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James 2

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

James 2.

INTRODUCTION: James is commonly referred to as the Proverbs of the New Testament. It practically and faithfully reminds Christians how to live and covers topics such as perseverance, true faith, controlling the tongue, submitting to God's will and having patience. James aids readers in living authentically and wisely for Christ it is one of the earliest of the New Testament writings (A.D. 40–50). It is believed to have been written by Jesus' brother James. Many have claimed that James and the apostle Paul differed on the question of faith versus works, but in reality, the spiritual fruit that James talks about is the outward evidence of inward faith. James gives us a picture of what inward Christian faith looks like practically on the outside it demonstrates the true faith of which Paul wrote. James and Paul's writings rather than being contradictory beautifully complement each other.

Topics.

- Show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- God chose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith.
- The Kingdom God promised to those who love him.
- Whoever fails in one point of the law become accountable for all of it.
- Speak and act as those under the law of liberty.
- Whoever shows no mercy will be, judged without mercy.
- Faith without works is dead.
- Even devils believe and shudder!
- Abraham was justified by works.
- Rahab the prostitute was justified by works.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter James spoke of counting it joy when suffering trials of various kinds, of faith being tested, of asking God for wisdom, of those who doubt being like a wave of the sea tossed by the wind and told the lowly to boast in their exaltation and the rich to boast in their humiliation. He said no-one is tempted by God and told all believers to be doers of the word and not hearers only like a person looking in a mirror and forgetting what they look like and brilliantly explained the difference between worthless religion and pure religion.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

JAMES 2:1-4

Show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

- **James 2:1-4:** My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. ²For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," ⁴have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

Verse one in the King James Bible says:

- My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons (v1).

Based on this verse some religious teachers have taught that James is rebuking those he is writing to because they do not have the faith that Jesus had and is telling them that they should have the faith of Jesus and if they did they would be able to do the same miracles Jesus did, but this is to isolate the verse and take it totally out of its context, and force it to mean something other than what it actually does mean. (I mention this primarily because it is a perfect example of how false doctrines are established).

Partiality: means to be one-side, to have a bias or show favouritism. The faith that Jesus had that James his brother is referring to is Christ's lack of showing partiality and favouritism to anyone. It mattered not to Jesus whether a person was noble or lowly, a Bible Scholar or lacked such knowledge, rich or beggarly he treated them all with the same esteem. Jesus exalted no-one on the basis of their high standing in society or lack of it. In the assembly of the Christian church no brother or sister should be esteeming one person above another regardless of whether they are the President of a nation or the CEO of a global company all humans are to be treated with the same respect and dignity. No matter whether noble or poor, rich or lowly we are all sinners that need saving and even when saved we are still in desperate need of God's grace. Added to this not one of us is saved or counted righteous because we have made ourselves to be so or are worthy of it, but because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace so whether noble, rich or poor we cannot even boast that we have done any great works to earn our own salvation since it is granted to us as a pure gift by God because of our faith in His Son and not because we have made ourselves worthy of it by our worldly achievements and successes.

2

James is rebuking those who he is writing to because they are setting themselves and those they considered to be noble, rich and successful above the poor and lowly and in doing this they are not only judging people according to their religious status or their worldly riches and possessions, but also showing that they consider those who are poor and less fortunate to be of lesser value than the rich and wealthy. This is why James is telling them they do not have the faith that Jesus had, Christ never judged or exalted anyone who came to him in this worldly manner. Certainly this is the general way the world judges those who belong to it, the mind (consciously or unconsciously) of those in the world judge a person according to what they own (i.e., the size of their home, car, company, bank account, fame and such like things), should a person be blessed with these they are esteemed as a somebody to be looked up to and exalted whereas those who lack are judged as lower class citizens (i.e., the lesser). But when self-worth is based upon success, fame, riches and possessions and upon what we achieve outwardly it is fickle, because all these things can be taken. When self-worth is based on what we have achieved outwardly and not upon whom we are as a person on the inside our value of ourselves is totally dependent upon our worldly circumstances. Worldly possessions, fame and significance can give a sense of importance and the feeling that a person is somebody of worth, but the citizenship of those in Christ is not of this world and therefore they should not be acting or judging in this manner.

