

# JAMES

## CHAPTER TWO



### Partiality – James 2:1-9

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

## DO NOT SHOW PARTIALITY

### Alternate Translations of James 2:1

**"My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality ... if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors"** (Jam 2:1-NKJV).

**"My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism"** (James 2:1-NIV).

**"My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?"** (James 2:1-NLT).

**"My brothers, do not let your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus, the Messiah, be tainted by favoritism"** (James 2:1-ISV).

## WHAT IS PARTIALITY

**Definition** – Partiality is (a) to give judgment based on the outward circumstances of man and not their intrinsic merits, and so preferring, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high born, or powerful, over another who does not have these qualities, (b) a bias or prejudice that causes one to separate, make a distinction, discriminate some over others.

**Basis** – James focuses on favoritism based on wealth but it could be based on other factors that we will discuss later

**Motivation** – Selfishness, unkindness, ignorance, other?

**Note** that partiality is not the same as having special friends:

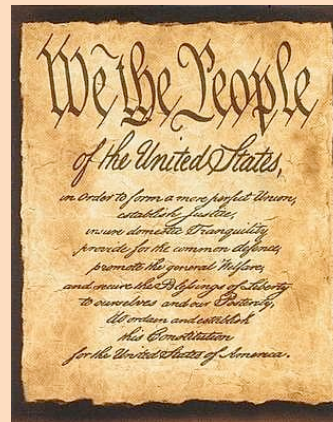
- David had a special affinity for Jonathan
- Jesus found a special friend in John

**Discrimination** – The “partiality” of James 2 reminds us of the topic of “discrimination” as addressed in our legal system ...

## DISCRIMINATION

**Definition** – The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, esp. on the grounds of race, age, or sex. -- treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class, or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit:

**In Constitutional Law**, the grant by statute of particular privileges to a class arbitrarily designated from a sizable number of persons, where no reasonable distinction exists between the favored and disfavored classes. Federal laws, supplemented by court decisions, prohibit discrimination in such areas as employment, housing, voting rights, education, and access to public facilities. They also proscribe discrimination on the basis of race, age, sex, nationality, disability, or religion. In addition, state and local laws can prohibit discrimination in these areas and in others not covered by federal laws.



Florida College  
From '77<sup>th</sup> Street'  
Brain-surgeon



**SUPPOSE THAT THIS FAMILY CAME TO SERVICES ... WOULD THEY BE SINCERELY GREETED?**

**Attractive, White, Young, Affluent**

College of hard knocks  
From '9<sup>th</sup> Street'  
Homeless



**WHAT ABOUT THIS MAN ... WOULD HE BE GREETED AS WARMLY?**

"Better keep a eye on Him. Who knows why he is here!"

**Not So White, Young, or Affluent**



## SOME EXCUSES FOR PARTIALITY

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Married vs. un-married  | 11. Perception of convertibility           |
| 2. Young vs. old           | 12. 'Strong' Christian vs. babe in Christ  |
| 3. Male vs. female         | 13. Educated vs. uneducated                |
| 4. Appearance              | 14. Athletic vs. the non sports enthusiast |
| 5. Race - nationality      | 15. Healthy and strong vs. not so healthy  |
| 6. Occupation              | 16. Interesting vs. boring                 |
| 7. Rich vs. poor           | 17. Hobbies – interests                    |
| 8. Democrat vs. Republican | 18. Shared experiences                     |
| 9. Outgoing vs. timid      | 19. Family Ties                            |
| 10. Shabby vs. fashionable | 20. Perceived competence or value          |

- We are all very different in personality, experiences, interests, wealth, abilities, etc.
- But we are not to use these differences as a basis for "dishonoring" some (Jam 2:6).
- "Who are you to judge another's servant" (Rom 14:4). All are "one in Christ" (Gal 3:28).
- If you do, "You commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors (Jam 2:9).

## PARTIALITY

1. Was this just a 1<sup>st</sup> century problem? Is our consideration of the topic largely a waste of time? None of us are even tempted to show partiality, right?
2. Is it possible to show partiality while believing oneself to be perfectly free of any bias?
3. What will be the results in the church if partiality is practiced?
4. What can we as individuals do to squelch any tendency toward partiality?

## GOD IS FAIR AND IMPARTIALITY

### He is a just God and a fair judge

- "...There is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me" (Isa 45:21).
- "But, O LORD of hosts, You who judge righteously, Testing the mind and the heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have revealed my cause" (Jer 11:20).

### He is no respecter of persons

- "So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, 'Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart'" (1Sam 16:7).
- "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." (Acts 10:34 – also see Deut 10:17-19).
- "You have put off the old man with his deeds ... and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all" (Col 3:9-11). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28).

## GOD DEMANDS THAT WE ALSO BE FAIR AND IMPARTIALITY

“You shall do no injustice in judgment. **You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty.** In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor” (Lev 19:15). “You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality ...” (De 16:19 ).

“**He will surely rebuke you if you secretly show partiality**” (Job 13:10 ). “**Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; Nor let me flatter any man**” (Job 32:21).

“... **It is not good to show partiality in judgment**” (Prov 24:23).

“My brethren, **do not hold the faith** of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, **with partiality**” (James 2:1).

## THE SIN OF PARTIALITY

James 2:1-9

Favoring some over others is natural and no big deal – right? James disagrees and gives this warning:

**Those who favor the rich over the poor have ...**

1. Shown partiality (v4)
2. Judged with evil thoughts (v4)
3. Dishonored the poor man (v6)
4. Violated the “royal law” – “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (v8)
5. Committed sin (v9)



## WHAT ABOUT THE RICH?

James 2:1-9

James warned some whose inclination was to provide special honor to the rich in the assemblies – if one were going to show partiality, this is the last group they should favor!

Forms of the word “rich are used 65 times in NT (NKJV) – the majority of time with a negative connotation. For example ...



- “... But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:24-25).
- “Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” (Jam 2:5 ). For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Cor 1:26).
- “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition” (1Ti 6:9). “Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?” (Jam 2:6-7 ).

