eloquence equal to the task."** (Luther, 1522, preface of James)

**"He does violence to Scripture and so contradicts Paul and all scripture."** (Luther, 1522 German Translation, Preface to James)

**"I therefore refuse him [James] a place among the writers of the true canon of my bible"** (Luther, 1522 Translation, Preface to James)

**"Hence, although I value the book, yet it is NOT essential to reckon it among the canonical books that lay the foundation of faith."** (Luther, 1522 German Translation, Preface to Jude)

Comparing the Epistles of Paul to the Romans and to Galatians with the Epistle of James, Luther states: **"In comparison with these, the Epistle of James is an Epistle full of straw."** (Luther, German Translation of the Bible, 1522, preface to Romans)

So out of the great apostasy and reformation movement has come a general view that James words here are not worthy of being accepted at face value and that Paul's writings and James writings cannot be harmonized.

Yet that is the very duty and obligation of the Christian! He must harmonize and make all Scripture fit. If Paul's words have been taken to such an extreme that they "contradict" other writings, then the problem is not Paul and James it is the way Paul is being used.

As Peter warned at the conclusion of his epistle, ignorant and unstedfast men would twist and wrest Scriptures to their own destruction. He also warned that since we know this beforehand we need to beware and be watching for it.

*Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation — as also our*

*beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 2Pet. 3:14-18*

Few areas have been as twisted and tortured as these. The origins of these ideas are probably lost to us now, but the religious world has been torn for centuries over the subject of grace and works. It was his inability to grasp this issue that caused Martin Luther to reject the book of James as an inspired epistle. What James wrote in this section could not fit into his mind filled with the theories of his day.

The question is very simple and straightforward. We have to harmonize what Paul said in Romans with what James said here. Once we see the basic idea of what James is trying to say it is not that difficult to do it, but at that time with all the other things Luther was dealing with, he could not see it. One interesting side note is that we are told did not repeat these quotes in his next edition of his translation. Perhaps he was regretting the strength of what he had said. But no retraction was ever made so we do not know what Luther would have done with James if he had been given enough time to study it further.

There is no contradiction between Paul and James. Paul was speaking of works without faith and works with faith. Can a man be saved by his works alone without any need of faith? His point in Romans is that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but there was still a chance for those men and women who would trust in Jesus and obey the gospel. With human effort and merit removed, the only thing left is obedience of the gospel and submission to God. That is what Paul is affirming!

*Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of faith. 28 We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Rom. 3:27-28*

*for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, (it is) the gift of God; 9 not of works, that no man should glory. Eph. 2:8-9*

*But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, 5 not by works (done) in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, Titus 3:4-5*

James was not speaking from Paul's perspective, either in matter of time or the scope of the faith. Paul was writing to those who have not yet obeyed the gospel warning them that it is the only means left to them and therefore their only hope. They were relying on the Law of Moses which required perfect obedience (perfect works), but not even Abraham or David expected to be saved in that way (Rom. 4). Israel must leave the Law of Moses and put their faith in Jesus or all doors to salvation would be closed to them forever.

James was speaking to those who have obeyed the gospel and are under the "perfect law of liberty." They have already rejected the notion of Israel that they can be saved by the Law of Moses and have accepted Jesus as Lord and Christ. He wanted to discuss two levels of faith within the gospel, not one outside and one within as Paul.

James was not speaking of different types of faith, or of different objects of faith, both of the individuals involved in the discussion have the same type of faith. James was not dealing with one who believed and one who did not believe. He was speaking about two Christians who both have faith in the Lord, but one has a faith that prompts him to do everything God demands to be done, and the other has a faith, that allows him to trust only in his faith and not do any of the things God has demanded.

Here we have two of the greatest concepts in the OT and NT Scriptures, and one of the greatest areas of controversy in the religious world. For God to take this much space(13 verses) on a subject so simple and obvious seems to indicate that He knew this would become a problem area. Even with these clear verses it is still a great controversy and many ignore His plain teaching here.

The theories of Luther and Calvin have come down into the denominations today with the idea

that man's works have no basis in our salvation and if we make our works any part of salvation we are wrong. Although they base these theories on certain passages of Paul, they must be carried too far. The main passages that are used to base these upon are:

Since James made it very clear that faith without works is dead, Paul could not possibly be saying the opposite. There is no way to misunderstand James, but there is a way to misunderstand Paul. It is of the highest importance when we have the inspired words of James and Peter and God's warning that Paul's words will be twisted to their own destruction that we carefully evaluate where we stand on this issue.

#### **14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?**

We see the scope and nature of the faith James describes in his very first verse. His simple question centers on whether two people who have the exact same faith in scope but a different view of how that faith is to influence their life.

Some of the later translations have softened the term "profit" which is used in the KJV; NKJV and ASV) to "*What use is it?*" (NASB); "*What good is it?*" (ESV; NIV), but the definition of the term makes it clear that "profit" is exactly what James said.

*ophelos...* (*ophello* to increase), *advantage, profit...*" (Thayer, 469; 3786)

*ophelos...* pertaining to a benefit to be derived from some object, event, or state - 'advantage, benefit, beneficial.' (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:3786)

His question is, what is the advantage or benefit, or what is the profit and value of such a faith. If you have two men, one who has no faith, and the other who has faith but no works, is there any use, profit or advantage to the faith of the man who does not have any works.

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony...6 But 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 diligently seek Him.*

Heb. 11:1, 6

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17*

We have two men here who both have this faith, but adding a third helps us see the question in its full value. First, we have a godly man who sees every word of God as being of the highest importance and as soon as he reads anything God has asked him to do, his response is to do exactly and everything God has said to the best of his ability. Next to him is the man who has obeyed the gospel, but sees no need to make any of the changes to his life. So if we then introduce a third man, the worldly minded man who has no faith in Christ and therefore makes no efforts to obey him. What is the profit of the man who still is doing exactly what the worldly minded man is doing. He is making no changes and is still living identically to that man who never obeyed the gospel at all. What is the profit to that faith? Is there any benefit or profit to it since it has not led to a single change in the conduct of that man?

Since there is nothing in the definition of the term "*works*" that changes any part of the controversy between Paul and James, the definition only helps outline the scope of James' question.

*ergon...* 1. *business, employment, that with which anyone is occupied...* 2. *any product whatever, any thing accomplished by hand, art, industry, mind...* 3. *an act, deed, thing done: ...*" (Thayer, p. 248; 2041)

*ergon ... mind your own business, 1. in II. mostly of deeds of war, to engage in battle, ... 2. of works of industry, tilled lands, fields, farms, Hom.; the tilled lands of Ithaca, .... then, generally, property, wealth, possessions, ... b. of women's work, weaving, c. of other occupations, fishing, as a way of life, Od.; ... also of all kinds of works, such as mines, iron-works, ... 3. a hard piece of work, a hard task, ... 4. a deed, action, often, ... deed, not word,..."* (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon.

Works are the things with which we occupy ourselves, the products we produce by hand or mind, the acts, deeds and things we do. Hence the very essence of the question posed is, can a man have conviction in the existence in God, belief that Jesus is the Messiah and that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation but have nothing to show for it. There is absolutely not effect on what he occupied himself with. NO product of hand and mind! NO impact on his acts, deeds and things done! If he were a soldier there is no warfare, if a farmer no tilled land, no

results at all. Is there any value to such a faith?

