

IN OUR STUDY OF JAMES, ~ WE ARE NOW MOVING ~ INTO THE NEXT MAJOR section, ~ 2:1 - 3:18.

HERE WE FIND FOUR MINI-ESSAYS IN PROVERB FORM.

▶▶ Today, ~ we'll begin looking at the first mini-essay.

▷▷ And i.e., ~ James' warning ~ against favoritism, ~ 2:1-13.

OUTLINE THIS WAY.

▶▶ James' Command against Favoritism (2:1).

▶▶ Concrete Example of Favoritism (2:2-4).

▷▷ At the outset, ~ need to understand, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ James is using a specific example to illustrate a much larger principle.

→→ Namely, ~ all forms of favoritism ~ are wrong and sinful.

↪↪ Not just favoring rich over the poor . . . .

▶▶ Presents 3 arguments against favoritism (2:5-13).

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup>, ~ God's view of the poor (2:5-6a). ¶¶ 1/15

▷▷2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ incongruity of favoring the wicked rich (2:6b-7).

▷▷And 3<sup>rd</sup>, ~ favoritism violates God's royal law. (2:8-13).

↪↪Specifically, ~ to love our neighbors as ourselves.

↪↪Briefly put, ~ favoritism is sin.

### PRELIMINARY NOTE.

▶▶Speaking to genuine believers in this paragraph . . . .

AS NOTED, ~ TODAY WE'LL BEGIN LOOKING AT THE JAMES' WARNING ~ against favoritism, ~ 2:1-13.

▶▶ Particularly this a.m., ~ vss 1-4.

▷▷Command against favoritism, ~ vs 1.

▷▷And concrete example of favoritism, ~ vss 2-4.

### 2:1, ~ JAMES' COMMAND AGAINST FAVORITISM.

MY BROTHERS, SHOW NO PARTIALITY AS YOU HOLD THE FAITH IN OUR LORD JESUS Christ, the Lord of glory. ⇔⇔ glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

▶▶My brothers and sisters, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTICE, ~ JAMES BEGINS HIS WARNING AGAINST FAVORITISM ~ WITH A GENTLE introduction. ↴↴ 2/15

▶▶ My brothers and sisters.

▷▷ Later in vs 5, ~ my dear brothers and sisters.

▶▶ Right at the start of and within ~ his warning, ~ he lets them know that ~ they are ~ 77

▷▷ loved by and important to ~ him.

▶▶ When we have tough words to speak to our fellow believers, ~ we should take a cue from James.

▶▶ His hard-hitting words ~ are tempered ~ by this warm greeting.

▷▷ James is no ~ arrogant, ~ superior teacher, ~ but a loving shepherd ~ 77

↳↳ who cares enough for his flock ~ to alert them to the danger of partiality.

▷▷ To not warn them, ~ would have been the opposite ~ of being a loving shepherd.

↳↳ Whole counsel of God . . . .

▶▶ As noted before, ~ James is very tough on his original readers and us.

▷▷ But ~ that believers are dearly loved and cherished by James ~ tells us ~ 77

↳↳ that he is writing ~ out of love.

▷▷ And therefore, ~ has our best interests at heart.

↳↳ God the Holy Spirit . . . . 77 3/15

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, SHOW NO PARTIALITY AS YOU HOLD THE FAITH IN OUR glorious Lord Jesus Christ.

▶▶ "Faith" ~ most likely refers to ~ their faith in Christ.

▷▷ As you hold your faith.

▷▷ My brothers and sisters, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, do not show favoritism.

▶▶ This fits the context, ~ since it is the genuineness of an individual's faith ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that is at issue later in the chapter.

▶▶ Also, ~ faith here ~ is more ~ than simply an intellectual assent ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to a statement about the Lord Jesus Christ.

↳↳ Demons would do that, ~ and they're not saved.

▷▷ Rather, ~ faith means a ~ personal trust in ~ and commitment to ~ Jesus.

▶▶ The claim ~ of commitment to Jesus ~ is incompatible ~ with any type ~ of favoritism.

▷▷ God himself, ~ as we'll discuss later, ~ is totally impartial.

