

James 2 - Show me your faith

v1-13 WARNING AGAINST FAVOURITISM

James now continues his emphasis on pure and undefiled religion (from 1:27). He shows how inconsistent it is with the gospel to show favouritism. **NIV "My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favouritism"**

v1 Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ: He immediately brings to their attention the life of their Lord as an example. Christ is "the glory" because he perfectly reflected the character of his Father: **Isa 40:5; Jn 1:14**. Jesus did not favour the rich: **Mt 19:23-26; Lk 6:24**. He taught that we should care for the poor: **Lk 14:7-14**.

Respect of persons: Do we show favouritism in the ecclesia to our family and close friends? Or those who may favour us in return? Do we give thought to the lonely in our youth group or those who are different to us? Are we prejudiced against certain families or ecclesias? If so, then this exhortation is for us. We cannot claim to have the faith of Christ if we show partiality: **1 Tim 5:21; Jas 3:17**. Read **Principles & Proverbs page 36**.

v2: Your assembly: The word is not *ecclesia* (as in 5:14) but *synagogue*. They were acting like Scribes and Pharisees. In 2:3 he refers to seats in the synagogues: **Mt 23:2,6**. A gold ring was a symbol of distinction.

v3 Footstool: He uses *irony* in alluding to **Psa 110:1; Isa 66:1,2**.

v4 Partial: Same word tr. *Wavering* in 1:6. The idea of division. **Judges of evil thoughts:** Gk. *evil thinking judges*. Contrast to the judgment of Christ in the Kingdom: **Isa 11:3,4**. Subsequent verses down to 2:13 speak of God's judgment. Jesus Christ is the true judge: **Jas 4:12; 5:9; 2 Tim 4:8**. It is human reasoning to label bro's/sis's and ecclesias "into boxes". So often our judgment is based on flawed information anyhow. We will be judged with the severity that we have judged others: **Mt 7:1-5**.

v5 Beloved brethren: He rebukes his readers yet constantly tempers this with a term of affection to show that he cares. **God:** Emphasis in Greek is on "God" cp. "ye" in 2:6. **Heirs of Kingdom:** **Mt 25:34; Rom 8:17; Tit 1:2; Jas 1:12; 1 Jn 2:25; Rev 3:21**. God's Kingdom is a *pearl of great price*: **Mt 13:46; Mk 10:30; Rom 2:7**. Green text is in parenthesis. If God has chosen each one of us above those important in this world, then how can we despise someone else whom God has chosen? A character "poor in spirit" is fit for the Kingdom: **Mt 5:3; Isa 66:1,2**. **Rich in faith:** **Isa 55:1; Rev 2:9; 3:17-18**.

Colour code: Blue (God & Jesus); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words & phrases); Purple (return of Jews to the land); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for Study Week 2012. For a PDF file, go to www.studyweek.net or email accdangierfeld@webshield.net.au. Much assistance for this study has been obtained from notes by John Martin, NZ youth conference notes and talks by Carl Parry, John Martin and David Bailey.

CHAPTER 2.

* It is not agreeable to Christian profession to regard the rich, and to despise the poor: 13 but rather to be loving, and merciful: 14 not to boast of faith where no deeds are, 17 which is but a dead faith, 19 the faith of devils, 21 not of Abraham, &c.

MY brethren, have not^b the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ,^c the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

4 Are ye not then partial in

v6 Despised: Christ was despised: **Isa 53:3**. He also was taken to judgment: **Jn 19:13**. So too were the apostles: **Acts 16:19**. **Rich:** The earliest persecution came from wealthy Sadducees, the priesthood: **Acts 4:1-7; 5:17**. **v7 Blaspheme:** Punished by death under the law: **Ex 20:7; Lev 24:10-16**. A serious mistake to cause unbelievers to blaspheme: **2 Sam 12:14; Rom 2:23-24; Tit 2:5**. **v8 Royal law:** **Lev 19:18** Upon this hangs all the law and prophets: **Mt 22:36-40**.

v9 Respect persons: Significantly this is also in the law: **Lev 19:15**. Remember he is speaking to Jews.

v10-11 Guilty of all: Law centred around 2 principles - love God and our neighbour: **Mt 22:36-40; 1 Jn 4:19-21; Ecc 12:13**. **v12** NIV "speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom". **Law of Liberty:** **Jas 1:25**. Freedom from condemnation: **Rom 8:1-2**. But not a licence to sin: **Tit 2:11-12**. Being *in Christ* frees us from the curse: **Rom 6:4-6; Gal 2:20**. **v13 Mercy:** NIV "because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!" cp. **Mt 7:1-5**. Mercy and judgment are opposites yet form God's character: **Ex 34:6-7; Rom 11:22**. In the life of Jesus we see the perfect blend of these: **Psa 85:10; Jn 1:14**. If we judge ourselves whilst being merciful to others, we will be shown mercy: **1 Cor 11:28-31**. At the judgment, mercy triumphs due to mercy we showed others.

v14-17 FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

v14 NIV "Can that faith save him?" Like Paul, James believes that we are justified by faith. James is saying that **real** faith is more than just giving lip service to a set of doctrinal beliefs. Jesus taught the same in **Mt 7:21-24**. In **Heb 11** we read how that faith was a **powerful force** in the lives of the faithful - it **produced action** in the most trying of circumstances. In **1 John** we read of 7 tests of true discipleship: **1 Jn 1:6,8,10; 2:4,6,9; 4:20**. We must live what we believe not just talk about it. Faith is tested to show that it is genuine. **James 2:14-17** is closely connected to **2:1-13**. **v15-16** The practical issues of life. See **Mt 25:32-45; Acts 11:28-29; Rom 15:26**.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." **Matthew 7:21**

yourself, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world [rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom / which he hath promised to them that love him?]

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

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.

v20 The 2nd time for emphasis (1st in 2:17, 3rd in 2:26) **v21 Abraham:** He is the father of the Jews so what better example to use to these Jews. Also the father of the faithful: **Rom 4:12; Gal 3:7-9**. **Justified** is to be *considered perfect*. God looks on us as if we are perfect, even though we are not. This was not merely actions in obedience to a command. It was motivated by the promise that God would provide: **Rom 4:12-25**. Abraham believed in God's power to raise Isaac: **Heb 11:17-19**. James refers to **Gen 22:16,18** "because you have obeyed"

v22 Wrought: Gk. *fellow-worker, energetic co-operation*. **Gal 5:6** "Faith expressing itself through love". **Made perfect:** Faith in the promise of a seed was the *motive force* behind offering Isaac: **Gen 15:4-6**. Faith *matured* or literally was *brought to completion*. In **Heb 6:13-15** we see a working together of faith **and** patient endurance. **v23 Scripture:** **Gen 15:6**, with **Gen 22** being the completion of a process. Cited also in **Gal 3:6; Rom 4:3**. The justified **live by Faith:** **Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38**. **Friend of God:** Also in **2 Chron 20:7; Isa 41:8**. James was writing to some who were friends of the world: **4:4**.

v24 NIV "a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone". Obedience is fundamental, not an optional extra: **1 Sam 12:15; 15:19; Heb 11:4-7**. Sadly, "salvation by faith alone" is the catchcry of many "Christians" today. **v25 Rahab:** Contrast with Abraham to show that this is a universal principle. She was the lowest of **Gentiles**, but faith triumphed: **Rom 3:29-30**. Many in the land believed but **she acted:** **Josh 2:9-16; 5:1; Heb 11:31**. **v26 Spirit:** Breath ie. **LIFE!**