## IF YOU REALLY FULFIL THE ROYAL LAW

James 2:8

“**LAW**” – Are Christians subject to Law? Yes! And not just any law. It is the King’s law – the “royal law” and it is a “law of liberty” (Jam 28, 12).

“**IF**” – Does James believe man has a free will? Yes! They can choose to “fulfill” the law or choose to sin and transgress the law. (Jam 2:8-10).

“**REALLY FULFILL**” IN CONTRAST WITH:

- Partially fulfill the law
- Deceiving yourself into falsely believing that you fulfill the law
- Hypocritically claiming to love others when you do not



# HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

James 2:8-9, 13

Really fulfill the law by loving all your neighbors as yourself without partiality ... showing mercy to all



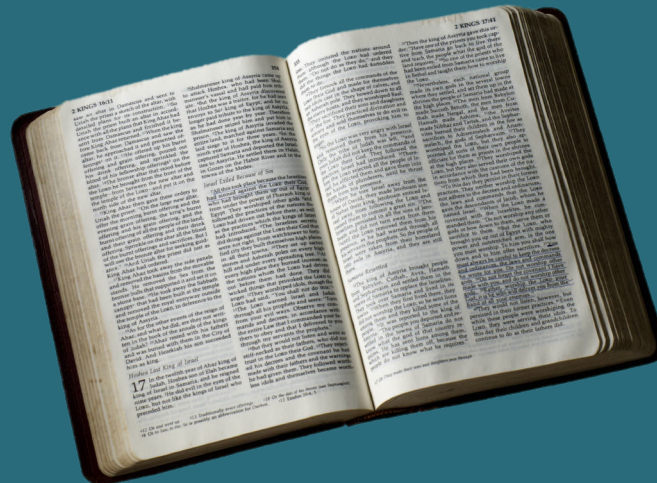
- Fail to fulfill the law
- Fail to properly love others
- Show partiality
- Convicted by the law as being a transgressor
- A sinner
- Will receive judgment without mercy

There is not much middle ground here. Either you are an obedient 'lover' or a 'discriminating sinner'

But is it really that big a deal?

## JAMES 2:9-11

# HOW MUCH LAW KEEPING IS ENOUGH? HOW MUCH LAW BREAKING IS TOO MUCH?



## JAMES 2:9-11

“...If you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. **For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**”

“For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.”



## THE SPIRITUAL BUFFET

James 2:10-11



Suppose God said, "I want you to eat one bite from each pan" and you answered:

I ate all of them but the last one ...

- It looks yucky and I just don't like it.
- And anyway, I ate from 90% of the pans.
- Also, I ate extra bites of the shrimp
- And the one I omitted was just slaw – not really all that important
- No one can eat that much. I did the best I could.

This man cannot claim to have obeyed the Lord's command. It does not matter what specific element of the command he disobeyed. The failure is the same – it is transgression of law – sin.

When WE choose which commandments will be ignored and which will be obeyed, who is really in charge in our lives? Who are we 'obeying?'

## 'PICK AND CHOSE' RELIGION

Perhaps in context, Peter responds to those who may argue that, in the overall scope of things, partiality is not that big a deal. This is certainly relevant to us – but are there other applications for us?

- Think about the disastrous partial obedience by Cain, Nadab & Abihu, Saul, those of Matt 7:22 & 15:, etc. They did some things right and in other areas they failed. It was their choice.
- Are we quick to offer the aspects of our religion that are easy and pleasurable to us while shrinking from those that are hard thankless, and unpleasant?
- Do we categorize sins as 'major' (e.g., murder) or 'minor' (e.g., speeding, gossip) and then act accordingly?

## **WE WILL BE JUDGED BY LAW**

“So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.” (James 2:12)

- Obviously law, properly applied, will have an impact on behavior.
- Those not impacted are lawless and rebellious sinners.
- Judged by what part of the law? All of it!
- So where does that leave all of us? (Rom 3:23)
- Are we then without hope? (Rom 5:20-21, 7:24-25)

## **SAVING FAITH IS WORKING FAITH**

**James 2:14-26**

## FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD

**“You see then that a man is justified by works and not by faith only” (James 2:24)**

1. An important message of James is the need for men to demonstrate the faith they profess through corresponding obedience (James 1:22, also 23-27; James 2:14-26).
2. The error being addressed in James’ time is also a big problem today.
  - Most so-called Christian denominations preach that salvation is based on faith without the need for any related works.
  - The origin of this error, as commonly taught today, is largely credited to Martin Luther (1483-1546).
3. But James’ teaching is addressed to Christians, not incipient Lutherans or Calvinists (James 1:1, 2:14).
4. We will look at the related denominational error and also the application for Christians today.

## SOLA FIDE

**Sola fide** (Latin: **by faith alone**), also historically known as the **doctrine of justification by faith alone**, is a Christian theological doctrine that distinguishes most Protestant denominations from Catholicism, Eastern Christianity, and some in the Restoration Movement.

**[It] asserts God's pardon for guilty sinners is granted to and received through faith, conceived as excluding all "works", – alone...** Thus, "faith alone" is foundational to Protestantism, and distinguishes it from other Christian denominations.

Martin Luther elevated sola fide to the principal cause of the Protestant Reformation, the rallying cry of the Protestant cause, and the chief distinction between Protestant Christianity and Roman Catholicism.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sola\\_fide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sola_fide))

**As we start this study of faith and works, lets look at the false doctrine of “faith only” as taught throughout the denominational world today.**

**ORIGIN OF THE “FAITH ONLY” DOCTRINE**

Early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Catholic Pope Leo X needed funds to reconstruct St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.



Pope Leo X



St. Peter's Basilica

## ORIGIN OF THE “FAITH ONLY” DOCTRINE, *Continued*

The means chosen to raise this money was through INDULGENCES. Catholic theology teaches that there are two punishments for sin; one is called eternal and is inflicted in hell, and the other is called temporal and is inflicted in this world or in purgatory. In (modern) Catholic theology, an indulgence is the full or partial remission of temporal punishment due for sins which have already been forgiven.

