

LAST TIME IN OUR STUDY OF JAMES, ~ ¶¶

WE BEGAN LOOKING AT THE 2<sup>nd</sup> MINI-ESSAY, ~ JAMES' DISCUSSION ~ OF FAITH & works.

▶▶ James 2:14-26.

LET'S REVIEW JAMES' PREMISE IN THIS MINI-ESSAY.

A CLAIM OF SAVING FAITH, ~ I.E., ~ A CLAIM TO BE A CHRISTIAN ~ ¶¶

▶▶ without the tangible evidence of its reality ~ cannot save. ⇔⇔ Not genuine.

▶▶ Genuine Christian faith ~ always ~ displays the tangible evidence of its reality.

▷▷ It may start out small, ~ when a person is first saved.

↳↳ But as a genuine Christian matures spiritually, ~ tangible evidence piles up.

▷▷ Will be times gen believer shrink back into sin.

↳↳ But looking at their lives overall, ~ tangible evidence will be unmistakable.

→→ E.g., ~ David & Abraham

▶▶ James then spends the rest of the ¶ ~ proving his argument. 1/15 ¶¶

LET'S ALSO REVIEW ~ TWO POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND ~ AS WE GO THROUGH THIS paragraph.

1<sup>st</sup>, ~ AS NOTED LAST WEEK, ~ JAMES USES DEEDS/WORKS IN THIS ¶ ~ IN A SPECIFIC sense ~ to refer ~ ¶¶

▷▷to actions done ~ out of love for Jesus ~ and for His glory.

▶▶IOW, ~ referring to good works ~ that have the right motives behind them ....

2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ AS WE ALSO NOTED LAST WEEK, ~ ¶¶

▶▶faith without the tangible evidence of its reality, ~ ¶¶

▷▷absolutely ~ cannot save anyone from the coming wrath.

▶▶Will keep no one from the lake of fire.

▶▶Because ~ faith without the tangible evidence of its reality ~ is dead.

▷▷And something that's dead, ~ cannot do anything.

HERE WE MUST DIGRESS ~ SO THERE'S NO MISUNDERSTANDING.

GOD HAS DONE ALL HE CAN ~ TO SAVE PEOPLE FROM HIS WRATH.

▶▶For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 2/15 ¶¶

▶▶ God would much rather people face His mercy, ~ love, ~ and grace ~ than His wrath.

▷▷ Scripture makes this abundantly clear.

▷▷ Through Ezekiel, ~ God says, ~ I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

▷▷ And in 1 Tim. Paul writes, ~ that God "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

▷▷ Please understand. ⇨⇨ Not saying . . . .

▶▶ But having said this, ~ that God would rather people face his ~ 77

▷▷ mercy, ~ love, ~ and grace ~ than His wrath, ~ it is also true ~ 77

↳↳ that when those who have rejected Jesus die, ~ they will face God's wrath.

→→ God has no choice . . . .

AND WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF GOD, ~ we should reiterate this from last week.

▶▶ In James' tough words, ~ we see the loving hand of our heavenly Father.

▷▷ He does not want us to hold to erroneous theology. ⇨⇨ Spells out clearly

▷▷ Furthermore, ~ in James' tough words, ~ we see God's hand of mercy ~ 77

↳↳ reaching out to those who think ~ a mere profession of faith ~ w/out tangible ev. of reality ~ can save them. 3/15 77

NOW LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION BACK TO JAMES ~ and his discussion of faith & works.

AFTER HIS APPLICATION OF THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE IN VERSE 17 ~ James continues to argue his case ~ ¶¶

▶▶that ~ faith ~ without the tangible evidence of its reality ~ cannot save, ~ vss 18-26.

▷▷Vss 18-19 today.

OVERVIEW OF THESE VSS.

IN VSS 18-25, ~ AS NOTED, ~ JAMES USES THE STYLE ~ of a dialogue with an imaginary objector.

▶▶Specifically, ~ in vss 18-19 ~ James deals with two misconceptions about faith ~ ¶¶

▷▷or two dimensions of false faith ~ that are held ~ by this imaginary objector.