OBSERVE NEXT ~ JAMES DESCRIBES JESUS AS ~ "GLORIOUS."

▶▶ Reference to Jesus in all his glory, ~ as he sits on the right hand of the majesty on high.

▶▶ Three of the apostles caught a glimpse of this glory ~ on the mount of transfiguration.

▷▷ Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, ~ James and John, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and led them up a high mountain to be alone.

▷▷ As the men watched, ~ Jesus' appearance was transformed ~ so that ~ ¶¶

↳↳ his face shone like the sun, ~ and his clothes became ~ as white as light.

→→ Later, ~ when Jesus appeared to John on Patmos, ~ John said ~ ¶¶

↳↳ that Jesus' face ~ was like the sun shining in full strength.

▶▶ At the Transfiguration, ~ Jesus' body was transformed ~ into the glorious radiance ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that he had ~ before coming to earth ~ and ~ that he will have ~ ¶¶

↳↳ when he returns in glory to establish his kingdom.

THE PHRASE, ~ GLORIOUS LORD ~ OR LORD OF GLORY ~ WAS NORMALLY APPLIED TO God.

▶▶ So, ~ James is alluding ~ to the deity of Jesus ~ when he says, ~ "our glorious Lord Jesus Christ."

THE QUESTION IS ~ WHY DID JAMES USE THE ADJECTIVE ~ GLORIOUS ~ ¶¶

▶▶ here in this command ~ not to show favoritism? ¶¶ 5/15

▷▷IOW, ~ how does it fit in ~ with James' warning against favoritism?

▶▶Nothing is by chance ~ in the writings of Scripture.

▶▶Most likely ~ he used "glorious" ~ to remind his first readers ~ and us ~ ¶¶

▷▷of an extremely important truth.

▶▶Discrimination against the impoverished ~ is inconsistent ~ with the incarnation, ~ ¶¶

▷▷where Jesus ~ laid aside his glory ~ and became poor.

▷▷In 2 Cor. Paul writes, ~ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

▷▷In Philippians, ~ Paul asserts that ~ Jesus ~ being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

▷▷And Jesus himself said, ~ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

TO KEEP OUR BEARINGS, ~ LET'S REPEAT JAMES' COMMAND IN VS 1.

▶▶My brothers and sisters, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, do not show favoritism.

THE WORD ~ FAVORITISM ~ COMES FROM A GREEK WORD THAT MEANS, ~ ¶¶

▶▶literally, ~ "receiving the face." ¶¶ 6/15

▶▶ The word was apparently ~ invented by NT writers ~ as a literal rendering ~ 77

▷▷ of a Hebrew word for favoritism.

▶▶ To "receive the face" ~ means ~ to make judgments about people ~ based on ~ external appearance.

▶▶ In the context here, ~ James applies this principle ~ to differences in dress ~ 77

▷▷ that reflect contrasting social/economic situations.

### THE GREEK WORD HERE FOR FAVORITISM IS PLURAL.

▶▶ It suggests ~ not simply a general attitude ~ but specific and repeated acts.

▶▶ Translated ~ "acts of favoritism."

▷▷ I.e., ~ My brothers and sisters, ~ believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ ~ 77

↪↪ must not engage ~ in acts of favoritism.

▷▷ And this makes clear ~ that the prohibition ~ has wide-ranging application.

▶▶ We, ~ believers ~ are not ~ to make decisions about people ~ based on any external factor, ~ 77

▷▷ whether it be ~ mental state, ~ clothing, ~ color of skin, ~ or ~ general physical appearance.

▷▷ God drove this point home to Samuel ~ in the choosing of David. 77 7/15

↪↪1 Sam. 16:6-7.

→→When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. ~ ~ ¶¶

↪↪For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

▷▷And God told Jeremiah, ~ in 17:10, ~ ¶¶

↪↪I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

▷▷The Lord alone ~ has the capacity to observe and judge a person's "heart," ~ ¶¶

↪↪i.e., ~ one's ~ thoughts, ~ emotions, ~ and intents.

→→On God's scales ~ these matters outweigh ~ all other aspects of a human life.