Dangers of spiritual gifts: judging others to be of greater or lesser value is not limited to judging according to worldly wealth possessions riches and fame etc., there is a more subtle danger for Christians and that is of judging people to be of greater or lesser value according to their success, authority and importance within the Christian community. Here the danger is to exalt and esteem those who are blessed with spiritual gifts above those who lack them. This was a great problem the Corinthian brothers and sisters had within their church so much so Paul told them they were not only acting like infants in Christ, but behaving only in a

worldly way (1 Cor. 3:1-5). A second danger of exalting others is that the one being exalted becomes puffed up with pride. When this happens, they can be seduced and deceived into feeling that they are not only more valued by God, but also feel superior to those who they are ministering to (especially to those who do the more menial tasks). Exaltation of those gifted can indirectly result in others in the faith that are not blessed in the same way feeling of less worth not only to the assembly, but to God. James is teaching that to judge people this way is grossly sinful and worldly. God does not judge those in the family of Christ according to their worldly success or lack of it or according to their spiritual gifts and religious positions of authority, but rather according to the integrity of their heart and the kindness and compassion they show toward others.

The self-worth of those in Christ should never be based on their positions of authority or standing in the world or the church or based on riches, wealth and material possessions, gifts and talents they may have attained, but because:

- They are accepted by God because of their faith in Christ.
- They are humble and have a heart of integrity and honesty before God and man.
- Their heart is full of love, compassion mercy and grace and such like things.
- The deep desire of their heart is to honour God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: this does not mean we should never speak words of credit or of encouragement to someone who has worked hard to serve the Lord or to those who have blessed us in some manner, even the Lord himself will honour and reward whoever faithfully serves him, but giving credit and encouraging a person is a totally different thing to exalting and esteeming someone above others.

JAMES 2:5-7

God chose those who are Poor in the World to be Rich in Faith.

- **James 2:5-7:** Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? ⁶But you have dishonoured the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? ⁷Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honourable name by which you were called?

My beloved brothers, refers to the scattered Jews living in Gentile countries and foreign lands (Jas. 1:1) and the rich that James has in mind most likely refers to the Jews at Jerusalem who hold the religious power and authority over Israel and who are opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith (v7).

James is saying just because these Jews dwell at Jerusalem, have the religious power, wear the holy garments and strictly hold fast to the laws of Moses, the ceremonial rites and religious Jewish customs and traditions does not make them the chosen of God, in fact quite the contrary it is the destitute, the oppressed and the poor God has chosen referring to the common people of Israel especially the scattered Jews who the religious leaders at Jerusalem not only looked down on them as the lessor, but had them put in prison for proclaiming Christ. But it should be noted what James is saying is not limited to the prideful religious Jewish leaders at Jerusalem or the scattered Jews, but can also refer to the leaders of any established religious institution or organization who not only consider themselves to be of greater value to God than those they are ministering to, but also oppress them by their ministry. James is telling all who belong

to the Lord, that should we exalt religious leaders or priests above the poor and beggarly simply because of their lack of fortune we are not only debasing, humiliating and bringing shame on the less fortunate, but are transgressing the law and making ourselves a gross offense to God (v8).

A rich church and a poor church: Jesus said to the church at Smyrna that he was aware of their tribulation and their poverty and then told them that they are actually rich, meaning rich in faith because they will be given a crown of glory and inherit eternal life and everlasting happiness" (Rev. 2:9). In contrast he said to the church at Laodicea who were worldly rich and had prospered so much so that they were in need of nothing that they without realising it, were actually wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked (meaning spiritually destitute) (Rev. 3:17).

Pride and Christian faith: judging ourselves better than others or considering others as lessor is a result of pride lurking within the heart. Amongst the religious world we often hear messages that teach against unlawful sexual sins and such like things, but very seldom against pride yet pride is the most dangerous of all since it is not only deceptive, subtle and not always easy to recognize, but self and ego readily embrace it with open arms. The greatest hindrance to a to a man or woman to receiving Christ and walking in God's ways is pride since it is the enemy of humbleness. Christ the Son of God our perfect example humbled himself before his enemies that God's will would be accomplished through his life. In chapter four James says:

- God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

Clearly showing that it is through humbleness God works not pride.