James doesn't even answer the question because the answer is obvious. There is no profit in that type of faith. In each of the examples God gave in Hebrews 11, it was by faith that they all did something! Their works were obvious. There is no one anywhere in the Scriptures whose faith did not get them to do something.

### **Can that faith save him?**

Although the term "that" is added by the translators, since he is referring back to the second man, it is necessary for us to make the proper application in English. That faith is the second faith, the faith without works. Can that faith save? First the term "can" is much fuller in Greek than our own English term.

*"dunamai... to be able, have power, whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favorable circumstances, or by permission of law or custom... to be able to do something... to be able, capable, strong, powerful..."* (Thayer, p. 158-159; 1410)

Hence does the quality of faith spoken of above have the power and ability to save? Does it have the capability? Is it strong and powerful enough? To save, is it able, capable of doing this? His term for "save" is the universal term for salvation, it is used over a hundred times in the NT Scriptures.

*"sozo... to save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction (opp. to apollumi)..."*

a. *univ., tina ... one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one (from perishing) e. g. one suffering from disease to make well, heal, restore to health: to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save(i.e.to rescue)...* b. *to save in the technical biblical sense; negatively, to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment,... to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance..."* (Thayer, p. 610-611; 4982)

That the salvation of the gospel is based upon faith is so obvious it need not be proven. It was the theme of Romans and the essence of the reason the gospel can save.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Rom 1:16-17*

*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, 1Th. 2:13*

Yet James question doesn't center on faith, but on "that faith." What James asked is if faith doesn't have any affect on the productions of the man's life, can it save? Can it bring about the salvation God promised? The literal way that James presents the question is:

*"not is able the faith to save him, is it?"*

His question demanded a negative answer. This quality of faith cannot save anyone can it? Yet since not all will not know how to answer that question, The Holy Spirit follows it up with a parable that perfectly fits the circumstances.

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

James is careful to leave nothing to chance here. The parameters of the illustration he gives offer no valid excuse. A brother or sister here could be either a blood relative, or a fellow Christian. Both of these are clearly within the responsibility of each of us. No one having such a brother or sister could legitimately claim they had no obligation here.

*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. 1 Tim 5:8*

*And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. Gal. 6:9-10*

Yet these passages barely scratch the surface. The parable of the good Samaritan makes everyone our neighbor.

*Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. Lk. 10:31-35*

Jesus Himself spoke strongly about those who do not help their brethren in times of need.

*Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Mt. 25:34-40*

What followed was the conversation with those who had done nothing and Jesus made it clear it did not bring salvation.

*"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' ... 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, Mt. 25:41-46*

So the parable has a great magnitude that no one who knows the Lord's teaching on this subject could miss.

**16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,"**

After all those passages above, which category do we want to be placed? Here as above with faith, the statement and the sentiment behind it are perfect. The need was recognized, they needed warmth either from clothing or shelter, and they needed food. The person with the obligation to help them recognized the need to help them and even expressed his own desire that they gain both. The feelings are right, the words of comfort are right. Everything up to this point is just exactly what it ought to be.

**and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body,**

The desire and obligation do not lead to a resolution of the problem. You see the need and acknowledge the need, but you do nothing to alleviate the problem. The person is still naked, and destitute of food, and the saint has only expressed a sincere desire that the person gets what they need, but nothing more is done for them. They part company with his wish for their being helped, but with no works. No deed or product comes from these wonderful feelings. What was the profit of his good wishes? Would that lead to any commendation from the Lord. He did nothing. The feelings only made the fact that he did nothing worse because he knew:

*And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. Lk. 12:47-48*

**what use is that?**

James repeats the exact same term from verse 14 *ophelos... (ophello to increase), advantage, profit...* What is the advantage or benefit, or what is the profit and value of such words and sentiments? So now we have another comparison. A Christian who desires the well being of his brethren but who will not do anything about it and a brother who not only desires the well being of his brother, but has the works to go along with it. So now we again add that third person. This time it is a person who doesn't care at all about the brother and does not wish them well. What makes the person who cares any better than the one who does not? What benefit did the one who expressed a desire and concern give to the one in need?

Absolutely nothing! If anything, the one who expressed the concern without doing anything about it is even worse, because he knew and did nothing.

**17 Thus also faith by itself,**

The term translated "thus" is the adverb "*houto... in this manner, thus, so,*" It could be translated thusly, or in the same manner. James is directly tying the illustration he has just given about the good wishes of someone but with no help being worthless to the statement he is about to make. It is like putting an equal sign between the two. Faith without works is equal to telling someone to be warmed and filled without actually helping them.

There is an ambiguity in the text that allows the term “by itself” to be placed either right next to faith as it is in the NKJV or to be placed after the term dead at the end of the sentence. Each translation chose its own way, but for most of them, it all works out to the faith being by itself. Only the ASV makes it “*dead in itself*,” meaning the faith is dead in itself. The rest of them, no matter where they placed it, all have it refer back to the faith.

*Even so faith, if it have not works, is **dead in itself**.* (ASV)

*Even so faith, if it has no works, is **dead, being by itself**.* (NASU)

*So also **faith by itself**, if it does not have works, is dead.* (ESV)

*In the same way, **faith by itself**, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* (NIV)

*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is **dead, being alone**.* (KJV)

*So also faith, if it does not have works, **by itself** is destitute of power (inoperative, dead).* (AMP)

There is some ambiguity in the expression by itself. Does it qualify faith or dead? The position of the Greek makes either a possibility. ASV takes it with dead, thus “is dead in itself.” It is more probable that the phrase is placed at the end for emphasis but is intended to be taken with faith, thus “faith alone” (KJV), or faith by itself (RSV, so also NRSV and many others). In this case, the clause *if it has no works is to be understood as an amplification of by itself*. (UBS New Testament Handbook Series)

Since in the context of the section, both are affirmed, it makes no difference doctrinally which one we choose. Truly, alone and by itself faith (because it has no works), is dead. At the same time faith without works is truly dead in itself (it has no life — “*as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*” (Jas. 2:26)

**if it does not have works, is dead.**

The term “if ... not” are often used together in a sentence where the verb is in the subjunctive mood.

The subjunctive takes “*ei*” and always changes it to “*ean*” because the subjunctive is a mood of contingency and possibility.

“*ean*... I. a conditional particle(derived from *ei an*), which makes reference to time and to experience, introducing something future, but not determining, before the event, whether it is certainly to take place; *if, in case, ...* (Thayer, p. 162-163; 1437)

This is a possibility for each individual, but can only be determined at the time by the individual. If I have no works, then I have fulfilled this condition and my faith is dead.

The same is also true of “*ou*” “and “*me*.” “*ou*” is only used in the indicative and “*me*” in the subjunctive, optative and imperative.

