


# The Book of James

Faith and Works

<sup>1</sup> Ryrie, C.R. NIV Ryrie Study Bible. Moody Press, Chicago, p. 1904





# James Chapter 2

- FAITH AND WORKS 2:14-26
- :14 – What good is it...if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds...?
  - Note: James is not saying that we are saved by works but that a faith that does not produce good works is a dead faith. James was not refuting the Pauline doctrine of justification by true faith, but a perversion of it. Both Paul and James define faith as a living, productive trust in Christ. Genuine faith cannot be “dead” to morality or barren to works. <sup>1</sup>
  - The difference between books by Paul and James is accounted for by the fact of 2 different vantage points. Paul deals with “Justification before God”; James, “Demonstration before Men.” Paul saw Christ in the heavens, establishing our righteousness. James saw Him on earth, telling us to be perfect...<sup>2</sup>
  - James had experienced the issue that FAITH is a basic ingredient of this new experience/Christianity/ religion. After all he could not *believe* that Jesus was the Christ until the end of Jesus’ life. His burden in writing the epistle was to show his Christian brethren that the faith that saves can be the only *genuine* faith. And if genuine then real, alive, of the heart, dynamic, productive and seen of men by way of action. Then if local Christians could be instructed and encouraged about what saving faith really was, then the world outside (these believers) would discover that Christianity was not another cult or religion, but a new life from above. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ryrie, C.R. NIV Ryrie Study Bible. Moody Press. Chicago. 1994. p. 1904

<sup>2</sup> Jensen, I.L. James:A Self-Study Guide. Moody Bible Institute. Chicago.1971. p. 16. . 3. p. 58

# James

## Chapter 2

- ▶ Abraham being justified by faith.
  - ▶ Gen 15: 1-6? Justification a sovereign act of God in declaring a man positionally righteous?
  - ▶ Gen 22: 1-19 – Was Abraham really commended for placing Isaac on the alter 22:9-10? Or a fear of God Gen 22: 12, and faith in Him 22:8; or both??
    - ▶ Compare with Heb 11:17-19 a NT commentary on this
- ▶ Rom 4:2, 6, Ja 2:21
  - ▶ These 2 passages may appear contradictory, but consider
    - ▶ Paul only denies works as the root of salvation. He is not writing about Christian conduct as such, but the way to becoming a Christian.<sup>3</sup>
    - ▶ James is not denying faith as the way of salvation, but his is maintaining that works will issue from a faith that is genuine.
    - ▶ DA Hayes writes: Paul is looking at the root; James is looking at the fruit....<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Jensen, I.L. James:A Self-Study Guide. Moody Bible Institute. Chicago.1971. p. 58-59

<sup>4</sup> Hayes, D.A, "the Epistle of James," The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 3: 1566

# James Chapter 2

- ▶ :15-16 – examples of spurious faith.
- ▶ :17 – a workless faith is a worthless faith.
  - ▶ Works are Faith's Partner<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ To James 2:18, Works are Faith's Demonstrators
  - ▶ James tests – can Faith be measured or needs to be demonstrated by works?<sup>6</sup>

Show me...


James asks, if a person can “see” another person's *genuine* faith without the presence of works?

states – Can a person “see” another person's *genuine* faith by observing his works?

Faith is NOT a mere intellectual assent

:21-23 – Abraham's act of faith (refer to Gal 3:6-29 re: Abraham as Spiritual Father.

- ▶ Shows that James does not deny that genuine faith can save, but it was the action, the follow through of Abraham that saved his son and demonstrated his deep faith in God. <sup>5</sup>
- ▶ IN contrast to Abraham, Rahab was a Gentile, a woman, a pagan and a prostitute. She believed that God had given Canaan to the Israelites and acted on that faith by sending the spies another way. Josh 2: 1-21



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- ▶ :26 – “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deed is dead,”
- ▶ How many places have the phrases “faith without works is dead?” ( or an equivalent to this phrase.)
- ▶ “Justified” root word in Greek = righteous
- ▶ “friend of God” – in Hebrew verse literally translated as “beloved.”
- ▶ Thought perhaps James chose Rahab’s story for lessons:
  - ▶ God saves, not because of one’s righteousness, but because of one’s faith
  - ▶ God has rich rewards for those who believe and obey Him
    - ▶ Refer to Joshua 6:25 and Matthew 1:5, Heb 11:31 re: Rahab

# James

## Chapter 3

- ▶ Sins of the tongue :1-12
  - ▶ Bridling the tongue : 1-4
    - ▶ Note: :2 Perfect man – mature, of full moral and spiritual growth.
    - ▶ :9 Our being made in the image of God is the basis for not cursing our fellow man.
- ▶ Boasting by the tongue : 5-12
  - ▶ :10-12 a believer's tongue should not speak inconsistencies.
- ▶ True wisdom : 13-18
  - ▶ Show wisdom by one's good life, by deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom.
  - ▶ :17 Wisdom from heaven is pure; peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere



# NEXT WEEK

- ▶ Chapter 4 of James
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