The Kingdom God promised to those who love Him: The Kingdom those who love Christ will inherit (v5) refers to the Kingdom God promised Abraham.

Here is the wonder, majesty and glory of the Christian faith: thousands of years ago the LORD swore by an oath to Abraham that He would make of him a great nation and that he would be the father of a multitude of nations. God swore He would make Abrahams name great, bless him, nations, and kings would come from him and He would give to him and to his offspring after him all the land of Canaan/Israel for an everlasting possession. God promised Abraham that his offspring would be as the dust of the earth and the stars of heaven so that they cannot be numbered and God will be their God. The LORD confirmed this promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their offspring after them throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant promising Abraham that in his offspring all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

(Gen. 12:1-3) (Gen. 13:14-17) (Gen. 15:4-7) (Gen. 17:1-8)
(Gen. 22:15-18) (Deut. 9:5).

Now the majestic wonder and beauty of God's promise is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul writes that the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. that is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all Abrahams offspring—not only to the adherents of the law (referring to the Jews) but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham (referring to the Gentiles), who is the father of us all (Jews and Gentiles), as it is written:

- I have made you (Abraham) the father of many nations—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (creation and the resurrection).

In hope Abraham believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be." Paul tells us that, "The twelve tribes of Israel earnestly worshipped night and day hoping to attain to this promise (Acts 26:7) and then gloriously points out that the Scripture does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many,

but referring to one "And to your offspring," who is Christ. Some may think the promises made to Abraham was for the Jews only, but Paul magnificently explains in the book of Ephesians that the promises of God have been extended to all nations through being baptised into the Lord Jesus Christ and clearly shows that the promises made to Abraham and to his offspring the Lord Jesus Christ are not limited to the Jews only but embraces whoever will come to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 4:13) (Rom. 4:16-18) (Gal. 3:16) (Gal. 3:27). For further information see the title:

- The Commonwealth of Israel," (at the end of this chapter).

Though we are at this present time in the spiritual Kingdom of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the majestic climax of God's promise will be when the Lord returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

JAMES 2:8

The Royal Law.

- **James 2:8:** If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing well.

The words the Royal law (v8) means the most-highest law, the chief law it is the principal law of all laws. Here is the stunning splendor of God's wisdom and the Christian faith all the laws, rules and do's and don'ts throughout the entire Bible can be summed up in the following two laws:

1. Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
2. Love your neighbour as yourself.

This means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, mentally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land. Leviticus chapter nineteen makes it clear that our neighbour is every other person, showing that the law requires justice to all people. The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves. To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ.

- Micah wrote: "What the LORD requires of mankind is to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God." (Micah 6:5-10).
- Isaiah says: "The LORD loves justice, hates robbery and wrong doing." (Isaiah 61:8).
- Jeremiah said: "Those who know God practise steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, because it is in these things that God delights." (Jer. 9:24).

The great prophets Micah, Isaiah and Jeremiah clearly show us that the people the LORD loves are not only those who acknowledge God, but who also uphold justice, do not lie, deceive or make promises they do not intend to keep, but speak the truth, do what is right, show respect and give help to others when able and make choices that lead to peace. These are the things the LORD delights in and that bring His favour.

Jesus famous sermon on the Mount: the constant theme throughout Jesus famous Sermon on the Mount is doing what is right before God by seeking the way of peace in all situations. Jesus calls Christians to treat people fairly and with respect, dignity, decency grace compassion, kindness, mercy and to be quick to forgive. This truth shines a spotlight upon the truth that living a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ is about doing all we can do to protect people from harm and being dominated by the thought, "What action can I take or do that will help and encourage this person." It is all about doing right to others. This is one of the reasons the message Jesus spoke on the mountain is referred to as, "The Famous Sermon" because the principals if followed not only by Christians but all humanity are the only way to peace (Matt 5). For further information on Jesus famous sermon see:

- Matthew 5 in Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

JAMES 2:9

If you show Partiality you are Committing Sin.

- **James 2:9:** But if you show partiality (have respect to persons in KJV) you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

In contrast to the Royal Law, "Love your neighbour as yourself," (v8) if we show favouritism in regards to judgment to anyone because we have a bias toward them, we are transgressing the law and committing sin. This is because God is a God of justice and justice means doing what is right and fair to all people regardless of our personal feeling or differences toward them.