*me mh/ not*, is the negative of thought, as *ou* of statement, i.e. *me* says that one thinks a thing is not, *ou* that it is not. The same differences hold for all compounds of *me* and *ou* ... in Independent sentences, 1. with Imperative ... 2. with Subjunctive ... 3. with Optative. to express a wish that a thing may not happen, ...” (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT 3361)

*me* a particle of negation, which differs from *ou* (which is always an adverb) in that ***ou* denies the thing itself (or to speak technically, denies simply, absolutely, categorically, directly, objectively), but *me* denies the thought of the thing, or the thing according to the judgment, opinion, will, purpose, preference, of someone (hence, as we say technically, indirectly, hypothetically, subjectively)**. This distinction holds also of the compounds *oudeis medeis ...*” (Thayer’s, NT: 3361)

Hence should we find ourselves in the position at anytime where in “*the judgment, opinion, will, purpose, preference, of someone*,” there are no works, we must realize that this is the condition we are in. We have a “*dead*” faith.

“*nekros... dead*, i. e. 1. prop. a. *one that has breathed his last, lifeless*:... hyperbolically and proleptically i. q. as if already dead, sure to die, destined inevitably to die... b. *deceased, departed, one whose soul is in Hades*... c. *destitute of life, without life, inanimate*... 2. trop. a. [spiritually dead i. e.] *destitute of a life that recognizes and is devoted to God, because given up to trespasses and sins; inactive as respects doing right*... b. univ. *destitute of force or power, inactive, inoperative*...” (Thayer, p. 424; 3498)

Faith without works is dead, lifeless, destitute of life, destitute of force or power, inactive and inoperative. The Spirit of God is very forceful here. God has no respect and no pleasure in a faith that has no works. It truly is a dead faith if it produces nothing in the life of the one who

possesses it. It doesn't matter how intense it is, how full and knowledgeable it might be, if the faith that is all by itself in the heart of the person who possesses does not get some works to go with it has a faith that is dead regardless of how he/she might feel about it.

There are so many verses that teach this that it is amazing that people still affirm it, but such is the nature of man and the tenacious evil of an accepted false doctrine.

**18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works."**

This has always been a confusing statement. There are 3 possible ways to interpret the statement.

1. "Someone" is a false teacher who comes to the readers of epistle and tells them that it is fine for James to have his works while they have their faith.
2. "Someone" is a person arguing with James in their own mind as they read the epistle. James has his faith while the person arguing with James has works.
3. "Someone" is a person who feels that some have faith and some (James) has works.

Either of the first two would be the most likely. Because either by someone else trying to persuade us (a false teacher), or by our own persuasion and conclusion, someone has decided that James can only speak for himself and not for all. It was made clear in the Scriptures that we are saved by faith, and that is enough. Faith in Jesus is a work and no greater work could we ever do!

*Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." Jn. 6:28-29*

So I will have my faith (which is a work) and James can have his works.

James has works, and that is good and wonderful since he thinks they are so important, but you have faith and that is just as important. This is the central theme of the argument as James seeks to destroy it. If the argument that James has his works and you have your faith and both of you have the right idea appeals to us, or we have actually used it to defend our conscience in times when these things are discussed, then we need to deal with the following point:

**show me your faith without your works,**

If you have a faith that really matters, then you are going to be able to show it. You are going to be able to "show" what it has done for you. What changes it has made in your life.

*"deiknuni... Sept. mostly for... to show, exhibit; 1. prop. to show i.e. expose to the eyes... w. metaph. a. to give the evidence or proof of a thing... b. to show by words, to teach..." (Thayer, 126-127; 1166)*

The Holy Spirit inspiring James is both clear and forceful! Those who have faith will be able to show it. They will be able to exhibit it, and to give the evidence or proof that they have it. The Spirit of God can be so forceful here because when true faith is born in the heart of any man or woman, it will begin to produce tangible changes. It will lead to repentance, confession of our faith and baptism. It will lead to tangible changes in our life as our old deeds are reprov'd and new deeds are given to replace them. The first day of the week becomes the special day "do this in remembrance of me." Our life is now filled with prayer, with confession of sins and other clear works that are different than what was done before we had faith. Without these and all the other works that God has commanded of those who really believe Jesus is Lord, our faith is not only dead, we can't even prove that it exists. You can't show faith only. It is "better felt than told," It is something that no one can question.

**and I will show you my faith by my works."**

James on the other hand will list his works that he has done as a result of his faith. He can begin with repentance, confession and baptism. He can then move to attendance of services, learning, studying, and growing. Producing the fruits of the spirit (Gal 5) adding to his faith, virtue, knowledge, etc. (II Pet 1). The longer the list, the greater the faith. This is the entire point of how God revealed the faith of the ancients (elders) listed in Hebrews 11. By faith Abel..., Noah..., Abraham..., Sarah..., etc. No one cannot show faith without works, but anyone with works can show and exhibit his faith.

There are many passages in Scripture to bear our what James has said here.

**Commands and Explanations of Good Works**

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **good works** and glorify your Father in heaven. Mt. 5:15-16

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their **deeds** were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his **deeds** should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his **deeds** may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." Jn. 3:18-21

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the **work** of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1Cor. 15:58

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

well reported for **good works**: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every **good work**. 1Tim. 5:10

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches; but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be **rich in good works**, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1Tim. 6:17-19

Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every **good work**. 2Tim. 2:21-22

that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every **good work**. 2Tim. 3:17 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of **good works**; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. Titus 2:7-8

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

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every **good work**, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. Titus 3:1-3

This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain **good works**. These things are good and profitable to men. Titus 3:8

And let our people also learn to maintain **good works**, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful. Titus 3:14

having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your **good works** which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. 1Pet. 2:12

## Zealous of Good Works

**Introduction:** Purchasing an expensive product, like a computer or a car, requires a careful assessment. Do we really need it and will it truly fulfill that need? If we conclude it is an important need and resolve that this product will fulfill it, it is easy to justify the purchase. Yet only if the product completely meets our expectations, will there be a great sense of satisfaction.

**Although the circumstances are different, the attitude we hold toward such a purchase is a fairly accurate picture (parable) of how Jesus felt purchasing the church (Acts 20:28).** There was never a more expensive purchase. Both Isaiah (Isa. 53) and Paul explain the cost. First, He "existed in the form of God," then "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men." Finally "He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Phil. 2:6-9).

**Those in the church are what Jesus gained in the transaction. He had the same expectations we do.** He made it very clear what will happen if we don't meet them: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of My mouth." (Rev. 3:15-17).

**Jesus "gave Himself for us" to "redeem us from all iniquity. ... "purify unto himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works."** When we break down this passage:

we see exactly what Jesus expected when He purchased us to be His own possession. This is very similar to Paul's words to the Corinthians: "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body." (1Cor. 6:19-20). We glorify God in our body when we are "zealous of good works." This was the need and it is what we were purchased to fulfill: "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, **zealous for good works**. ... 3:8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that **those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works**. These things are good and profitable to men. ... 14 And let our people also **learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful**. (Titus 2:14-15; 3:8, 14)

**Because of their importance we would be wise to carefully consider the meaning of the three attitudes toward good works.**

**Zealous:** "most eagerly desirous of," "striving after," "an object of warm interest" "an emotion leading to action."

**Careful** "to give heed," "take thought," "concentrate upon," "think with concern," "pay attention," "be cautious about," "attend," "care about," "regard."