Pope Leo X sold indulgence franchises that allowed the franchisee to retain about half the funds raised by selling indulgences in return for sending to Rome the other half for Leo's construction project



## ORIGIN OF THE “FAITH ONLY” DOCTRINE, *Continued*



In 1517, Pope Leo X made Johann Tetzel (1465 –1519), a German Dominican preacher, commissioner of indulgences for all of Germany. He was an energetic and successful salesman.

The accusation that he sold full forgiveness for sins not yet committed, caused great scandal. Also he advocated the sale of indulgences for the dead and was infamous for saying, *“As soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory”* or *“As soon as the gold in the casket rings the rescued soul to heaven springs.”*

Tetzel was accused of overstating the Catholic position on indulgences by selling indulgences for forgiveness of sins, sins not yet committed, and for the sins of the dead.

## LESSON EIGHT

# JAMES

FIRST, SOME OLD BUSINESS ...

## FINAL THOUGHTS ON PARTIALITY

Excerpts from an article by David Maxson

"I'm concerned about segregation in churches.

No, I'm not speaking of racial segregation. That is a problem and it is one we should continue to fight to change.

I'm talking about age segregation. In many churches you have very well defined age groups that sit together, converse with each other after services, and interact with each other outside of services. ...if we look around us and only see people just like us we are not functioning as the body of Christ. The body of Christ is diverse, and God has arranged it this way intentionally ....

My exhortation is this: embrace the unique talents of people who are not like you. It's not easy to relate to people who are different. It's easier to just work with people who are like us. But we're missing out on many blessings when we separate ourselves out.

Father, thank You for the diverse Body of which we are all members. Help us to embrace differences, not run from them. Give us patience to work with and ultimately learn from each other."

David Maxson



## JAMES 2:8-13

“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. **For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.”**

## JAMES 2:8-13

**“For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy” (NKJV). Or in the NLT, “There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others.”**

He that is harsh and short with his neighbor, or else does not help him, he shall find God a hard and rough judge to him. (Geneva)

Consider the parable of the two debtors in Matt 18:21-35

**Mercy triumphs over judgment.”**

As the above parable shows, failing to show mercy puts one in danger of the judgment and eternal destruction. Conversely, showing mercy puts one in position to receive mercy at the judgment rather than to receive condemnation. In this sense, one’s demonstrated mercy helps them triumph over the condemnation that might otherwise be theirs in the last day.

Merciful men, who have shown mercy to the poor saints, will not be afraid of the awful judgment, but rather rejoice or glory, as the word signifies, in the view of it, since they will obtain mercy at that day, (Gill)

## WHAT IS THE POINT OF JAMES 2:10?

*“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”*

James wrote, “ if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors” (Jam 2:9).

Some might respond, “Are you saying I am a sinner just because I disobey in this one area – just because I sometimes show partiality?”

And James said, ‘Even if you kept the rest of the law perfectly and fail in this one area (i.e., partiality), you are a law breaker and a sinner.’

Why? Because the same God that gave this commandment also gave all the others. Regardless of which one of His commandment you violate it is the same. “You have become a transgressor of the law.”

## WHAT IS THE POINT?

*“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all...” (Jam 2:9-10)*

### SOME APPLICATIONS FOR US

1. We do not get a pass just because we perceive the particular law we violated to be ‘less significant.’ Any transgression of any law leaves us condemned and in need of the grace of God. Remember that Jesus said that these supposed minor laws “ought to have done, without leaving the others undone” (Matt 23:23).
2. It would be arrogant, selfish, and rebellious if we presumed to classify God’s laws as to which are really important and which are not worthy of as much concern.
3. Respect for God requires a respect for His law – all His law.

# SAVING FAITH IS WORKING FAITH

James 2:14-26

Continued ...

## ORIGIN OF THE "FAITH ONLY" DOCTRINE, *Continued*



Martin Luther  
(1483-1546)

Martin Luther was a highly educated Catholic priest and was a powerful and influential preacher.

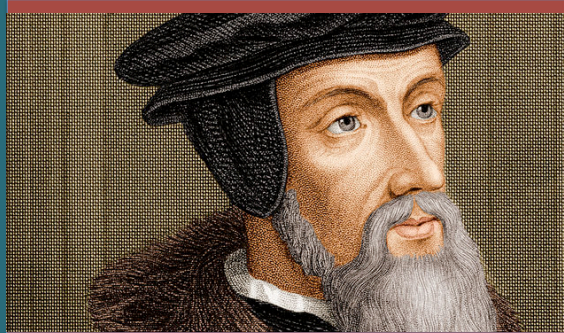
1. In about 1510, Martin Luther visited Rome and was appalled at the immortality and corruption he witnessed there among the Catholic priests and leadership.
2. About 1513, as a lecturer on the Book of Romans at the University of Wittenberg, Martin Luther came to believe that salvation is based solely on faith alone.
3. About 1517, as Johann Tetzel did his work selling indulgences, Martin Luther was moved to write his 95 Theses and nail them on the university's chapel door.
4. This event is generally thought to mark the start of the Protestant Reformation.

## ORIGIN OF THE “FAITH ONLY” DOCTRINE, *Continued*

As a result of preaching by Martin Luther, the Lutheran church was established and grew. A key part of its doctrine was salvation by faith alone.

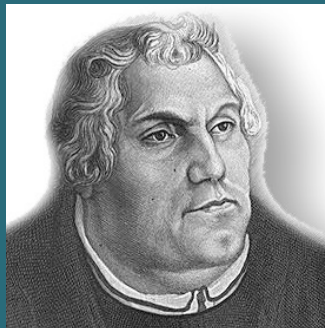
About 1530, John Calvin, an influential French preacher, broke with the Catholic church. He proclaimed the doctrine now widely known as Calvinism which served as the foundation of the Reform and Presbyterian Churches. Its principles were later adopted by many others (i.e., some Baptists).

Calvin’s ideas were influenced by the work of Luther. Most groups adopting the Five Points of Calvinism also accept Luther’s faith only doctrine.



John Calvin  
(1509-1564)

## MARTIN LUTHER AND THE ‘FAITH ONLY’ DOCTRINE



Martin Luther taught that salvation was based on faith alone, and not received based upon a person’s meritorious works. **He did not, however, take faith alone to mean that mere mental assent to Christ’s deity was sufficient to obtain salvation.** In fact, Luther’s idea of faith alone does not conform to the modern-day idea that baptism cannot be required for salvation.