A practical example: some believe that husbands, wives and friends should support each other regardless of whether they are right or wrong. Certainly, this may sound wonderful to some, but it is worldly and not what God would say. For those who belong to the family of Christ supporting justice and fairness and what is right for all people regardless of whether they are in God's Kingdom or our friend's must override our love and friendship for a person. Not one of us should favour a person who is in the wrong simply because they belong to the family of Christ or because we have an affectionate friendship with them since to do this is to pervert justice and justice is one of the great pillars of God's throne.

JAMES 2:10-11

Whoever Fails in One Point of the Law become Accountable for All of It.

- **James 2:10-11:** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. ¹¹For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

The following is a practical example of what James is teaching in these verses:

- Anyone who steals from their workplace is not going to be declared innocent or escape punishment on the basis they have kept all other laws their boss demanded.
- A person who steals a car will not be declared innocent or escape the punishment of the law on the basis they have not broken any other laws.
- A man who rapes a woman will not be declared innocent or escape the punishment of the law on the basis he has perfectly kept all other laws.

James is saying it matters not how perfectly we might have obeyed the law in many areas the instant we break even the smallest of its commands it will without mercy judge us guilty and condemn us to eternal death. This is because God has engraved into the universe a law that states, "The wages of sin is death" (mortal and eternal) (Rom 6:23), this law affects all humanity. It means whoever transgresses the law in any part is guilty of breaking the law. No one is going to be excused from robbery on the basis they have not broken any other law, this is what it means if we break one part it's the same as if we broke the whole law. The law does not have mercy or compassion its demand on those that are under it is strictly official, formal and legal and enforced without compassion or any sense of sorrow toward its condemned victims. The universal demand of the law states if anyone fails to keep the law in any aspect, they are guilty of breaking the law it then without mercy rightfully and legally judges and sentences its guilty victims (all mankind) to eternal death.

The law and coveting: some might think that since they have not, had any other gods or worshipped idols, have never blasphemed God's name, or dishonoured their mother and father and certainly not murdered, committed adultery, stolen or told lies (Exod. 20:3-16) that they have no need to worry since they have not broken any of the law, but there is one more law that slays us all before God because it states, "You shall not covet" (Exod. 20:17). It is futile to attempt to attain to righteousness by keeping the law since the law states:

- You shall not covet your neighbour's house, his wife, his very successful business, his new car, beautiful boat or anything that belongs to him (Exod. 20:17) and the Royal law states, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Rom. 13:9).

Jesus says all the commandments regarding mankind are summed up in the words of the Royal law because the Spirit underpinning the Royal law is about desiring the best for others contrasted to the spirit underlying coveting which is craving the best for self.

Covet: (covetousness) means; to set the heart upon, to desire, long for or lust after (rightfully or otherwise) it carries the idea of holding onto or desiring more than one has or needs (the practice of greediness) and embraces those who live a lifestyle of unlawful sex, orgies adulteries and sexual immorality to fulfil their own lust and to anyone whose heart is craving after and worshipping and exalting another person as a god (an Idolater). By implication covet can refer to:

- Those who are not honest and true and who use pressure or coercion to force or entice others to fulfil their own selfish need or ambition and to anyone who intentionally deprives somebody of money or property by dishonest means because they are greedy and eager for gain.

The commandment you shall not covet:

- Exposes human selfishness, pride, ego, lust, and greed etc., it reveals the dysfunctions and aberrations that are imbedded within our fallen corrupted human nature that hinder us from attaining to the perfection of God's Holy law, it exposes our self-centeredness in our desires for more than we need, our excessive avariciousness toward materialism, our overeating of tasty foods the craving to be important or esteemed, our sensual and lustful thoughts, the desire to be rich and have abundantly more than we need etc.

