

*Expanded Analysis of*

# JAMES

## "APPLIED CHRISTIANITY"

"For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead." James 2:26

### EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF JAMES

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## Notes to the Reader:

(1) The footnotes in this analysis of James often include an Anglicized rendering of the Greek original word, plus a number. This number is the standardized Strong's Lexicon number. I include the Strong's number so that the reader may go to an online source and examine how the original writers used a particular Greek word in its various contexts. In other words, I believe it is important for us English speakers to know how Greek speakers and writers used a particular word in establishing the appropriate shades of meaning of that word.

One helpful online source in examining original words is StudyLight.org. Here is the direct link to StudyLight's Greek Lexicon: <http://www.studylight.org/lexicons/greek/>. If you type in the Strong's number in the appropriate dialogue box, you will be taken to the page where all the occurrences of that particular Greek word in the various New Testament books occurs. The reader will notice that he has the option of looking up verses in the King James Version or the New American Standard Bible. To obtain the proper Strong's number, one source you may use is [NetBible.org](http://www.netbible.org). It defaults at Matthew 1:1, but you may insert any Scripture reference you wish. "Mouse-over" the text, and a number will pop up. Of course, if you are looking up a Strong's Number in the Old Testament, you will need to consult StudyLight's Hebrew Lexicon: <http://www.studylight.org/lexicons/hebrew/>. Happy studying God's Word!

(2) When I quote sources, I give a more or less complete identification in the first instance, followed in parentheses by the name or abbreviation by which that source will be identified in the future. Thereafter, that source will generally be identified by that shorter nomenclature.

# JAMES

## “APPLIED CHRISTIANITY”

“For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.” James 2:26

### A 1 HANDLING TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS 1:1-18

#### B 1 A Constituency Undergoing Trials / Temptations – Introduction 1:1

C 1 The author: {1} James,<sup>1</sup>

D 1 a bond-servant<sup>2</sup> of God

D 2 and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

C 2 The recipients: to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James 1:1 - James: James was not the brother of John, both sons of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21; 10:2), for he had been wrongfully executed by Herod Agrippa I in the early days of the church, ca. A.D. 44 (Acts 12:1-2). This James is rather the half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19) who, after his conversion to Christ following Jesus' resurrection, became a leader of the early church (Acts 15:13-21; 21:18; 1 Cor. 15:7), as even Peter himself acknowledged (Acts 12:17). Of course, since Jesus is the half-brother of Jesus, it follows that the Roman Catholic Church's (RCC) dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity, often linked with the RCC's dogma of the Assumption of Mary, is simply not true. (See the linkage, for example, in <http://www.calledto communion.com/2011/08/solemnity-of-the-assumption-of-the-virgin-mary-into-heaven/> ). For another pro-RCC link to Mary's perpetual virginity, see <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15448a.htm> .

James wrote this book between A.D. 45-48 or 50 (Thomas Constable, *Notes on James*, 2010 Edition, p. 1 [hereafter, Constable]; see also Charles C. Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible* (hereafter *RSB*), Introduction.)

<sup>2</sup> James 1:1 - bond-servant: The word is *doulos*, [1401](#). The NASB translates it bond-servant(s) 23X; bonds slave(s) 11X; slave(s) 98X. The word means slave. Why not translate it that way here? Presumably, the translators must think, because it is a metaphorical usage. But James considered himself a common slave of both God and his Lord (lords were the masters of slaves), Jesus Christ. According to the Louw-Nida Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (henceforth Louw-Nida), *doulos* means “pertaining to a state of being completely controlled by someone or something - ‘subservient to, controlled by.’” James viewed himself as a slave of God and Jesus. We should translate it that way. And we Christians ought to view ourselves as slaves of God and Jesus. That means God and Jesus have the unquestioned right to control us completely.

<sup>3</sup> James 1:1 - to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: The NASB wording, “who are dispersed abroad,” translates *tais en te diaspora* – “the ones in the dispersion.” “The dispersion” is a technical term for “The Diaspora” – Israelis exiled from the land of Israel. (For a further discussion of Diaspora as well as Return (*Aliyah*), go to <http://wordexplain.com/glossarya.html#Aliyah>.)