<http://espanol.apologeticspress.org/articles/1858>

## MARTIN LUTHER AND THE 'FAITH ONLY' DOCTRINE, CONTINUED

### Martin Luther said regarding baptism:

"[I] affirm that Baptism is no human trifle, but that it was established by God Himself. Moreover, He earnestly and solemnly commanded that we must be baptized or we shall not be saved. No one is to think that it is an optional matter like putting on a red coat. It is of greatest importance that we hold Baptism in high esteem as something splendid and glorious. The reason why we are striving and battling so strenuously for this view of Baptism is that the world nowadays is full of sects that loudly proclaim that Baptism is merely an external form and that external forms are useless.... Although Baptism is indeed performed by human hands, yet it is truly God's own action" (*Large Catechism*, 1978, pp. 98-99).

<http://espanol.apologeticspress.org/articles/1858>

## MARTIN LUTHER AND THE 'FAITH ONLY' DOCTRINE, CONTINUED

### Martin Luther said regarding 'faith only' and baptism:

But our know-it-alls, the new spirit people, claim that faith alone saves and that human works and outward forms contribute nothing to this. We answer: It is of course true that nothing in us does it except faith, as we shall hear later. But these blind leaders of the blind refuse to see that faith must have something in which it believes, that is, something it clings to, something on which to plant its feet and into which to sink its roots. Thus faith clings to the water and believes Baptism to be something in which there is pure salvation and life, not through the water, as I have emphasized often enough, but because God's name is joined to it ... It follows from this that whoever rejects Baptism rejects God's word, faith, and the Christ who directs us to Baptism and binds us to it (*Martin Luther's Large Catechism*, (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia), pp. 101-102).

<http://espanol.apologeticspress.org/articles/1858>

## THE 'FAITH ONLY' DOCTRINE IN THE DENOMINATIONAL WORLD TODAY



Charles Stanley

While not every Protestant believes the same thing on the 'faith only' doctrine, a good number of them agree with this well known denominational preacher.

### Quotes from Dr. Charles Stanley Regarding 'Faith Only'

- "You and I are not saved because we have enduring faith. **We are saved because at a moment in time we expressed faith** in our Lord" (p. 190). "**When you believe** that Jesus took your place and that His blood counts as the payment for your sin, **then God sees you as sin-free** and pure for all time. (John 3:16)" (*Eternal Security: Can You Be Sure?* - p. 35)
- In another article Stanley writes: "Look at that verse [John 3:18] and answer this question: According to Jesus, what must a person do to keep from being judged for sin? Must he stop doing something? Must he promise to stop doing something? Must he have never done something? The answer is so simple that many stumble all over it without ever seeing it. **All Jesus requires is that the individual 'believe in' Him**" (p. 67). **It would be hard to put it more plainly than that!** . . ." (*Spring 1991 issue of the Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* - pp.69-71).

## THE METHODIST DISCIPLINE PUTS IT THIS WAY ...

**“Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.”**

(1948 Discipline, p. 27, Art. 69).

## N. T. WRIGHT’S ‘NEW PROSPECTIVE’



*N. T. Wright*

N. T. Wrights’ “New Perspective on Paul has cause great consternation among the Presbyterians and some other Calvinists with his ‘new’ take on faith alone:

“When Paul uses the term “faith” as the basis of our salvation, he is not using the term merely to refer to our trusting acknowledgment of the work of Christ in our behalf, but rather as a commitment to coming under the rule of Christ in the ordering of one’s life. Thus, faith is really ‘faithfulness.’”

*Dr. Bryan Chapellon on what the ‘New Prospectives’ believe  
President and Professor of Practical Theology Covenant Theological Seminary  
Presbyterian Church of America (PCA)*

## PAUL ON FAITH AND WORKS

Passages like those that follow were misunderstood by Martin Luther to imply that justification was by faith alone. He equated 'deeds or works of law' with acts of obedience

<sup>20</sup>Therefore **by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified** in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God **apart from the law** is revealed ..., <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ ... <sup>28</sup>therefore we conclude that **a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law**" (Rom 3:20-21, 28) "... <sup>2</sup>we are not under law but under grace" (Rom 6:15). "<sup>3</sup>For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son..." (Rom 8:3).

"... <sup>16</sup>**a man is not justified by the works of the law** but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and **not by the works of the law**; for **by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified**" (Gal 2:16). "But that **no one is justified by the law** in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith'" (Gal 3:11).

## PAUL ON FAITH AND WORKS

"...<sup>31</sup>Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. <sup>32</sup>Why? Because **they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law**. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone..." (Rom 9:31-33). "<sup>3</sup>For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup>**For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes**" (Rom 10:3-4).

**God has a plan for making men righteous – through the work of Christ. But Jews of his day rejected this plan and sought righteousness on their own terms – through a continued attempt to be good enough though keeping the Mosaic Law. Their futile optional plan excluded any appeal for grace through Jesus.**

**Paul's purpose was to persuade these Jews that salvation was available only through the grace that was in Christ and which was through faith – and not though any plan that depended on personal merit separate from the grace God has given in Christ.**



## PAUL ON FAITH AND WORKS

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),<sup>6</sup>and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His **grace** in His kindness toward us **in Christ Jesus**. <sup>8</sup>For **by grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup>not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph 2:4-9).

**So we are saved by the grace that is in Christ Jesus and that is accessed by faith. But what kind of faith? James answers that question.**

## PAUL AND JAMES AGREE PERFECTLY ON FAITH AND WORKS

**Paul said:**

- **We are saved by grace (and not by meritorious OT law keeping)**
- **This grace is available only in Christ Jesus and**
- **It is accessed by faith.**

---

**James said:**

- **The faith by which God’s grace can be accessed must be a living and mature faith – one that results in works of obedience.**

**Paul preached works of faith (Rom 1:5) and James preached a faith with works (Jam 2:14-26).**

## “DO NOT BE DECEIVED MY BELOVED BRETHREN”

James 1:16

Wisdom is needed (Jam 1:5) to avoid being deceived about our spiritual condition. Before we conclude that we cannot be deceived, we should see Matt 7:21-27.