**Maintain:** "take the lead" "preside over," "lead," "direct," "care for," "sponsor," "arrange," "apply oneself to."

**The two parables and prophecy of future judgment in Matthew 25 describe and explain how these three terms will manifest themselves.** In the first parable, the five wise virgins were zealous, careful and taking the lead in their preparations and had more than enough oil. The five foolish virgins did not eagerly strive after what they knew was expected and were condemned. In the second, three men were given the means and opportunity to manifest stewardship. The first two were wise, exhibiting their "warm interest" in properly using the talents. But the third squandered every opportunity "to think with concern" about the future reckoning.

In His prophecy of the judgment day, two groups are set before Him. One on the right and one on the left. His Praise and condemnation were based entirely on good works:

*Then the King will say to those on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was **hungry** and you **gave Me food**; I was **thirsty** and you **gave Me drink**; I was a **stranger** and you **took Me in**; 36 I was **naked** and you **clothed Me**; I was **sick** and you **visited Me**; I was **in prison** and you **came to Me**.'*

He concluded with the condemnation of those who did not do these things.

*Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was **hungry** and you **gave Me no food**; I was **thirsty** and you **gave Me no drink**; 43 I was a **stranger** and you **did not take Me in**, **naked** and you **did not clothe Me**, **sick and in prison** and you **did not visit Me**.' (Mt. 25:34-43).*

Have we taken these things to heart? These are things to be "affirmed constantly" and "learned." When announcements are made about the sick or those in need of prayers, those who are zealous and careful will make notes and take the opportunity to add another good work to bring before the Lord. What good works did we do this week that we will bring before our God on the final day?

In the parable of the talents, God "gave to each according to his own ability." As with all giving, "if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have. (2Cor. 8:12). So God's expectations are clear.

**God used a human body for us to use to assess our own abilities and seek for opportunities. Every part just needs to do its share.** "The whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." (Eph. 4:16).

**Each member of the body has its own function. We all have gifts that differ.** So God wants us to make an assessment of our own abilities and then use them.

“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or **ministry**, let us **use it in our ministering**; he who **teaches, in teaching**; 8 he who **exhorts, in exhortation**; he who **gives, with liberality**; he who **leads, with diligence**; he who **shows mercy, with cheerfulness**.” (Rom 12:4-8).

In order to be good stewards, we have to take the gifts we have received and minister it one to another. God only asks that we *minister as with the ability God supplies.*”

“And above all things have **fervent love for one another**, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” 9 **Be hospitable** to one another without grumbling. 10 **As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards** of the manifold grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.” (1Pet. 4:8-11).

**Conclusion:** The fleeting years of life are passing quickly. What of our own good works? Are we zealous, with “eager desire and “earnest strivings?” Are we careful, “thinking with concern,” and “paying attention?” Are we maintaining, “arranging,” “applying ourselves to” these good works; that we may not be unfruitful? We can’t grow weary in these things.

2 **Bear one another’s burdens**, and so **fulfill the law of Christ**. ... 9 **And let us not grow weary while doing good**, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 **Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all**, especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Gal. 6:2,9-10).

“It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 35 Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming — in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning — 36 lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” (Mk. 13:34-37).

### Full of Good Works

**Introduction:** “At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was **full of good works** and charitable deeds which she did” (Acts 9:36-43). Her example is exactly what Paul later told Titus to do as “**a pattern of good works**.” Jesus died to “purify for Himself His own special people, **zealous for good works**” and Dorcas showed exactly how this could be done. All should “**affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works**” as Dorcas did. She exemplified the duty to “let our people also learn to **maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful**.” (Titus 2:7,14; 3:8, 14).

**Are we full of “good works” like Dorcas?** Most of us have made prayer and reading Scripture daily priorities and they are important enough that we monitor them. Yet are we as “zealous for good works” as we are for these? Evangelists are to “affirm constantly” that believers in God should be “careful — meaning take care, concentrate upon, consider, reflect, take thought, give heed) to their “good works.” Are we as careful as Dorcas to be full of them? In the same way we flee every temptation and confess every sin, we must also concentrate on “maintaining good works”

Jesus told us that “**good works**” are necessary for our salvation. “His own special people” **must be** “zealous of good works:”

“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. ... 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You... 40 Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’” (Mt. 25:31-45)

**This is exactly what Dorcas was doing for the widows in Joppa.** She was clothing “His brethren.” Jesus’ praise was for those disciples who gave Him food, drink, shelter, clothing, and

visitation. Yet no Christian ever saw Jesus in the flesh. He was at God's right hand the day the church began. Hence they asked, "*Lord, when did we see You?*" His answer: Any good work done to even "**the least of My brethren you did it to Me.**" Who are His brethren? "*For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.*" His brethren are those who are being sanctified as Christians; (Heb. 2:11).

**Our entrance into the eternal kingdom will be based on our "good works"** If we are not zealous for them and careful to maintain them. We are "*unfruitful*" and "**cursed of My Father.**"

*"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; ... 45 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'*

**When Dorcas died, "all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them."** She had recognized the needs of the widows and had busily fulfilled it with a skill she possessed and wanted to share in the church.

**She shared her gifts with those who needed them.** That is exactly what good works are! We take our gifts and serve our brethren with them: "*according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*" and "*Having, then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them*" (1Pet. 4:10; Rom. 12:6)

**Every local church is a body of Christ filled with Jesus' brethren.** Our gifts(time, money, ability, sacrifices, etc.) must not be squandered or we will be unfruitful. We must share them with our brethren. Just as the garments Dorcas made blessed the church at Joppa, making it a happier and healthier body, so it is today. So what gifts are we ministering to those in our local church? Those who "*minister*" and "*use*" their gifts for the brethren are doing it to Jesus. Dorcas "*ministered*" and "*used*" her gifts. She was so full of good works that when she died the widows wept at her loss. Would anyone weep after our death because the gifts we ministered and used were gone? Will we be sorely missed?

## Good Works

*God, who is rich in mercy, ... even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ... For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:1-10).*

**Introduction:** The power God wrought when we obeyed the gospel(Rom 1:16), is compared to a resurrection(*we were dead but made alive*) and a creation(*created in Christ*). As "*we were buried with Him through baptism,*" "*just as Christ was raised from the dead,*" "*even so we also should walk in newness of life*" (Rom. 6:4-7). God has made clear His purpose in restoring us. We are to "**walk in newness of life**" and do "**good works** God prepared beforehand that we should **walk in them.**" When we fulfill this, we are "*His own special people,*" "**zealous for good works**" because "*those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.*" (Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-8).

God was rich in mercy when He gave us this second chance. We are "*His workmanship*" and "*were created in Christ*" for these "**good works.**" Our gratitude and relief should lead us to be **zealous of,** and **careful to maintain good works.**

**What are these "good works"** God prepared beforehand for us to walk in? The English "*prepared beforehand*" translates a single Greek word: "*Ready in advance,*" "*prepared in advance,*" and "*determined/purposed in advance.*" These are **not good works we devise,** but **good works He prepared!** We will need more than human ingenuity and imagination to do them(1Cor. 2:9-11).

