



Epistle of James

James 2:14-17 - Faith and Works - Intro

- Review of Favoritism, Royal Law, and Law of Liberty, Part 2
 - All sin falls short of the glory of God, but consequences of sin differ.
 - And doesn't this include the absence of *agapao* love?
 - The Law of Liberty frees us from the penalty of sin and the power of sin.
 - Mercy triumphs over judgment, and don't we all agree this is wonderfully loving doctrine!
- ***James 2:14 - What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?***
 - *What does it profit, my brethren?*
 - It's clear to whom James is writing isn't it, *his brethren*.
 - *if someone says he has faith*



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- Is *if (though)* 1st (*since*) or 3rd class (*if*) conditional here?
- What *faith* – is this security of salvation *faith* – **Saving Faith 101?**
 - » *Joh 3:16 - “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*
 - » *Rom 10:9 - that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*
 - » *Eph 2:8 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*
 - » *1 Cor 15:2 - Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.*
- Remember, we need to interpret in context as to what James is stating here; *being saved* occurs in 3 verb tenses:
 - » From the penalty of sin (past).
 - » From the power of sin (present)
 - » From the presence of sin (future)
- *but does not have works?*
 - What are *works* and are we to be the judge?
 - Strong's - an act, deed, or thing done.



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- *does not have (present active) works* includes *mē* (*erga de mē echei*) indicating God forbid that works be present.
- James has already addressed this issue with the *brethren*, hasn't he?
 - » *James 1:22 - But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*
- A very pointed example of this has already been presented.
 - » *James 2:1 - My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.*
- *Can faith save him?*
 - James appears to indicate the answer is: **No.**
 - Merryman – ‘Is hell/eternity in view or is deliverance from degradation in **being** saved in view? *Being* doers of the Word brings deliverance for the soul. It is this deliverance in **being** saved that he has in mind here.
 - Constable – ‘In verse 14 James returned to his thought in 1:21-22 about saving one's life from death. His point here was that **faith is no substitute for obedience.... Good works in addition to faith are necessary for that kind of deliverance (salvation).**’
 - McCalley – ‘Paul emphasizes that faith alone justifies; **James emphasizes that works prove the reality of faith.** In Paul, faith is the root of righteousness; **in James, works is the fruit of righteousness.**’



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– Darby – **‘This is the evidence of faith which is required for man — it is only by its fruits that we make it evident to men; for the faith itself cannot be seen. But if I produce these fruits, then assuredly I have the root, without which there could not be the fruits. Thus, faith does not shew itself to others, nor can I recognize it, without works; but works, the fruit of faith, prove the existence of faith.**

» *1 Tim 4:8 - For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*

» *Titus 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.*

• This is not the source of *works* that are communicated in words or lives by self—deceivers.

» *James 3:15 - This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.*

» *Titus 1:16 - They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.*

• ***James 2:15,16 - If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not***



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*give them the things which are needed for the body,
what does it profit?*

- Again, is *if (though)* 1st (*since*) or 3rd class (*if*) conditional here?
 - Of course, for either translation there is *no profit* here!
- How's this for a practical and vivid example of what James states in *verse 14*.
- *depart in peace be warmed and filled* – wow and *be* – a state of being!
 - This is very similar to the issue James raised in *verses 2-4*.
 - » *James 2:2-4 - For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes ,have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?*
 - McCalley – ‘Empty words are again the focal point. **The words are empty because the works are missing.**’
 - A reminder of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the apostle John.



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- » Matt 25:36 - *'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*
- » 1 John 3:17 - *But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*
- **James 2:17 - Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.'**
 - In context, (*ῆ*) *faith* reflects the present verb tense, *being saved*.
 - » 1 Cor 1:18 - *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*
 - » James 1:21 - *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*
 - How should we interpret *dead*?
 - Merryman - *'Dead here is used in its normal scriptural sense, that of separation, not annihilation or lack of existence.....James is not saying faith does not exist: it does exist, but it is separated from God's intent, hence dead or profitless to mankind.'*
 - Jamieson-Fausset-Brown – **“Faith is said to be “dead in itself,”** because when it has works it is *alive*, and it is discerned to be so, not in respect to its works, but in respect to *itself*.’



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» James 2:26 - *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

- I'd using a quotation from a document entitled James vs. Paul, shared with me by Jimmy Brinkerhoff, a dear brother in the Lord.
 - 'Finally, if any should feel disposed to inquire as to the difference between law-works and life. works, it is simply this: **law-works are such as are done in order to get life; life-works are the genuine fruits of life possessed.** And how do we get life? By believing on the Son of God. "Verily, verily, I say to you, He that hears my words, and believes on him that sent me has everlasting life." (*John 5:24*) **We must have life before we can do anything; and we get life, not by "saying" we have faith, but by really having it, and when we have it, we shall manifest the precious fruits thereof, to the glory of God.'**