James has already addressed these areas of possible self-deceit:

- Do not be deceived about the course of temptation and the consequences of giving in (James 1:13-16)
- Do not be deceived about what manner of man you are. Pay attention to the ‘mirror’ and react accordingly (James 1:22-25)
- Do not be deceived about whether your ‘religion’ is pure (James 1:26-27)
- Do not be deceived about whether you really fulfill the “Royal Law” (James 2:8-9)

Now he comes to another area where we have to be careful not to be deceived:

- Do not be deceived about whether your faith is “profitable,” “perfect,” and ‘alive’ (James 2:14-26)

## “WHAT DOES IT PROFIT?”

James 1:14-17

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?”

“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?”

“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

**URGENT MATTER!** – This is not just a discussion of effective benevolence but rather a matter of eternal salvation!

# “WHAT DOES IT PROFIT?”

James 1:14-17

ANSWER:

**Absolutely nothing!**

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? **Can faith save him?**”

**Alone (implied)**

ANSWER:

**Absolutely not!**

“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, **what does it profit?**”

ANSWER:

**Absolutely nothing!**

“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

- ◆ But what if they really mean well?
- ◆ What if they really believe things will get better?

Simple and obvious example intended to illustrate and conclusively answer the question posed above.

# THE TRUE APPRAISAL OF A FAITH THAT DOES NOT WORK

James 1:14-17

**2** ...that is un-profitable

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? **Can faith save him?**”

**3**

**...and cannot save**

“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?”

“Thus also faith by itself, if it **does not have works, is dead.**”

**Faith without works ...is a dead faith**

**1**

## “SHOW ME YOUR FAITH”

“But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:18).



“I have faith”

“Show it to me. I can’t see it. How can I perceive it if there are no resultant works. It is, at most, an invisible sentiment with no substance or effect.



“I have works”

“It is quite clear that you do. I can see them. And such works are clear and incontrovertible evidence that you have faith. No man without faith would be motivated to do such things.

Questions:

1. Can one have acceptable faith without works?
2. Can one have acceptable works without faith? (Consider Mark 16:15-16; Rom 14:23)
3. What is the obvious indication that one has a living faith?

## THE BELIEVING DEMONS

James 2:19

“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!”

“Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? **I know who You are – the Holy One of God!** ... And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, **“You are the Christ, the Son of God!”** And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for **they knew that He was the Christ.**” (Luke 4:33-34, 41).

The obvious message: Demons have a measure of faith but do not exhibit corresponding works of righteousness – and certainly no one would argue that they enjoy God’s favor!

“You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?” (James 2:19-20-NIV). Consider the example of Abraham ...

## THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

### The Father of the Faithful (Rom 4:16)

What then shall we say that **Abraham** our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "**Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**" Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Rom 4:1-5)

"Was not **Abraham** our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "**Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**" And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (Jam 2:21-24).

By faith **Abraham** obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going ... By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country ... By faith **Abraham**, when he was tested, offered up Isaac ..."  
(Heb 11:8-17)

"Just as **Abraham** believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness ... But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith" (Gal 3:7-11).

## THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM

### The Father of the Faithful (Rom 4:16)

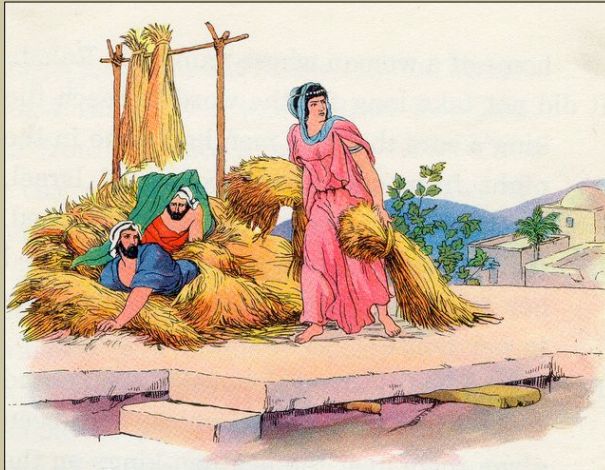
"Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "**Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**" And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (Jam 2:21-24).

By faith **Abraham** obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going ... By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country ... By faith **Abraham**, when he was tested, offered up Isaac ..."  
(Heb 11:8-17)

## THE FAITH OF RAHAB

“Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also’ (James 2:25-26).

“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace” (Heb 11:31).



## IN SUMMARY – TWO FAITHS

### ACCORDING TO JAMES, FAITH ONLY ...

- Will not bless (1:25)
- Will not profit (v14)
- Will not save (v14)
- Will not justify (v24)
- Is not “perfect” (v22)
- It is dead (v17, 26)

### BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND, FAITH WITH WORKS:

- Gives blessings (Jam 1:25)
- Is a part of pure and undefiled religion (Jam 1:27)
- Is profitable (Jam 2:14)
- Can provide salvation (Jam 2:14)
- Provides for justification (Jam 2:21)
- Working faith is a complete faith (Jam 2:22)
- Works bring faith to life (Jam 2:26)

Before we leave James 2

## WHAT ARE THE APPLICATIONS OF JAMES' MESSAGE FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?

James' words can rightly be used to refute the faith-only false doctrine. But, in context, these words to "beloved brethren" (Jam 1:19, 2:14) and not to alien sinners. So we need to carefully consider the proper application for us today.

1. We were created for good works – "For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10).
2. We must be zealous for good works – Jesus "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, **zealous for good works**" (Tit 2:14 ).
3. We must be rich in good works, fruitful – "And let our people also learn to **maintain good works, to meet urgent needs**, that they may not be unfruitful" (Tit 3:14).

Without such works, even the one who claims to be a Christian has a worthless dead faith and is lost. Remember, *"To the work! To the work! We are servants of God; Let us follow the path that our Master has trod; With the balm of His counsel our strength to renew, Let us do with our might what our hands find to do"* (Fanny Crosby).

# JAMES

## CHAPTER THREE

# BEWARE SINS OF THE TONGUE

James 3:1-12

Study's indicate that the average adult speaks about 16,000 words per day!