God revealed it will take "**all Scripture given by inspiration of God,**" to be "**thoroughly equipped for every good work**" (2Tim. 3:15-17). Without consulting the Scriptures, we cannot be "*thoroughly prepared,*" "*furnished completely,*" or "*fully qualified.*" David discovered this when he planned the "**good work**" of moving the ark to Jerusalem. Although he thought it good, "*the LORD our God broke out against us.*" Uzzah lost his life, and the ark's travel to Jerusalem was;

stopped, "because we did not consult Him about the proper order" (1Chr. 15:13). Their good work included an ox cart while God's good work required the Kohathites to carry it on their shoulders. This small modification changed the good work into an evil one. We must learn from this and search the Scriptures to assess our good works. Jesus said, only if we do "the will of My Father in heaven," will we escape the condemnation "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Mt. 7:21-23)

In order to "do the will of My Father in heaven," we must first be "**filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.**" Only then can we be equipped and thoroughly prepared to "please Him in all respects." Without this, we are not "**being fruitful in every good work**" (Col. 1:9-11). King Saul was given the good work of punishing the Amalekites for their sins. When he changed (very slightly in his view) what God asked him to do to better suit himself, God rejected him as King and instead sought out "a man after his own heart who would **do all His will.**" (1Sam 15; Acts 14:22). True good works can only be performed when "filled with the **knowledge of His will,**" and in full respectful submission.

The "ordinances of divine service" of the Old Covenant were done away when "Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation" (Heb 9:1, 11). We now have "boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us," and are to "consider one another in order to **stir up love and good works**" (Heb. 10:19-20,24).

**These "good works" can only be found in "the Holy Scriptures"** that "make one wise to salvation." Hence, in order to do the "good works God prepared beforehand," we must consult the blueprints God gave. Even those "who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things," were warned "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain" (Heb. 8:5). Nadab and Abihu lost their lives because the good work God had revealed to them was not done "according to the pattern." He saw it as an insult to His holiness and glory when the "offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them" (Lev. 10:1-3). God not only defines the good works we should walk in, but often gives specific instructions about how they should be carried out. Worship, organization, terms of membership, code of conduct, etc. are all the good works God wants us to walk in.

**Conclusion:** The Most Holy Place was the most beautiful place in the tabernacle. Gold covered walls, "a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen with an artistic design of cherubim," "the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat," and "the ark of the covenant with the tablets of the covenant." (Ex. 26:31; Heb. 9:5). Its value was priceless.

Yet God decreed it only be entered once a year, by one person (the High Priest). The rest of the time it sat empty. While many might consider this a waste, it was God's will, God's good work, that needed to be obeyed. It was priceless as a testimony to God's holiness and served no other purpose. Today when a church building sits idle, some consider it a waste. Yet because it was purchased with the Lord's money, it must be used for the Lord's good works.

Some have done what Saul did, changing the good works to suit themselves, by modifying the building as an eating place. Others have followed Nadab and Abihu and do things that were never commanded, by making this building a place of recreation. Multitudes have followed the bad example of David, not seeking to do God's will after the proper order when they devise other uses. If we are wise, we will remember that God's good works can only be done when we do them after His will, not after our imagination. If we do not do the Father's will, Jesus will say, "I never knew you."

## **19 You believe there is one God.**

Instead of faith, James now uses the verb believe. You actively believe the truth that there is one God. Later even the Holy Spirit will reveal that this is a critical first step.

*But 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 diligently seek Him. Heb 11:6*

Yet that is not the whole story. There is so much more to a "saving" faith than one of the component parts. One must also believe Jesus is Lord, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Those who obey the gospel are saved and those who have not yet obeyed the gospel

are lost. Yet each of these things that are believed leads to another step in our quest to shoulder responsibility and obligation.

The Spirit now makes a comparison that shows the true problem with such a proof.

**You do well; Even the demons believe — and tremble!**

Although they might first conclude this is sincere praise, the conclusion reveals that it is irony or sarcasm. No one would argue that the demons are saved. The demons have a faith in God, but it doesn't do them any good. The use of the demons is proof positive that such faith cannot save. They sought to destroy Jesus every way they could and Jesus said, that as He cast them out He was binding Satan. There is no way demons can be used in anything but an unfavorable light.

**20 But do you want to know, NKJV But are you willing to recognize, NASB**

There are two vocabulary words here that have led to a slight divergence in translation. The first word is often translated either willing or wanting:

*“thelo,... (derived apparently fr. helein with a fuller aspiration, so that it means prop. to seize with the mind; ...) to will, (have in mind,) intend; i.e. 1. to be resolved or determined, to purpose ... 2. to desire, to wish:... 3. i. q. to love foll. by an inf., to like to do a thing, be fond of doing... 4. in imitation of the Hebr. ... to take delight, have pleasure... the will which proceed from inclination...” (Thayer p 285-286; 2309)*

This has led to the divergence of “want” or “will.” What they would read is “Do you have in mind and intend?” “Are you resolved or determined?” “Do you desire or wish?”

The second vocabulary word is their most basic word for learning and knowledge.

*“ginosko... 1. univ. 1. to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of,... 2 to know, understand, perceive, have knowledge of... II in particular ginosko, to become acquainted with, to know, is employed in the N. T. of the knowledge of God and Christ, and of the things relating to them or proceeding from them... In classic usage... ginoskein, distinguished from the rest by its original inchoative force, denotes a discriminating apprehension of external impressions, a knowledge grounded in personal experience ...” (Thayer, p. 117-118; 1097)*

*“ginosko... signifies to be taking in knowledge, to come to know, recognize, understand, or to understand completely... in its past tenses it frequently means to know in the sense of realizing, ... (Vine Vol 2, p. 297-298)*

James combines the active “want and desire” to the aorist “know.” Are you now prepared and desiring to reevaluate your knowledge about this subject and further it? The amount of knowledge that you have has now been augmented with additional information are you now willing to admit into your knowledge the truth that they were wrong and need to repent.

**O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (useless – NASB)?**

With the first three points in the debate now clearly understood, James now moves from gentle teaching to open rebuke and censure. James has shown:

1. Faith without works is like telling someone cold and hungry to be warmed and filled, but give them nothing.
2. Faith without works is dead by itself.
3. Faith without works only makes us like the demons who believe and shudder, but are lost.

When all of this is added to the knowledge they have amassed on this subject, it is now clear that they were vain and foolish when they affirmed that faith alone was enough:

*“kenos,... empty; 1. prop. of places, vessels, etc., which contain nothing... metaph. empty, vain; devoid of truth... 2. of men, empty-handed, without a gift:... metaph. destitute of spiritual wealth, ... 3. metaph. of endeavors, labors, acts, which result in nothing, vain, fruitless, without effect... in vain to no purpose...” (Thayer, p. 343; 2756)*

*kenos outside the NT. ... 1. Lit. "empty," "without content," ... 2. Fig. a. of persons, "hollow," "vain," ... In biblical Gk. the moral element becomes stronger. ... not just foolish and vain but useless and careless persons ... "frothy," "frivolous," ...” (Kittel, TDWNT NT:2756)*

*kenos ... I. of things, empty, opp. to full ... 2. metaph. empty, vain, ... to no purpose, in vain, ... II. of persons, 1. c. gen. void, destitute, bereft, ... Soph.: -empty of wit, empty-headed, (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT 2756)*

In the eyes of God, those who make such arguments become “empty, vain and devoid of truth.” They are “frothy and frivolous” without and substance. Worse of all, they are “empty of wit, or

empty headed." These are all the judgements of God on this doctrine and those who hold it after seeing the truth.