↪↪And some actual people.

▷▷1<sup>st</sup>, ~ in vs 18, ~ he attacks the supposition ~ that there are two different ways of approaching God.

→→I.e., ~ some people coming by faith ~ and others coming by works.

▷▷2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ in vs 19, ~ he repudiates the notion ~ ¶¶

↪↪that faith consists solely ~ in believing certain doctrines to be true.

→→Demons have a perfectly correct theology. ⇔⇔ Not saved. 4/15 ¶¶

▶▶ Then to strengthen his case even further, ~ in vss 20-25, ~ he introduces ~ ¶¶

▷▷ two scriptural examples, ~ to show ~ that genuine faith ~ is always accompanied ~ ¶¶

↳↳ by the tangible evidence ~ of its reality.

▷▷ And he shows the opposite as well.

↳↳ A faith without tangible evidence of its reality, ~ is a useless and non-saving faith.

▷▷ 1<sup>st</sup> ex., ~ Abraham.

↳↳ His willingness to sacrifice his son came ~ about 30 years after ~ ¶¶

→→ his initial faith for which God counted him righteous. ⇔⇔ Works = Faith gen.

▷▷ 2<sup>nd</sup> ex., ~ Rahab.

↳↳ Before she hid the men, ~ she expressed faith in God.

→→ Hiding the spies ~ proved her expression of faith was genuine.

FOR CLARIFICATION PURPOSES, ~ and we'll come back to this again in the details, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ we need to drive the following point home in our overview.

▶▶ James was not raising the issue ~ of how God saves the ungodly.

▷▷ Nor was he showing ~ how Abraham and Rahab became righteous. 5/15 ¶¶

▶▶ He simply sets them forth ~ as examples to prove his point.

▷▷ And i.e., ~ genuine faith ~ is always accompanied ~ by the tangible evidence ~ of its reality.

▶▶ James thereby obliterates ~ the entirely mistaken and dangerous notion ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that a faith without deeds ~ has any value or power.

AFTER HIS IMAGINARY DIALOGUE, ~, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ in vs 26, ~ as noted, ~ James signals the end of this mini-essay ~ ¶¶

▷▷ by offering an illustration from daily life.

▶▶ Breathing ~ is an evidence of life.

▷▷ So too, ~ good works ~ are the evidence of genuine faith.

THAT'S THE BIG PICTURE, ~~ NOW LET'S LOOK AT VSS 18-19.

IN VS 18, ~ JAMES ATTACKS THE SUPPOSITION ~ ¶¶

THAT THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT WAYS OF APPROACHING GOD.

▶▶ Here he introduces the imaginary objector.

▷▷ But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." 6/15 ¶¶

▶▶ The Greek text here is hard to translate and interpret.

▷▷ Not bore you with a lot of details.

↪↪ Simply share the majority view, ~ which I agree with.

▶▶ The Grk text suggests ~ that the pronouns, ~ you and I, ~ are used generically ~ ¶¶

▷▷ rather than identifying ~ James and his opponent specifically.

▷▷ I.e., ~ the imaginary opponent is using the "you" and "I" ~ as a way of saying ~ ¶¶

↪↪ "One person says this, ~ another that."

▶▶ Possible to trans., ~ Now someone may argue, ~ some people have faith; ~ others have good deeds.

▷▷ Or, ~ But someone may say: ~ 'One chooses faith, ~ another action.'

THE OBJECTOR'S POINT ~ WOULD BE ~ THAT FAITH AND WORKS ~ ARE SEPARATE entities.

▶▶ His supposition seems to be ~ that there are two different ways ~ of approaching God.

▷▷ Namely, ~ some people coming by ~ faith ~ and others coming by ~ works.

▶▶ I.e., ~ the objector argues ~ that faith and works ~ ¶¶

▷▷ are separate but equal ways ~ to receive salvation. 7/15 ¶¶

## THUS, ~ THE POSITION JAMES IS SETTING HIMSELF OVER AGAINST ~ ¶¶

▶▶ is the supposition ~ that works and faith ~ are somehow separable.