The commandment you shall not covet, shines a spotlight on our self-interest, it highlights our lack of willingness to give to those less fortunate and those in need it exposes our degrading, resentful, bitter and jealous thoughts of others and the list goes on. In summary the command you shall not covet embraces all those attitudes and thoughts that dwell within our members that are contrary to the law of love and the Holiness of God which means the entire human race is held guilty before the law and therefore it legally has the right and the power to condemn us all to both temporal and eternal death which it does without hesitation, compassion or mercy. These facts shine a brilliant spotlight upon the Royal majesty, the wonder and the glory of the following words of the Good News of the Gospel:

- God through Christ has cancelled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands (the debt being all our trespasses and sins) (Col. 2:13-14).

JAMES 2:12

Speak and Act as those under the Law of Liberty.

- **James 2:12:** So, speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.

Liberty: means freedom in this context it carries the idea of deliverance from the bondage and judgment of the Mosaic Law to declare us guilty and condemn to eternal death. At the beginning of this chapter James told us that we should not treat anyone with partiality or favouritism in regards to judgment in contrast to this we should think, speak, act, and behave in love to all people equally regardless of their status in life, or whether they are rich or poor, titled or lowly. God's grace and mercy in Christ has delivered those who belong to the family of the Lord Jesus Christ from the judgment and condemnation of Moses law. All who are saved are saved by God's love, grace and mercy, thus the law of liberty is the law of love.

Those who belong to Christ will be judged by the law of love. This means that we will be judged or rewarded not by the Law of Moses, but by what we do in love or against love. Being judged by the law of liberty means we will be judged by what we have done against the Royal law, love your neighbour as yourself we will be judged according to how we have treated others. Whatever we do against the law of love or in love are what we will be judged by or rewarded for. The law of liberty is the Gospel of Christ which is the law of universal love, manifested to the world in tragic horror and yet majestic glory on the cross of Calvary. The Gospel of Christ is a gospel of love, grace and mercy and those who are saved by it should show the same love grace and mercy to others as Christ has shown to them.

The apostle Paul tells us:

- God showed his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

These awe-inspiring words clearly show us that God loved us even while we were sinners and that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. The love of God and of Christ for us did not begin when we chose to love him, but long before we even began to think about him. It is God's love that saves us and if we don't show this love to others we will be judged accordingly, this is the law of liberty, in love we are saved and have freedom from the condemnation of the Law of Moses, but if we don't show love, grace and mercy to others as Christ has shown it to us we will suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ. This is what Paul was referring to when he wrote:

- If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done and if the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward, but if anyone's work is burned up, they will suffer loss, though they themselves will be saved, but only as through fire (1 Cor. 3:12-23).

This law of liberty is a Royal law of love, grace and mercy and comes from the King of kings himself, should any Christian act outside of love, grace and mercy they will be judged by this law of love. No-Christian should think that their religious works or biblical knowledge will atone for their lack of love, grace and mercy toward others. It is interesting to note that the Ten Commandments were placed in the Ark of the Covenant under the Mercy Seat.

JAMES 2:13

Whoever Shows No Mercy will be, Judged without Mercy.

- **James 2:13:** For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

It is God's mercy that frees those in Christ from the judgment of the Mosaic Law. Those who trust in Christ are delivered from the judgment and condemnation of Moses law by the mercy of God so in the same way we should live to show mercy towards others and should we not we will not taste of the mercy of God. This is the judgment of those who do not live according to the law of liberty, i.e., the law of mercy (which also embraces love and grace). Whoever does not show mercy toward others will find not mercy when they stand before the Lord Jesus Christ. James is shining a spotlight on the fact that though Christians have been delivered from the condemnation of Moses Law they have come under another law called the Law of liberty which is a law of love, grace and mercy and is warning those who have faith in the Lord that if they do not show mercy to others as Christ has shown mercy to them they themselves will be judged accordingly.

Mercy triumphs over judgment: here is the splendour, wonder and glory of Christ and the Christian faith, "Mercy triumphs over judgment" (v13). This means that though God is justified in declaring men and women guilty because of their sinful acts, should they have shown mercy to others their judgment will be overshadowed by mercy, because of the mercy, grace, love and kindness they have shown to others. Jesus said:

- Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy (Matt 5:7).

Here it we are told that certain men and women will triumph in mercy, because mercy rejoices against judgment. This means that some who find themselves standing before God on that great day of His descent to earth will be judged vessels of wrath because of their lack of mercy while others will be counted as vessels worthy of mercy, because of the mercy they have shown toward others. If we do not in turn practice the law of love to our neighbour, we in turn will be judged by our own lack of love. For further information regarding this universal judgment, see the title:

- Resurrection (Second or White Throne Judgment).
- In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

JAMES 2:14-17

Faith without Works is Dead.