There is only one thing left to do now. They must repent of this doctrine and never preach or teach it again.

There is "some degree of doubt" between the Textus Receptus and the Nestle Aland on which Greek word should be in the text. The Textus Receptus has *nekros* and Nestle's has *argos*. *nekros* was already used in verse 17. If it is repeated it has the same meaning as there, if it is *argos*, then the definition is:

"*argos*... fr. a priv. and *ergon* without work, without labor, doing nothing), *inactive, idle*: a. free from labor, at leisure... b. lazy, shunning the labor which one ought to perform... c. of things from which no profit is derived, although they can and ought to be productive: as of fields, trees, gold and silver... *unprofitable*... (Thayer, p. 72: 692)

*argos* ... (contr. from *a-ergos* ... not working the ground, living without labour, ... then, generally, inactive, slothful, idle, lazy, ... idle at a thing, free from it, 2. of land, lying fallow or untilled, ... of money, unemployed, yielding no return, ... II. pass. not done, left undone, (Liddell and Scott, Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:692)

The KJV/NKJV have translate it "dead." The ASV/NASB translate it barren or useless.

### **21 Was not Abraham our father**

Like most of the passages in the New Testament, Abraham is called "our" father, because God had promised him he would be the father of many nations and the gospel fulfilled that promise.

All who obey the gospel are "like Isaac, children of promise."

**For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal. 3:26-29**

**For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar ... 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband." 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. Gal. 4:22-29**

God's test of Abraham in asking him to offer up Isaac on the altar is the third of three pivotal moments in the chronology of Abraham's life. They are all recorded by the Holy Spirit as examples to us who live as Christians under the New Covenant. Each of them was set forth as something we should imitate and follow. As God revealed to Isaiah, everyone seeking righteousness must look to Abraham and follow his example.

**"Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. 2 Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him." Isa 51:1-2**

Abraham is the rock from which all of us are hewn. Since his faith and life are set forth as examples of greatness in the sight of God we must be of the same substance and quality, we must look to him. If we truly follow after righteousness and truly seek for the Lord, Abraham is the way forward.

**and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Rom 4:21-24**

**just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. Gal 3:6-8**

**Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. James 2:22-24**

It is therefore very important that we know and understand exactly what Abraham did and how God felt about it along with how we too can follow these examples with our own faith and works.

### **1. When God called Abraham went.**

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 11:8-10*

### **2. When God made an Impossible Promise Abraham never wavered.**

*(as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed-- God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." 19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 Now, it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Rom. 4:17-25*

### **3. When God Made an Impossible Demand and He Fulfilled it.**

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. James 2:21-24*

*For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." 15 And so, after*

*he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that, by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. Heb. 6:13-18*

*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him, in a figurative sense. Heb. 11:17-19*

Clearly there is no more important or practical example than that of Abraham. Since his life has been made a template for for all his children, God expects us to be like him.

#### **justified by works**

As one carefully assesses the life of Abraham would we see him as a man of faith alone, or as a man of faith with works? Never was his faith alone. It was always accompanied by the actions God expected of those who have faith. In all three examples above, God tested the quality of the faith by looking at the response and then recording it so we could look at it. When God called Abram, the response of faith was to come out and to go. When God made an impossible promise, faith's response was to never waver or doubt either in word or thought. God's command that Abraham offer up his son as a burnt offering took the greatest faith of all. What else but complete trust in God would lead him to get up the next morning and take Isaac to that mountain?

Since it is faith's works here that are under consideration, James, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, points at the works that faith demands as the point of justification. God "justified"

Abraham by his working faith.

*“dikaioo... 1. prop. to make dikaios; to render righteous or such as he ought to be... 2. to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous,... 3. tina, to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be,... a. with the negative idea predominant, to declare guiltless one accused or who may be accused, acquit of a charge or reproach, ...b. with the positive idea predominant, to judge, declare, pronounce, righteous and therefore acceptable,...”* (Thayer, p. 150; 1344)

God declared Abraham righteous and such as he ought to be on the basis of the works of faith and not on the basis of faith alone without any works. Abraham was declared and made righteous by God on the basis of the strength of his faith. God made him righteous, then showed and exhibited him to be righteous. So the heart of the question James asked proved conclusively that it was not on the basis of faith alone, but on the basis of faith that produced works. This is also made evident by the preposition used.

*“ek... It denotes as well exit or emission out of, as separation from, something with which there has been close connection; opposite to the preposition eis into and en in: from out of, out from, forth from, from... I. of PLACE and 1. univ. of the place from which; from a surrounding or enclosing place.. from the interior of... II of the ORIGIN, SOURCE, CAUSE;.. 5... is used of the cause (whether thing or person) by which the act expressed by the accompanying verb is aided, sustained, effected...”* (Thayer, p. 189; 1537)

The origin, source and cause of justification were the works. The very fact that God asked him to offer Isaac, demanded a work. There was no way for Abraham to pass this test without action. Only by the action of taking Isaac and offering him could Abraham fulfill the conditions God had set for his faith to accomplish.

#### **when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?**

James chose this one specific moment in the life of Abraham. The moment when he reached the top of the mountain, arranged the wood, tied up his son and reached for the knife.

*Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Gen. 22:9-12*

God chose the exact moment. He did not stop Abraham until the knife was in his hand and the decision to obey God had clearly been made and was now being acted upon.

It is clear from the account that there was some faith when he arose the next morning with everything needed to do God's will. But God waited until there was no more opportunities to turn back. Everything needed to be accomplished that was demanded in the command. If Abraham had not gone on the journey, stopped at any point on the journey, refused to go up on the mountain. Did not lay out the wood and tie up Isaac, and at the last moment if he could not reach for the knife, faith would not have been made perfect by the works.

Hence both Paul and James are right. There is no contradiction but complete harmony. Paul made it clear that it was the faith that Abraham had in God that led him to justify:

*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. Rom. 4:1-4*

Abraham did not work to receive justification. He was a sinner just like all the rest of mankind. But God did use his faith. It was when he believed God that he was accounted as a righteous man. James is not even discussing works and faith. He is discussing faith. What kind of faith did Abraham have, is James' question. The clear answer is a faith that had works.

Can we even imagine Abraham telling God He believed him but did not feel it necessary to be obedient to this command? If he had reasoned with God as the man James was speaking about here did could the outcome have been the same? If at any point Abraham had said, my faith should suffice, you are asking too much, the outcome would not have been the same.

It was a gracious act on God's part that caused Him to forgive Abraham on the basis of simply taking his son up on to the top of the mountain to offer him. It manifested the extreme depth of

his faith.