That provides hundreds of opportunities to sin and do great harm every day! At the same time it provides opportunities for great good to be done. How will we use our tongues?

# CAUTION FOR BIBLE TEACHERS

## ALL CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE TEACHERS

- “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient...” (2Ti 2:24).
- “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you...” (Heb 5:12).



**BUT, IN THIS CONTEXT, JAMES IS WARNING PUBLIC BIBLE TEACHERS**



## CAUTION FOR BIBLE TEACHERS

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment” (James 3:1).

**Many eagerly sought to be public Bible teachers:**

- **Some for the praise of men** – “But all their works they do for to be seen of men... and love... to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi” – i.e., “teacher” (Matt 23:5-7).
- **Some for money** – “For there are many ...who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.” (Titus 1:11; also Phil 1:15).
- **Some without knowledge of the truth** – “Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (1Tim 1:7).
- **Some who did not ‘walk their talk** – “Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?
- **Some were malicious false teachers** – Speaking deceptive and empty words (2Pet 2:1-18)

## CAUTION FOR BIBLE TEACHERS

‘So you want to be a public Bible teacher. That can be good. But you should not thoughtlessly rush into this matter. Teaching is an awesome responsibility. It provides many opportunities for sin with the tongue. And you will be held accountable for what you say and do not say.’

### STEWARDSHIP

- Public teaching is not about us – not about what we enjoy doing. It is God’s work.
- Teachers have been granted public assembly time, access to the ears of many, and perhaps an open door to do good. How terrible if that opportunity is squandered!

### VUNERABILITY – to sin with the tongue.

- Many word spoken to many people.
- Opportunity for sin and for great harm

### ACCOUNTABILITY (James 3:1)

- “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Luke 12:48)
- “So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty” (Jas 2:12 ).
- “For every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it “ (Matt 12:36).

## TEACHERS AND STRICTER JUDGMENT

**Barnes** – not that those who were public teacher would be condemned, but that there would be a much more solemn account to be rendered by them than by other men, and that they ought duly to reflect on this in seeking the office of the ministry.

**Clarke** – should men enter into the office of teaching others ... perform it negligently, or live not according to the doctrine they teach others, such would be judged out of their own mouths, and by their own words, and their condemnation would be aggravated

**Abbott** – The meaning is, that a great responsibility is incurred by every one who attempts to guide and instruct others.

**Family** – Right views of the responsibility of religious teachers and guides, of the difficulties of their work, the strict account which they must render to God, and the awful ruin which will come on those who are unfaithful, tend effectually to prevent improper aspirations for power in the church.

## TEACHERS AND STRICTER JUDGMENT

### RELATED PASSAGES

“...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more” (Lu 12:48 ).

“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.” (Luke 9:42).

“Therefore let us ... resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way. ... It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak (Ro 14:13, 21 ).

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you” (Matt 7:1 ).

“[You] know His will ...and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?” (Rom 2:17-21).

## HORSES' BITS



A man who is able to control his tongue can “brindle” his whole body. “Indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body ... Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things” (James 3:3, 5).

## “LOOK ALSO AT SHIPS”



A man who is able to control his tongue can brindle his whole body. “Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.” (James 3:3, 5).



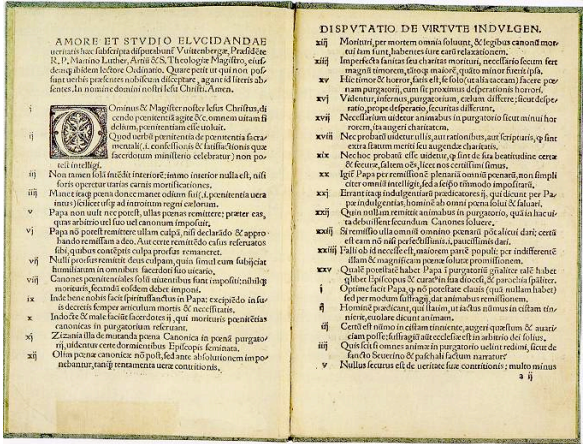
## **HORSES, SHIPS, AND FIRE...**

### **What is the Point?**

- The ‘little’ tongue, of course represents our communications – primarily verbal but would also apply to other communications (e.g., written).
- Don’t be deceived by the small size of the tongue. **Its potential impact is great!**
  - Just like little bits are crucial in the domestication of horses
  - And relatively small rudders play an essential role in the operation of ships
  - And small fires can grow into a huge and destructive forest fire
- **“Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things”** (James 3:5)



# MARTIN LUTHER AND THE NINETY-FIVE THESES



The Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences, commonly known as The Ninety-Five Theses, was written by Martin Luther in 1517 and is widely regarded as the initial catalyst for the Protestant Reformation. The disputation protests against clerical abuses, especially the sale of indulgences.

## COUNCIL OF TRENT

### Catholic Statement of Beliefs in Response to the Reformation

During the 1500s, Lutheranism was growing rapidly. In response, this council was convened by the Catholic Church in Trent between 1545, and 1563 for twenty-five sessions. Its purpose was to condemn the principles and doctrines of Protestantism and to clarify the doctrines of the Catholic Church on all disputed points. Results included the following:

- **Canon 9:** "If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema."
- **Canon 12:** "If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that confidence alone by which we are justified ... let him be accursed"
- **Canon 14:** "If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because that he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema."
- **Canon 24:** "If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema."

## GRACE, FAITH, AND WORKS

How do they fit together in God's plan of salvation?



**GRACE**

Conditional?

Non conditional?

- Universalist
- Calvinists

- We understand that salvation is by the grace of God (Rom 3:24, Eph 2:3-9; Tit 2:11, 3:1-7)
- Almost all religious people agree. That is why sacrifices, worship, and prayers have offered since time began – even by idolaters.
- The principle question is whether that grace is conditional or non conditional

**GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**

**GRACE**

Conditional?

Non conditional?