- **James 2:14-17:** What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

10

James is not teaching that Christians are saved by works as some religious leaders teach, but he is saying that where there is true faith there will be some form of outward action or behavior to evidence it. Genuine inward faith cannot be contained; bound or hidden it will flow from the inside out and manifest itself in some manner. Hebrews chapter eleven known as, the Hall of Faith lists Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab the prostitute, Samson, David, the prophets and many others who God commended for their great faith. When we read of their lives, we discover that they all had some outward action or behavior that evidenced their inward faith. Some accomplished great things through their faith while the faith of others was manifested in their refusal to deny God even though they were mocked, imprisoned, stoned, killed in battle, destitute and afflicted (Heb. 11). For further information on Great Faith see:

- Hebrews 11.
- In Commentary New Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

James is highlighting in these verses two things:

1. How the law of love, works and Christian faith work together.
2. How prayer, action and love work together.

Clearly if we pray for God to bless and provide for a man or woman and we do not offer to help them when it is in our power to do so, our faith is dead. James in the previous chapter wrote, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (Jas. 1:22), being doers of the word is about fulfilling the Royal Law of love, it is about loving our neighbour as ourselves which means helping others as we would help ourselves, this is true religion (Jas 1:27).

JAMES 2:18

Faith apart from Works and faith with Works.

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

James is writing to the Jews who have been scattered into foreign countries and Gentile nations so it is certain that they were still practicing Moses laws of purification, ceremonial rites and their Jewish religious customs and traditions, James here is saying that true faith is not manifested in strictly adhering to religious rites, customs and traditions, but through love mercy and grace. James was the brother of Jesus, clearly, he understood that the life his brother lived was not about keeping religious laws, rules, customs and traditions, but about showing others love kindness, compassion and forgiveness and being willing to help whenever one is able. James is shining a brilliant spotlight on how true inward faith manifests itself outwardly i.e., not in religious customs and traditions, but in love and compassion toward others. A man or woman who say they believe in God, but never read the Bible, never have any fellowship with other Christians and never talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, and show no evidence of the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., mercy, grace, kindness, compassion, forgiveness and love etc.), working in their lives and flowing out toward others are deceiving themselves, because there is no outward behavior or actions that evidences their faith.

JAMES 2:19

Even Devils Believe and Shudder!

- **James 2:19:** You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons (damion) believe—and shudder!

The context of this chapter is, faith without works is dead, meaning faith without any evidence to support it is not real faith. James is talking to people who believed evil inferior gods called demons existed. These people are boasting that they believe in God, but there is nothing in their lives that outwardly evidences their faith so James in a form of rebuke tells them belief alone means nothing because even the demons believe in God and they are certainly not saved. James is basically saying, people who believe they are possessed with demons also believe in God and are afraid of Him so it means very little when a person says they believe in God if there is nothing in their lives that evidences that belief.

He is trying to make it very clear to the people who are boasting that they believe in God, but don't show any outward evidence of their faith that they are deceiving themselves because a person's outward life should evidence their inward belief. The great majority of the Australian population says they believe in God and yet they have no interest in reading the Bible, learning about God or talking with others about Christ or even being with Christian people. It is important to note that James in his rebuke to his listeners is not saying outward behavior saves a person, but that it evidences that they are saved. It is not enough to simply say, "I believe in God," even so-called demon possessed people do that and they are not saved.

The confession of a persons' faith in God must be followed
by some form of outward behavior that evidences its
reality otherwise it is simply words in the wind

JAMES 2:20-24

Abraham, was Justified by Works.

- **James 2:20-24:** Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"— and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

All Christians know that Abraham had great faith but how do we know this, only because his faith was manifested outwardly by his obedience to God to offer up his only son Isaac. Outward actions evidence inward faith, Abraham's love and devotion to God could not be hidden, it was not in him to disobey God such was his inward faith. The only proof of Abraham's inward faith was his outward works. Abraham's obedience to sacrifice Isaac proved outwardly his inward faith. James is teaching in these verses that without outward works, how would anyone know Abraham had great faith? Which means that genuine faith is evidenced by outward works. Abraham the father of faith believed God, and his belief was proved by his outward obedience. God calls those in Christ who have this kind of faith His friend and counts them righteous. James in this chapter is saying, "All who confess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and whose faith is evidenced by love, the fruits of the Spirit and helping others when able will be counted as righteous, justified and a friend of God."

