

*The Letter to the  
12 Tribes*

# James

*Jas. 2:14-26*



Jas. 2:14 What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?



21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.



## INTRODUCTION, 1:1

### I. THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BATTLES, 1:2-16

A. The Testings of the Christian Life, 1:2-12

B. The Temptations of the Christian life, 1:13-16

From verse 17 until the end of chapter one the Book of James is emphasizing the importance of the Word of God.

### II. THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BIBLE, 1:17-27

A. God's Word is Likened to a Gift, 1:17-18

B. God's Word is Likened to a Graft, 1:19-22

C. God's Word is Likened to a Glass, 1:23-27

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2. The royal law defied, 2:9-13

a. A very great principle, 2:9-11

b. A very good policy, 2:12-13



Jas. 2:1 My brethren, **have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.**

- By faith, a believer should be patient in testing – ch. 1.
- By faith, a believer should be practicing truth – ch. 2.

There are three primary interpretations of this passage of Scripture:

- The first view is that it refers to a person who was a believer but has lost his salvation. He used to have saving faith but does not have it any longer. This is the view of most Arminians.



- The second view is that it refers to an unbeliever who professes to be a Christian, but has never truly exercised saving faith in Christ. His faith is only intellectual assent to gospel truth, not saving faith.
- The third view is that it refers to a believer who is not living by faith. He is not behaving consistently with what he believes. Donald W. Burdick, "James," in *Hebrews-Revelation*, vol. 12 of *The Expositors Bible Commentary*; Tasker; Motyer; Fanning, pp. 424-27; and John F. MacArthur, *Faith Works*, pp. 139-55.

#### IV. THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS BELIEFS, 2:14-26

##### A. The approach, 2:14

Jas. 2:14 What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?



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1. The false claim is quoted, 2:14a – “What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works...”

2. The false claim is questioned, 2:14b – “...can faith save him?”

- He may not be saved.
- He may be saved, but he is not living by faith, practicing his faith.

Eph. 2:8 For **by grace are ye saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9 **Not of works**, lest any man should boast.

10 For **we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works**, which God hath before ordained that **we should walk in them**.

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2 Cor. 5:7 (For **we walk by faith**, not by sight:)

A person is not saved by doing works, but by grace through faith. After trusting Christ as Savior, a believer, due to love for Christ, is motivated to good works, for His glory.

Faith and works are two separate sides of the same coin of grace. A believer does not have one without the other. During a coin toss of emphases, Paul chooses heads (faith) and James chooses tails (works.) They each know that the other side of the coin is connected to the amazing coin of grace.

B. The appraisal, 2:15-18

1. A case to consider, 2:15-16

a. The need discerned, 2:15

Jas. 2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

b. The need dismissed, 2:16

(1) A foolish assertion, 2:16a – “And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled...”

(2) A foolish assumption, 2:16b – “...notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?”

1 Jn. 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and **seeth his brother have need**, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, **how dwelleth the love of God in him?**

18 My little children, let us **not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.**



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## 2. A conclusion to consider, 2:17-18

### a. A pontifical conclusion, 2:17

Jas. 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

### b. A pragmatistical conclusion, 2:18

Jas. 2:18 Yea, a man **may say**, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Actions verify the validity of one's motivational source → FAITH!

"Dead" does not mean non-existent but inactive, no longer vital, dormant, useless (cf. v. 14). **(The battery is dead = not functioning, but still existent.)**

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## C. The application, 2:19-20

### 1. Faith displayed, 2:19

Jas. 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Jn. 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

30 As he spake these words, **many believed on him.**

31 Then **said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;**

32 And ye shall know the truth, and **the truth shall make you free. ...**

37 I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, **because my word hath no place in you.** ...

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* **because ye cannot hear my word.**

44 **Ye are of your father the devil**, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. ...

47 **He that is of God heareth God's words**: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

## 2. Faith disputed, 2:20

Jas. 2:20 But wilt thou know, **O vain man**, that faith without works is dead?



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## D. The appeal, 2:21-26

### 1. The proof of the contention, 2:21-25

#### a. The case of Abraham the Hebrew, 2:21-24

##### (1) A great triumph, 2:21

Jas. 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

##### (2) A great truth, 2:22

Jas. 2:22 Seest thou how **faith wrought with his works**, and **by works was faith made perfect**?



Original Word: συνεργέω

Transliteration: sunergeó

Definition: I cooperate with, **work together**.

<http://biblehub.com/greek/4903.htm>

Original Word: τελειόω

Transliteration: teleioó

Definition: (a) as a course, a race, or the like: I complete, finish (b) as of time or prediction: I accomplish, (c) I make perfect; pass: I am perfected.

<http://biblehub.com/greek/5048.htm>



2 Pet. 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, **add to your faith** virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For **if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful** in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath **forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.**

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for **if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:**

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



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(3) A great trust, 2:23a – “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, **Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness...**”

(4) A great testimony, 2:23b – “...and he was called the Friend of God.”

Jn. 15:14 Ye are my friends, **if ye do whatsoever I command you.**

(5) A great test, 2:24

Jas. 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.



## b. The case of Rahab the harlot, 2:25

(1) What is declared of her, 2:25a – “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works...”

(2) What was done by her, 2:25b – “...when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?”

## 2. The point of the contention, 2:26

a. A dead body, 2:26a – “For as the body without the spirit is dead...”

b. A dead belief, 2:26b – “...so **faith without works is dead** also.”

## Summary

A sinner is saved by grace, through faith, and NOT of WORKS.

Works are not necessary for salvation, but produce a visible testimony of relationship with God.

Sonship is not based upon works, but fellowship with God produces works for God's glory.

One with no works exhibits a non-functioning faith, in essence – dead faith.

Faith worketh by love, Gal. 5:6b. If faith is dead, then love for Christ is malfunctioning as well.

Believers should walk by faith, exhibiting love for Christ that substantiates genuine relationship with Him for His glory!

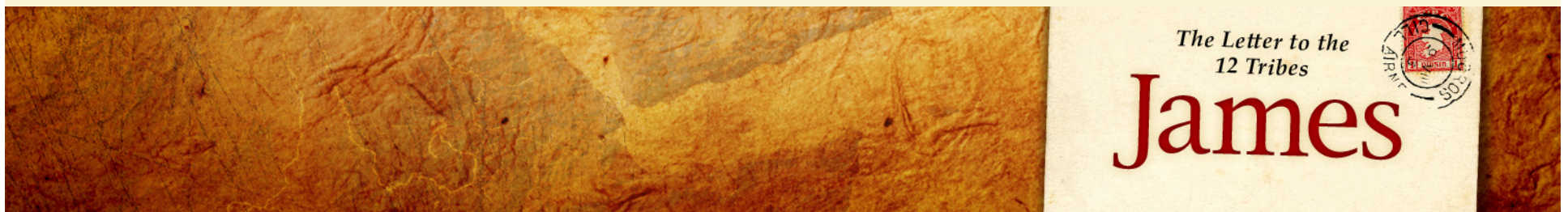
## Conclusion

This passage is not about one being saved by works instead of by faith. The passage is about living by faith.

Hab. 2:4 Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but **the just shall live by his faith.**

Rom. 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **The just shall live by faith.**

Gal. 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me.



Gal. 3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, **The just shall live by faith.**

Heb. 10:38 Now **the just shall live by faith:** but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