- Universalist
- Calvinists

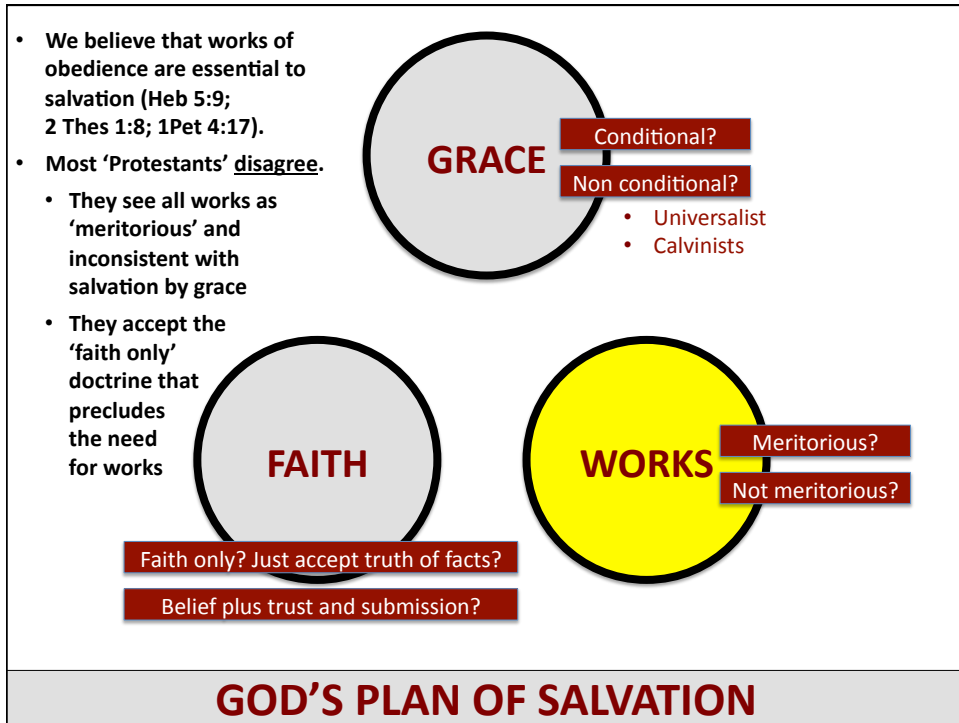
**FAITH**

Faith only? Just accept truth of facts?

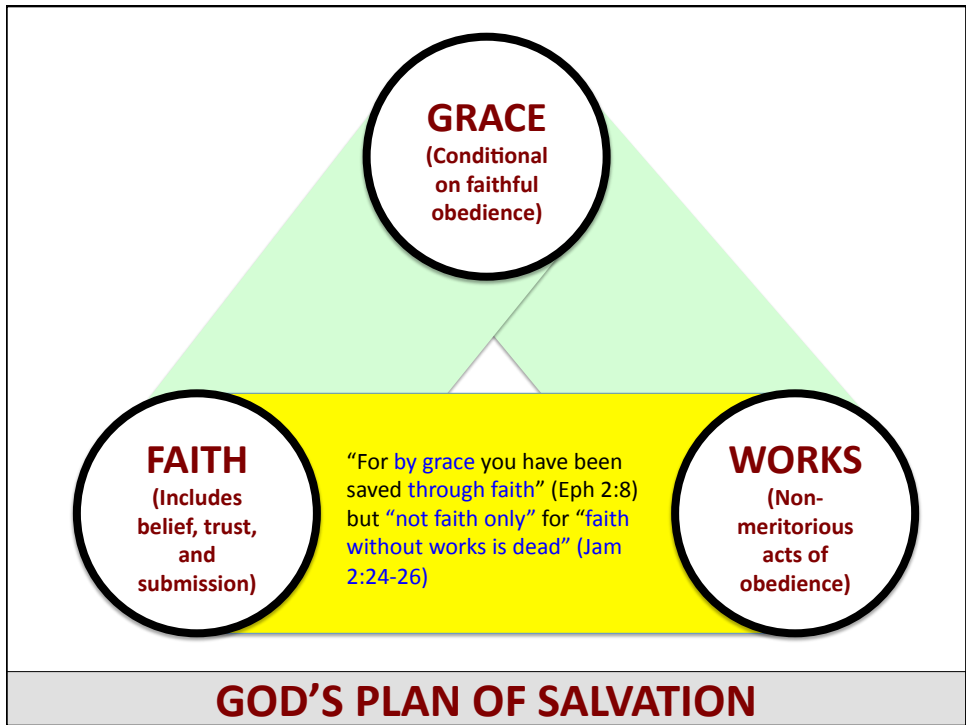
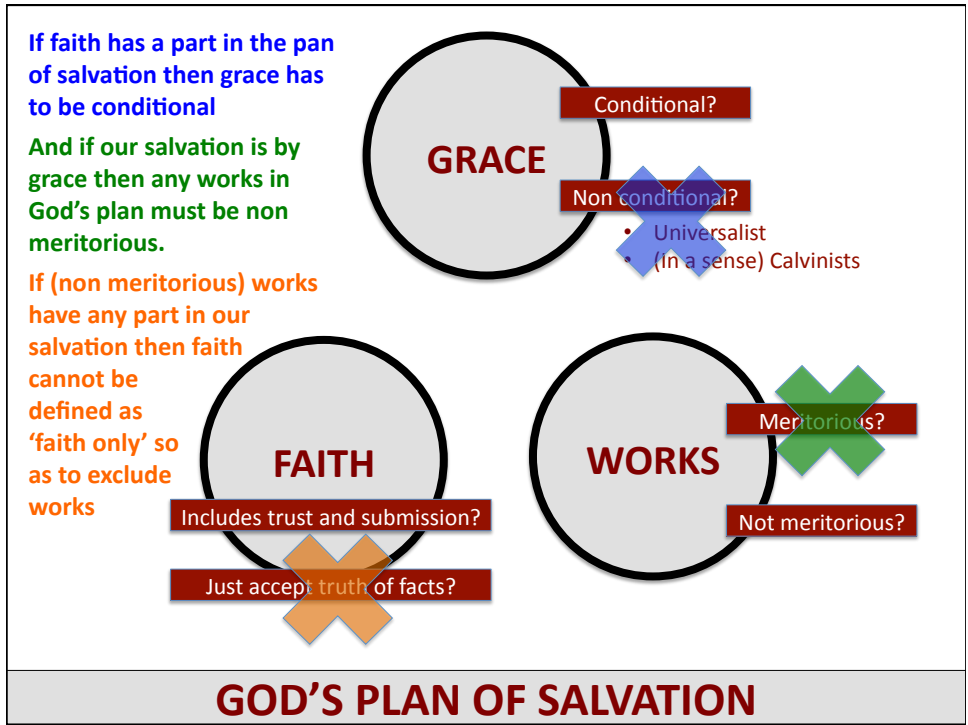
Belief plus trust and submission?