## **22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works,**

Faith and works form a partnership in the heart and life of all true children of Abraham. Nothing has changed. Just as in Abraham's case, the faith "*worked together*" with his works, so also today, God has crafted the gospel to require both inward and outward actions to assure all that they have a working faith.

*"sunergeo... to work together, help in work, be a partner in labor... to put forth power together with and thereby to assist, ... faith (was not inactive but by coworking) caused Abraham to produce works..."* (Thayer, p. 603; 4903)

The two of them become partners in labor, they work together, help in work, put forth power together, and assist one another. Without the faith, no one would work and no work would matter. Without the works, the faith is not strong enough to be called faith. Both must be working together to merit the quality of reward God offered to Abraham. It was precisely because this man by this act became a great example that God selected him to be the father of all the faithful. God knows the quality of faith that makes man righteous and He knows how to develop it throughout our life to reach its highest level. The gospel is the perfect combination of trust and confidence in things that cannot be seen and conviction and submission to the difficult commands that both prove and increase it.

## **and by works faith was made perfect?**

James repeats "*ek*"(see above) to continue to emphasize that the works were the source by which the faith was made perfect. This is what the works do. They are of the highest importance because without them faith cannot be brought to "perfection."

*"teleioo, to make perfect or complete ... 1. to carry through completely; to accomplish, finish, bring to an end... 2. to complete(perfect) i. e. add what is yet wanting in order to render a thing full... 3. to bring to the end (goal proposed... 4. to accomplish, i.e. bring to a close or fulfillment by event..."* (Thayer, p. 618).

While faith is the critical thing and is the most important element in salvation, God added the works to bring this faith to its full completion. Works take the small things that make faith lacking and lead that faith to the perfection necessary to bring salvation. So without the works. faith alone is imperfect. It doesn't have everything necessary to reach the level of power and value to bring about salvation. Hence, is the essence and source of salvation, but it must have the works in order to be perfected as a faith that God is pleased enough with to save us.

## **23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says,**

It was the works that perfected the faith and thus fulfilled the Scripture. "fulfilled" is defined:

*pleroo...1. to make full, to fill, to fill up... to fill to the full... cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally ... 2. to render full, i. e. to complete; a. prop. to fill up to the top...so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim... b. to perfect, consummate... bb. to make complete in every particular; to render perfect... c. to carry into effect, bring to realization, realize; a. of matters of duty, to perform, execute ... bb of sayings, promises, prophecies, to bring to pass, ratify, accomplish; ... hh universally and absolutely, to fulfill, i.e. to cause God's will (as made known in the law)to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfillment..."* (Thayer, p. 517-518; 4137).

Without the works, the Scripture could not have been fulfilled. It is important to realize that the Scripture James quoted was given to Abraham many years earlier. Abraham 86 years old when Ishmael was born and this conversation occurred even before that.

*And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Gen. 15:4-6*

Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born and now Isaac is old enough to carry the wood up the mountain so it is about 20 years later that the words God had given to Abraham were actually brought to their full completion. The point James is making is that these words were absolutely necessary in order for the words spoken at that time to be brought to their full completion.

This is exactly what God teaches in the NT. Jesus teaches that he that believes and is baptized shall be saved. When a man is baptized he is saved. But it is not till after the life is over and it is filled with works of a faithful life up to death (Rev 2:10 that the Scripture is truly fulfilled.

**“And Abraham believed God, and it was accounted (reckoned NASB) to him as righteousness,”**

While Abraham was the first to receive this wonderful pronouncement, it was the basis upon which all men would be saved. Yet it was not brought to its end until Abraham’s faith sacrificed and worked. The term “reckoned” is one of the most important in the Bible:

*“logizomai... [a favorite word with the apostle Paul, being used (exclusive of quotations) some 27 times in his Epp., and only four times in the rest of the N.T.]. 1. ...to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over; hence a. to take into account, to make account of... 2. ... to reckon inwardly, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate,... 3. by reckoning up all the reasons to gather or infer; i.e. a. to consider, take account, weigh, meditate on...” (Thayer p 379)*

God took Abraham’s working faith and accounted, computed, calculated it to be righteousness to Abraham. After man sinned, God knew all men could only be saved by His grace offered through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary. But he was not going to just give it away. Though God could no longer require perfect works as that would disqualify everyone, He could require a hard working faith. The greater the works that faith produced, the more pleased God would be to save that person by grace. Those who’s faith did not motivate them to work were not much different than those who do not believe at all. With no sacrifices and nothing offered, how does that faith differ from those who had no faith at all?

**and he was called the friend of God.**

Because Abraham counted God more important than his own son, and Abraham was willing to sacrifice for God and not simply be a fair weather friend, God drew a wonderful conclusion about him. He was a true friend. God counted Abraham a friend because Abraham allowed his faith to work. The harder our faith prompts us to work and sacrifice, the greater faith we have and the more devoted friend to God we become.

Although God is a friend to everyone, Abraham is the only one who was called the friend of God.

*But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend. Isa. 41:8*

*Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 2 Chr. 20:7*

*And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the “friend of God.” Jas. 2:23*

The inference here is that if we too want to be God’s friend we must make similar decisions to offer similar works to God.

**24 You see that a man is justified by works,**

James now draws his conclusion. After putting forth a direct statement, answering the arguments with the illustration of the futility of wishing someone warmed and filled without works, bluntly stating that faith without works is dead, showing the demons believe and capping it off with Abraham, he now demanded that they acknowledge that he is right. Surely now they “see” it:

*“oraō... 1. to see with the eyes... 2. to see with the mind, to perceive, know... 3. to see i.e. to become acquainted with by experience, to experience ...” (Thayer p 451-452)*

Surely now they must acknowledge what they have seen through these words. These additional facts must change what they now see with the mind, perceive and now know it to be the truth. With these words they ought to be able to see “that.”

*“hoti... I. the substance or contents (of a statement), that; 1. joined to verbs of saying and declaring... II the reason why anything is said to be or to be done, because, since, for that, for, (a causal conjunct. ...)... a. it is added to a speaker’s words to show what ground he gives for his opinion;... b. hoti makes reference to some word or words that precede or immediately follow it...” (Thayer p 458-460; 3754)*

Surely you see the substance of the point. Surely now you will acknowledge that man is justified and made right in the sight of God on the basis of a faith that works and not on the basis of faith

alone.

### **and not by faith alone (only NASB).**

After seeing these additional facts, they can now realize that there can be no justification “out of – ek.” If faith is “alone” there can be no justification.

“monos,... 1. an adjective *alone*(without a companion); a. with verbs... b. it is joined with its noun to other verbs also so that what is predicated may be declared to apply to some one person along... 2. *alone, only, merely*... referring to an action expressed by a verb” (Thayer, p. 418; 3441).

### **25 Likewise (And in the same way NASB) was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?**

Why the Holy Spirit selected Rahab is an interesting question. Why He also referred to her as the harlot is also an interesting question. Of the of the eight times her name is mentioned in the Scriptures five times she is identified as “the harlot.” Since she is the only Rahab in the Scriptures, it is not repeated because it was needed to identify her.