▷▷ And either ~ faith or works ~ is a viable approach to God.

▶▶ James insists ~ that faith and works ~ are inseparable.

▷▷ And that good works ~ are the tangible evidence ~ of genuine faith.

▷▷ A declaration of faith ~ without tangible evidence of its reality ~ ¶¶

↳↳ is inadequate to save anyone.

## THE IMAGINARY OBJECTOR CLAIMS ~ THAT WORKS ARE A VIABLE OPTION FOR salvation.

▶▶ They are not.

▶▶ Our good works cannot save us.

▶▶ Why?

▶▶ Because, ~ for one thing, ~ even our good works ~ are tainted by our sin nature.

▷▷ As Isaiah says, ~ We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

▷▷ Sin is the defilement which a fallen nature imparts to all we do. 8/15 ¶¶



▷▷ So, ~ even what we might consider to be in our favor, ~ righteous acts, ~ 77

↪↪ partake of the defilement of fallenness.

▶▶ What's more, ~ consider what Paul says in [Gal. 2:15-16](#).

▷▷ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

▷▷ No Jew could attain salvation by observing the commands of the Mosaic law.

▷▷ And no person can ever be justified by good works.

▷▷ Paul is alluding to [Psalm 143:2](#).

↪↪ Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.

▷▷ Paul is in agreement with the psalmist ~ that all of us ~ are immersed in sin ~ 77

↪↪ and can never attain righteousness on our own.

▷▷ Only divine mercy and grace can make it possible.

▷▷ And that's exactly what God has done.

↪↪ Through his mercy and grace, ~ he has made it possible for us to be clothed ~ 77

→→ in the righteousness of his Son. 9/15 11

## BACK TO JAMES.

### IN THE LATTER PART OF VS 18, ~ JAMES CHALLENGES THE OBJECTOR.

▶▶ Show me your faith apart from your works, ~ and I will show you my faith by my works.

▷▷ "Show" here means ~ to demonstrate or prove, ~ not simply ~ allow to be seen.

▶▶ The 1<sup>st</sup> part of the challenge.

▷▷ James says, ~~ "Prove to me ~ that you have genuine faith without works.

↳↳ The implication ~ is that gen. faith ~ cannot ~ be demonstrated apart from action.

→→ James may have been being a little sarcastic here.

▶▶ And the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the challenge.

▷▷ James says, ~ and I will prove to you ~ that I have genuine faith ~ by my works."

▶▶ With his challenge, ~ James stumps the objector.

▷▷ Because, ~ there is no other way to prove genuine faith ~ other than ~ 77

↳↳ a person's transformed lifestyle ~ brought about by the Holy Spirit.

▶▶ Genuine faith ~ is invisible.

▷▷ An authenticating lifestyle ~ makes genuine faith ~ visible. 10/15 11

▶▶ Jesus said, ~ *If you love me, you will keep my commandments.*

▷▷ The impact of this verse means ~ that obedience is a test or indication ~ of loving Jesus.

▶▶ The inability to demonstrate one's faith ~ will prove ~ that it is not true faith.

▶▶ On the other hand, ~ James himself ~ possessed true saving faith, ~ 77

▷▷ which was active ~ in producing Christian works.

▶▶ He was not discounting faith, ~ but was proclaiming the fact ~ 77

▷▷ that true faith ~ is active, ~ while mere profession ~ has no life whatsoever.

↪↪ Faith and works ~ are inseparable.

▶▶ Good works being the natural result of genuine faith. ⇨⇨ *Never the other way around.*

▷▷ For we are *God's workmanship*, ~ created in Christ Jesus ~ for good works.

▶▶ We need to press this home, ~ so there's no misunderstanding.

▷▷ If someone consistently claims to have genuine faith in Christ, ~ 77

↪↪ yet consistently ~ fails to demonstrate it in their life, ~ James' challenge is fitting.

▷▷ Can faith ~ that is never seen ~ really be ~ saving faith?