Christian faith is not a dead faith, but a living one meaning it
is manifested outwardly in some form, true Christian faith
cannot be hidden or kept secret

JAMES 2:25

12

Rahab the Prostitute was Justified by Works.

- **James 2:25:** And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

The story of Rahab; Joshua sent two men to spy out the land of Jericho and they lodged in the house of Rahab a prostitute (Josh 2:1). Rahab told the spies that she believed the LORD the God of Israel is the God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath and that the hearts of all the men of Jericho melted because they had heard how the LORD had dried up the water of the Red Sea and how Israel had destroyed the two kings of the Amorites (Sihon and Og) (Joshua 2:8-11), because of her faith in the power of Israel's God she hid the two spies from the soldiers of Jericho (Josh 2:6). Rahab's faith resulted in her being saved and exalted as a great woman of faith so much so that her name is recorded in the Hall of Fame with all God's other great men and women of faith in Hebrews chapter eleven. James is not teaching that Rahab's works saved her as some think, since no-one is saved by self-effort and works, rather James is teaching his readers that her outward works evidenced and proved her inward faith in the God of Israel. James message is that if a person says they have faith in God, but there is absolutely nothing in their life that evidences it they are deceiving themselves i.e., if a person says they believe in the Lord, but live a totally worldly lifestyle they are deluding themselves.

NOTICE: the glory of God's grace, Rahab was a prostitute a woman despised by society and especially the religious community, yet she is commended by God for her faith alongside Abraham Sarah, Moses, David and the many other men and women listed in Hebrews chapter eleven.

JAMES 2:26

Faith apart from Works is Dead.

- **James 2:26:** For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

The body in this context can refer to two bodies:

1. The human body, without the spirit (i.e., life) it is dead.
2. An individual, local church or churches world-wide that confess to be Christian and part of the global body of Christ, but lack the Spirit of the Lord (i.e., mercy, grace, love, kindness, compassion, justice and forgiveness etc.,) not only in their lives, but also flowing out toward others is also dead. Likewise, genuine Christian faith is living and active it cannot be separated from works, like the human body without life or the body of Christ without the Spirit is dead so too is faith without works.

Outward works of love do not save, but they evidence that a believer has true Christian faith dwelling within

Jesus is, God's gift of grace: the following words of Paul show the enormous importance of trusting in God's grace in Christ and that James is not teaching that we are saved by works. Paul in his letters wrote:

- I do not nullify the *GRACE* of God, for if justification were through the law (or any form of religious self-effort), then Christ died for no purpose (Gal. 2:21).

This means, when a brother or sister in Christ begin to justify themselves through the law and self-effort, they nullify the grace of God and by their actions declare that Christ's death was of no value. Equally as horrific as this Paul states:

- When we forsake *GRACE* we separate ourselves from Christ because it was only by *GRACE* that God made us alive in Christ (Gal. 5:4) (Eph. 2:5).

Paul to highlight even more the majestic glory of grace wrote with absolute boldness that: -

- It is only by *GRACE* that any brother or sister has been saved (Eph. 2:8).

Paul in these verses is shining a brilliant floodlight on the truth that every brother and sister in Christ is saved, solely by faith and by grace and it is not their own doing, but the gift of God. This means that without grace no-one can be united to Christ and whoever is without Christ is separated from God and without God no-one can be saved to eternal life. This means in regards to eternal salvation, Christ, God, grace and faith, are all on an equal par with each other since no-one can be saved to eternal life without any one of them. These verses (there are many others like them) clearly show that James is not teaching that we are saved by works, but rather that true faith will be evidenced by outward behaviour and actions.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew).

Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ: the apostle Paul said:

- **Ephesians 2:11-22:** Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit.

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God because in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

14

The practical application of what this means to you: if you belong to Christ, all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to you. The book of Revelation states:

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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