FURTHERMORE, ~ BACK TO JAMES ~ THE TENSE OF THE VERB ~ SHOWS THIS TO BE AN ongoing thing.

▶▶The idea is ~ never ~ do this.

SO JAMES' COMMAND ~ CAN BE EXPRESSED THIS WAY.

▶▶My brothers and sisters, ~ as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, ~ never ~ engage ~ in acts of favoritism. ¶¶ 8/15



## FAVORITISM IS CONDEMNED ~ BOTH ~ IN THE OT AND THE NT.

THE OT REPEATEDLY STRESSES ~ THAT GOD HIMSELF, ~ AS WE'VE ALREADY SEEN ~ ¶¶

▶▶ is impartial.

▶▶ He looks at the heart ~ rather than at the outside of a person.

▷▷ And God's people ~ are to imitate him ~ in this respect.

▶▶ In a passage that is echoed many times in the OT ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and ~ which touches on many of the same issues James is concerned about, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Moses reminded the Israelites that ~ ¶¶

→→ the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing (NIV).

THE IMPARTIAL AND JUST NATURE OF GOD ~ IS A LEADING THEME OF THE NT AS well.

▶▶ Peter tells Cornelius ~ that God does not show favoritism ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but accepts those who fear him from every nation (Acts 10:34-35).

▶▶ Paul agrees that salvation ~ is for Jew and Gentile, ~ since "God does not show favoritism" (Rom 2:11). ¶¶ 9/15

▶▶ Even when the enemies of Jesus seek to trap him, ~ they have to admit he is impartial.

▷▷ Mark writes, ~ they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God (Mk 12:14).

ADDITIONALLY, ~ THERE IS A STRONG AFFINITY ~ ¶¶

▶▶ between what James wrote in this passage ~ and Lev 19:15 (CSB).

▶▶ The command in that verse says: ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Do not act unjustly when deciding a case. Do not be partial to the poor or give preference to the rich; judge your neighbor fairly.

▶▶ Respect for the entire people of God, ~ particularly toward ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the defenseless and needy, ~ runs throughout the commands of Leviticus 19.

▶▶ Whenever judgments are made based ~ on selfish gain rather than on true need ~ or ~ ¶¶

▷▷ on the truth about a wrongful act, ~ justice is perverted.

▶▶ Neglect of orphans and widows and the poor visitor in church ~ ¶¶

▷▷ are prime examples of Christian neglect, ~ ~ i.e., ~ sins of omission and injustice.

▶▶ The Lord does not show favoritism, ~ and neither should his people.

▷▷ In Eph. Paul exhorts us ~ ~ be imitators of God, ~ as beloved children. ¶¶ 10/15

▷▷ Paul encouraged the Corinthians ~ to follow his example ~ insofar ~ ¶¶

↳↳ as he imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1).

▷▷ And Jesus told us, ~ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

↳↳ The bottom line here ~ is that ~ believers ~ are to emulate their Father in all they say and do.

→→ His perfection is the goal for our thoughts and action, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ for our relationships inside and outside the community of faith.

**BOTH TESTAMENTS ~ CONSISTENTLY WITNESS ~ THAT GOD DOES NOT PLAY favorites.**

▶▶ Our triune God ~ does not prefer ~ rich to poor, ~ men to women, ~ or even Jew to Gentile.

▶▶ He judges fairly, ~ by looking at the heart.

▷▷ Again, ~ as God told Samuel, ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ People judge by outward appearance, ~ but the Lord looks at the heart."

▶▶ Those who claim Jesus Christ ~ as their Savior and Lord ~ must also judge fairly ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and not ~ at face value. ¶¶ 11/15

OK, ~ LET'S BRING IT BACK TO JAMES' COMMAND IN VS 1.

▶▶His command implies that ~ favoritism ~ or discrimination, ~ is incompatible ~ with Christian faith.

IN VSS 2-4, ~ JAMES GIVES US A CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF PARTIALITY.

THIS IS A VIVID HYPOTHETICAL CASE STUDY.

▶▶Two men entered the church meeting.

▷▷We can assume ~ that these men were both visiting, ~ ¶¶

↪↪since they are described only by appearance.