↪↪ Is saving faith really there ~ if it is never seen? 11/15 11

IN VS 19, ~ JAMES REPUDIATES THE NOTION ~ THAT FAITH CONSISTS SOLELY ~ ¶¶

IN BELIEVING CERTAIN DOCTRINES TO BE TRUE.

▶▶ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

THIS IS A REF. TO THE SHEMA, ~ the Jewish confession of faith, ~ found in Deut. 6:4.

▶▶ It was reiterated by Jesus ~ as the opening to the greatest commandment.

▷▷ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one."

▶▶ James' point ~ is that ~ when you say aloud ~ that there is one God ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and you mentally assent to this truth, ~ this is not enough ~ to provide evidence of saving faith.

AFTER ALL, ~ EVEN THE DEMONS MENTALLY ASSENT ~ to the truth that there is one God.

▶▶ But clearly, ~ this does not signify ~ the presence of saving faith.

▷▷ This faith they have ~ does not benefit them.

↪↪ It does not issue forth ~ in a changed life.

DEMONS HAVE A PERFECTLY CORRECT "THEOLOGY."

▶▶ But do not have the commitment to what they believe.

▷▷ Their faith has affected their minds, ~ but not their wills. 12/15 ¶¶

▶▶ So a faith without the commensurate deeds ~ is also ~ a less than saving faith.

▷▷ It's a bogus faith.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED ~ THAT BELIEVING THERE IS ONE GOD ~ IS NOT ENOUGH TO save someone anyway.

▶▶ At the time of James, ~ non-Christian Jews and some pagan philosophers ~ 77

▷▷ were monotheists but not believers.

▶▶ Likewise today, ~ Jews believe that there is one God ~ but are not necessarily saved.

▶▶ Believing the right stuff about God ~ without true saving faith ~ is useless.

AND NOTICE THE DEMONS' RESPONSE. ⇔⇔ Shudder.

▶▶ The Greek term for "shudder" ~ describes a shudder ~ that results from fear.

▶▶ That the demons so respond to the fact of God ~ is evidence that their belief ~ 77

▷▷ is a thorough conviction.

▶▶ However, ~ their response is also evidence ~ that their faith ~ is not saving faith.

▶▶ For they are terrified at the thought of God.

▶▶ Their belief ~ has not brought them peace with God. 13/15 11

▶▶ Saving faith does bring people peace with God.

▷▷ Rom. 5:1, ~ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

▷▷ And Rom. 5:11, ~ And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation.

SAVING FAITH, ~ THEN, ~ is not mere intellectual acceptance ~ of a theological proposition.

▶▶ It goes much deeper, ~ involving the whole inner person ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and expressing itself outwardly ~ in a changed life.

↳↳ I.e., ~ a life that is pleasing and glorifying to God.

LET'S COME BACK TO DEMONS FOR A MOMENT..

▶▶ Demons ~ have a much more realistic view ~ of the type of faith they have ~ ¶¶

▷▷ than those who believe ~ you can have genuine faith without the commensurate works.

▶▶ Matt. 8:28-29, ~~ And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" ⇒⇒ Not self-deceived . . . .

HOLDING TO THE ERRONEOUS BELIEF ~ THAT ONE CAN HAVE GENUINE FAITH ~ without the resultant works ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is self-deception. 14/15 ¶¶

MY FRIENDS, ~ GOD WANTS NO ONE ~ TO BE SELF-DECEIVED.

SO HE MERCIFULLY SPELLS OUT THE TRUTH FOR US.

▶▶ Jesus said, ~ If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

▶▶ Those who are committed deeply to Jesus' teaching ~ 77

▷▷ will know the truth, and the truth will set them free.

▶▶ This means ~ that such followers can ~ discern truth from falsehood, ~ 77

▷▷ discover the true way to live by God's will, ~ and are committed to living that way.

▶▶ In short, ~ the "truth" ~ is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

▷▷ It both ~ changes lives ~ and ~ establishes true beliefs and doctrines.

↪↪ This kind of truth ~ will "set you free" ~ from error ~ and from sin.

→→ This is the kind of freedom ~ Jesus wants everyone to have.

↪↪ And that ~ is good news. 15/15