*So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab(1), and lodged there. Josh. 2:1-2*

*So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, Josh. 2:3*

*Only Rahab the harlot(2) shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, Josh. 6:17*

*And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. Josh. 6:23*

*And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot(3), her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. Josh 6:25*

*Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king. Matt. 1:5-6*

*By faith the harlot Rahab(4) did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. Heb. 11:31*

*Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot(5) also justified by works Jas. 2:25*

It is also not likely that this was used in some negative way, because she is always mentioned in a very positive way in the Scriptures. The only other possibilities are that this done in a way very similar to the apostle Paul (the chief of sinners). Regardless of her sinful and wicked occupation, her faith was not only responsible for her being the only one spared out of cursed Jericho, but for her becoming one of the ancestors of David and His Christ.

It can't be denied that the rest of those in Jericho perished. Even though Rahab had related how the entire city had learned and was subdued by God's dealings with them, she was the only one to express her faith in action:

*“I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you,” Josh 2:9-11*

Regardless of how much or how little faith they had, they did nothing. Rahab acted on her faith and by that action her faith was also made perfect and she was saved. Others were filled with dread, but she was the only one with enough faith to act upon it. If she had not received the messengers and manifested her faith by committing herself by hiding them and sending them another way, she would have only had a dead faith. It would not have saved.

*And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot(3), her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. Josh 6:25*

### **The Two Spies and Rahab the Harlot**

*Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. Josh 2:1*

The providence of God is often the underlying theme of many of the events in the Scriptures. Since God knows that hearts of all men, wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge;

of the truth, and is longsuffering toward all not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance, it is obvious that He would always guide the feet of his people to those who would be most benefitted. So it was with Rahab, the one person in the entire town who had the faith to be saved.

*By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. Heb 11:31*

Whether they knew this as they entered that home is not recorded, only that after they arrived, an emergency arose that allowed Rahab's faith to save the day.

*And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." 3 So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country." 4 Then the woman took the two men and hid them. Josh 2:2-4*

At that moment, Rahab had the choice of turning them over or protecting them. Like Moses before and the opposite of Delilah later, she chose to stand with the people of God.

### **Rahab told a Lie**

Many have looked carefully at her words to the servants of the king. But seeking for a way to justify her words has proven futile. She told a lie. None of what she said happened, and there is no way to justify or rationalize it away. It was a lie.

*So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. 5 And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." 6 (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) Josh 2:4-7*

Some even among our brethren have concluded that this was not a sinful lie, but a simple omission, justifying the concept of situation ethics. They then seek to use her place in Hebrews 11 as the reason why it was not a sin. But that this reasoning is fallacious because she was also a harlot and that too is passed over without condemnation. If her faith justified her lying then it also justified her prostitution. The truth is that the Holy Spirit simply records things as they happened and often leaves unspoken the moral consequences of the action. Thus Abraham's lies about Sarah were not condemned, nor was Judah's fornication with Tamar, or Saul's suicide. God simply recorded the events and leaves it to His people to assess the moral consequences of each action. Lying is a terrible act because, it is impossible for God to lie and the devil is the father of all lies and liars. So when we lie we make ourselves Satan's children, not God's. Also because **all** lies and **all** liars will be cast into the lake of fire.

*that by two immutable things, in which **it is impossible for God to lie**, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. Heb 6:18*

*You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, **for he is a liar and the father of it.** John 8:44-45*

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and **all liars** shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Rev 21:8*

*But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or **a lie**, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Rev 21:27*

*But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and **whoever loves and practices a lie.** Rev 22:15*

So Rahab was a harlot and a liar, but later repented of both and having sought forgiveness and being restored, she has been placed among the great people of Heb 11.

### **Words to inspire Confidence**

Rahab's faith was based on the reputation that had preceded the children of Israel's arrival. They had heard about the Red Sea and previous victories that the Lord had given to Israel. It had led the people to be very afraid. This must have emboldened the spies and even Joshua when they recounted it to him. No longer did they appear to be grasshoppers in the sight of those living in the land of Canaan.

*"I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, Josh 2:9-11. And they said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us." Josh 2:24*

### **Rahab's "Good Confession" and Plea**

Rahab then made a "good confession" regarding her faith in God and her hope that she and her house could be saved.

*for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. 12 Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, 13 and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." Josh 2:11-13*

Whether the men should have agreed to her proposal without consulting Joshua and hearing from God in the matter is passed over in silence. They did agree and it turned out to the glory of God. They then give her three specific instructions that would lead to her salvation. First, unless she tied a scarlet cord to her window, the oath would no longer be binding. Second, all she wanted to be saved must be in her house at the time of the battle. Third, if she tells anyone about this business they will be free of the oath.

*We will be blameless of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, 18 unless, when we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. 19 So it shall be that whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we will be guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head if a hand is laid on him. 20 And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be free from your oath which you made us swear." Josh 2:17-20*

She agreed to all their words and immediately tied the scarlet cord to the window.

*Then she said, "According to your words, so be it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window. Josh 2:21*

### **Rahab was Spared**

As had been previously agreed, the promise of the men would be kept. The scarlet thread had been placed and all of Rahab's family had entered and remained in her home. Joshua made certain that the oaths that had been taken were fulfilled.

*And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword. 22 But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." 23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. Josh. 6:21-23*

Her faith did not end with her life. She married Salmon of the tribe of Judah and they had a son; they named Boaz. Boaz was one of the main characters of the book of Ruth, a very honorable man who married Ruth and they too had a son they named Obed. We are later told that Obed was David's grandfather, the father of Jesse.

*And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; 19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; 20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; 21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; 22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David. Ruth 4:17-22*

The Holy Spirit later elevated both Rahab and Ruth even more by revealing that both these women had been selected as ancestors of the Messiah.

*Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. 4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king.*

Mt. 1:3-6

So David's great grandmother was Rahab the harlot and his grandmother was Ruth. One can't help but wonder if these two great women of faith had some influence on David's heart being after God's own heart. That was certainly the case with Timothy.

*when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother,*

*Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. 2 Tim 1:5-6*

## **26 For as the body without the spirit is dead,**

James final conclusion is prefaced with conjunction "*gar* — for giving the affirmation and conclusion, generally translated denoting *truly therefore, verily as the case stands.*" He then gives the most powerful indictment of a faith that does not lead the person to works. A human body that has lost its spirit is dead and lifeless. It has no life and no power. It is the spirit within the body that gives the life and the essence to the human body. Within our spirit lies all our memories, plans, goals and dreams. Within our Spirit lies our eternity and our likeness to God. The body lives only to move, carry and care for the spirit. When the spirit leaves the body, it no longer has any purpose. It is dead, and there is nothing left to do but to bury it. Paul describes the body without the spirit each time he describes what it is like when it is sown.

*The body is **sown in corruption**, it is raised in incorruption. It is **sown in dishonor**, it is raised in glory. It is **sown in weakness**, it is raised in power. 1 Cor 15:42-44*

This is the state of the body without the spirit. Corruption, dishonor and weakness. So also is a faith that has no works.

## **so faith without works is dead also.**

In exactly the same way, "*houto... in this manner, thus,*" faith without works is dead. Works are the life force of faith. They are the purpose for it's existence, they are the essence of what it is to produce. Without them, faith is exactly like a dead body. It is useless and worthless.