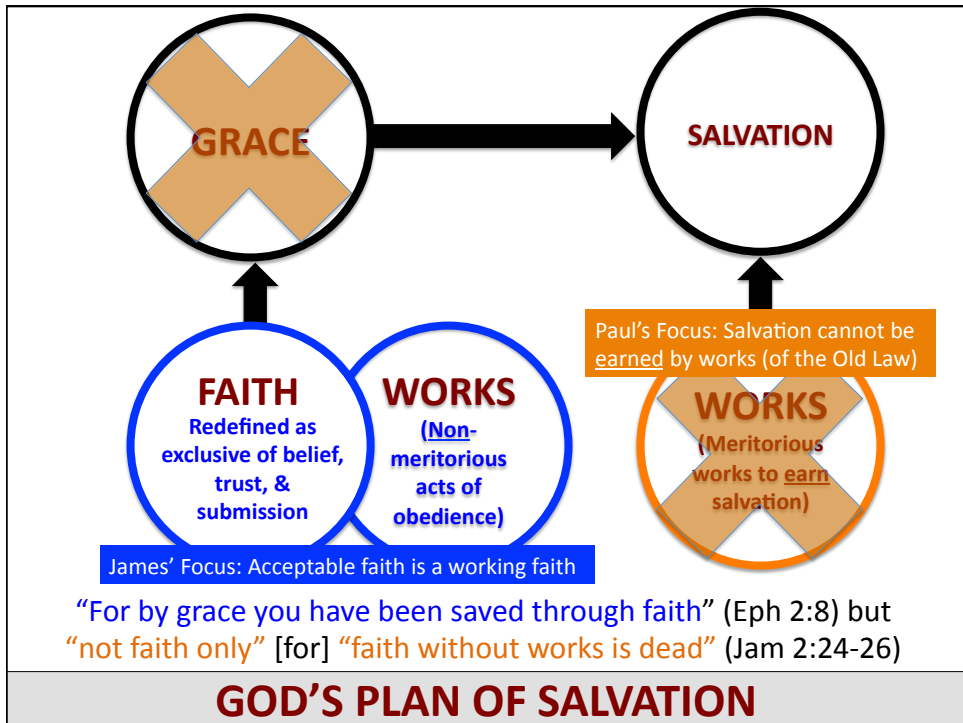
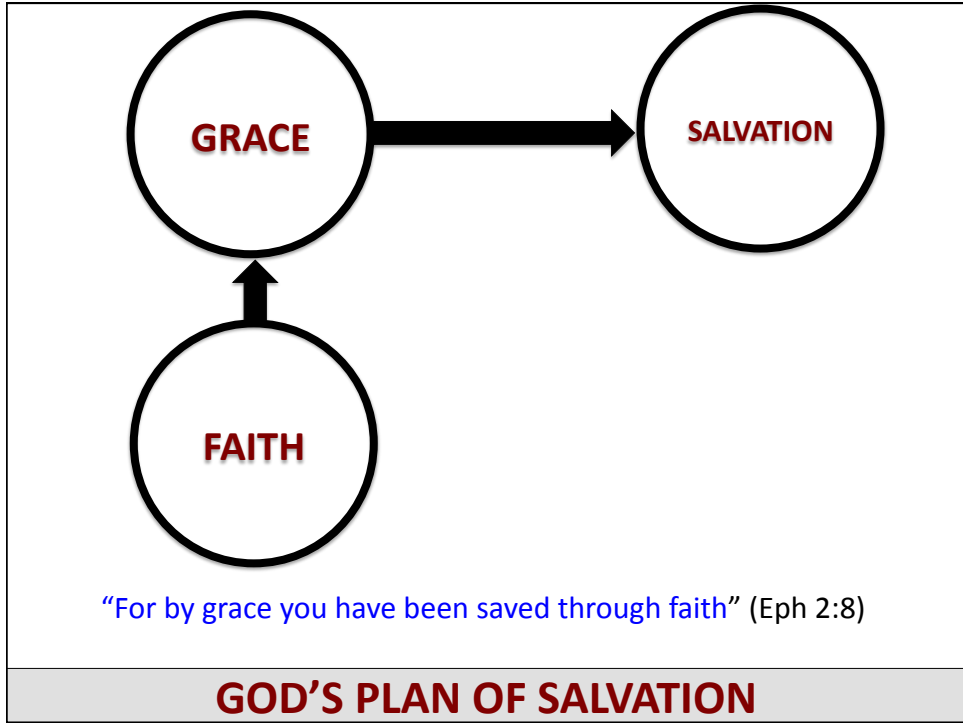
- We also believe that faith is essential to salvation (Mark 16:15-16; John 8:24; Eph 2:8; Heb 11:6).
- And almost all of the so called Christian world agrees.
- But there is wide disagreement on the nature of that faith – it it just the mental assent to the truth of facts – or more? Is it 'faith only' of faith and the obedience of faith?

**GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION**









## RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER

While Romans 14 deals with our relationship with brothers who are “weak in the faith,” the underlying principles apply regardless of what kind of partiality is involved.



“Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand” (v4).

“But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (v10).

“Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.” (Rom 14:13).

## DO NOT SHOW PARTIALITY

- The wording suggests that this was an area of real concern to Peter and may have been offered in response to reports of related problems.
- Behavior in the assembly was specifically cited (“into your assembly” v2) and based on wealth. But surely this sin could be committed in other settings (e.g., which brethren you will invite to your house).
- Is this topic worthy of our consideration? Is showing partiality ever a problem for Christians today?