▶▶One man was rich, ~ as noted by ~ his fancy clothes and expensive jewelry.

▶▶The other ~ was poor and dressed in shabby clothes.

▷▷Peasants commonly had ~ only one cloak, ~ which would thus ~ often be dirty.

▷▷The image James conjures up ~ is of the typical homeless person in our day, ~ ¶¶

↪↪dressed in ~ mismatched, ~ stained, ~ and smelly rags.

▶▶In this scenario, ~ the rich man is ~ given special attention and a good seat.

▷▷The believers were impressed by him.

↪↪He became the object ~ of special service and deference. ¶¶ 12/15

▶▶ The poor man, ~ however, ~ gets ~ standing room only, ~ or a seat on the floor.

▷▷ He is given neither dignity nor comfort.

▶▶ This ~ is mockery.

▷▷ In Proverbs, ~ Solomon warns: ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Whoever mocks the poor ~ insults his Maker (Prov. 17:5).

→→ And ~ ~ Those who oppress the poor ~ insult their Maker.

▶▶ James speaks out against this.

▷▷ It is our relationship with Christ ~ that gives us dignity, ~ not ~ ¶¶

↳↳ our profession or possessions.

THEN IN VS 4, ~ JAMES DRAWS HIS CONCLUSION ~ FOR WHEN THIS HAPPENS.

HAVE YOU NOT THEN MADE DISTINCTIONS AMONG YOURSELVES ~ ¶¶

▶▶ and become judges with evil thoughts?

▶▶ The Grk word for ~ not ~ implies that the question ~ demands a positive answer.

▷▷ "Yes James, ~ we have discriminated ~ if we pander to the rich ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and treat the poor in an undignified manner." ¶¶ 13/15

▷▷ IOW, ~ to do such a thing as this ~ is clearly wrong.

↳↳ And as James will say later, ~ ¶¶

→→ whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

JAMES THEN SAYS ~ THAT WHEN WE DO THIS, ~ we become judges with evil thoughts.

▶▶ Later ~ James will assert ~ that there is only one ~ lawgiver and judge.

▷▷ And it's not you or me.

▶▶ When we attempt ~ to discern people's value ~ based on external features, ~~ ¶¶

▷▷ we not only try to usurp God's role as judge, ~~ ¶¶

↳↳ but we fail miserably in the process.

→→ Finite in knowledge & understanding, ~ tainted by sin, ~ and imperfect.

THE TERM ~ THOUGHTS ~ CAN IMPLY EITHER ~ INTERNAL INTENTIONS ~ OR ~ external conversations.

▶▶ In this context, ~ it may refer to both.

▷▷ E.g., ~ as some speak audibly ~ ¶¶

↳↳ in support of their distinctions between rich and poor, ~ while others ~ mentally concur. ¶¶ 14/15

▶▶ Either way, ~ believers have sinned ~ if their reasoning process leads them ~ to discriminate ~ for or against others.

### THE ADJECTIVE ~ EVIL ~ SHOWS THAT JAMES ~ 77

▶▶ views this way of thinking and acting ~ as immoral.

▶▶ The congregation that discriminates between rich and poor ~ has turned ~ 77

▷▷ from worshiping God ~ to becoming evil-intentioned judges.

▶▶ No doubt the evil intention here ~ is to favor the rich ~ in order to benefit financially.

### WE NEED TO BE ON OUR GUARD AGAINST THIS.

▶▶ This problem is a clear and present danger, ~ especially in churches that are struggling financially.

### FOR CLARIFICATION AND APPLICATION SAKE, ~ AGAIN PLEASE UNDERSTAND, ~ 77

AGAIN, ~ JAMES IS USING A SPECIFIC ILLUSTRATION, ~ FAVORING THE RICH OVER the poor, ~ to illustrate a much larger principle.

▶▶ Namely, ~ all forms of favoritism ~ are wrong and sinful.

▶▶ We, ~ believers ~ are not ~ to make decisions about people ~ based on any external factor, ~ 77

▷▷ whether it be ~ mental state, ~ clothing, ~ color of skin, ~ or ~ general physical appearance. 15/15