With reference to the immediate theme, James is writing to Christian Jews who are undergoing trials and temptations. They are part of the Jewish Diaspora – they have been exiled from their homeland. They face additional difficulties in that they are perhaps, in many cases, also estranged from the Jewish synagogue that they might otherwise attend and from which they might ordinarily receive some support. So the trials of which they are partaking tempt them to become discouraged.

Here is a literal translation of what James wrote: Jacobus – of God and Master Jesus Christ a slave – to the twelve tribes – the ones in the diaspora – greetings.” James wrote to the “twelve tribes” (of the “sons of Israel,” the common Biblical – even NT – designation for Israelis – see Matt. 27:9; Luke 1:16; Acts 5:21; 7:23, 37; 9:15; 10:36; Rom. 9:27; 2 Cor. 3:7, 13; Heb. 11:22; Rev. 2:14; 7:4; 21:12) who were also Christians, but dispersed abroad, exiles from the land of Israel. Today we would call them Messianic Jews dispersed abroad from Israel,” or “Messianic Jewish Diaspora.” The fact that James wrote to Christian Jews (he calls them brothers in James 1:2; 5:7, etc.) belies

C 3 The greeting: Greetings.

## B 2 Counting It Joy to Undergo Trials / Temptations 1:2

C 1 The command: {2} Consider it all joy,<sup>4</sup> my brethren,<sup>5</sup>

C 2 The circumstance: when you encounter various trials,<sup>6</sup>

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the view of most of Christianity that Israel's existence as a nation is passé, both now and in the future. Most of Christianity believes in Replacement Theology – that the Church forever replaces Israel in the economy of God. That belief is based on a misinterpretation of, for example, Ephesians 2:11-22 and Galatians 3:28. The truth of the matter is that, though the barrier that separates Jew and Gentile has been broken, and though Jew and Greek, slaves and free men, males and females are all one in Christ, those facts do not obliterate any of the respective roles of those societal genres in Christian living or in society, as even the rest of the New Testament acknowledges. Wives are still to submit to their husbands; husbands are to be the loving heads of their wives; men, not women serve as elders and deacons; slaves are to submit to their masters, even bad ones; and even throughout eternity, Israel will exist as a nation in union with, but also in distinction to both the Church, and Gentiles (Rev. 21:10-22:2). After all, nothing could possibly be more Jewish than the eternal existence of New Jerusalem as the capital city of New Earth! Obviously, James did not believe in Replacement Theology. (For a brief discussion of Replacement Theology go to [http://www.wordexplain.com/glossary.html#Replacement\\_Theology](http://www.wordexplain.com/glossary.html#Replacement_Theology).)

<sup>4</sup> James 1:2 - consider it all joy: James calls upon his readers to consider (the [Aorist](#) imperative of) (*hegeomai*, [2233](#)) their encountering of various kinds of trials (*peirasmos*, [3986](#)) as leading to all joy! His command (*hegeomai* is here an imperative) to actively be led to view trials as a source of joy reminds us of Paul's perspective: "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations (*thlipsis*, [2347](#)), knowing that tribulation (*thlipsis*, [2347](#)) brings about perseverance (*hupomone*, [5281](#));" etc. (Rom. 5:3).

<sup>5</sup> James 1:2 - my brothers: James calls his readers brothers (*adelphoi*, [80](#)) in James 1:2, 9, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14, 15; 3:1, 10, 12; 4:11 (3X); 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19. This means that, though he was writing to exiled Jewish people (the Diaspora – 1:1), he was specifying a subset within the Diaspora, namely Christian Jews.

<sup>6</sup> James 1:2 - trials: Trials translates the noun *peirasmos*, [3986](#), used in the book of James only here and in 1:12. The related verb *peiradzo* ([3985](#)) is used in the book of James four times – all in James 1:13-14. Both the noun and the verb convey both the sense of trial and the sense of temptation, though a particular context may seem to emphasize one aspect or the other. We often think of a trial as some sort of difficulty which we encounter without necessarily considering the temptation involved. It is hard, and difficult to endure. We don't think of it as being a temptation, that is, a solicitation to commit evil. However, if one keeps it in mind that Satan always tempts us to have the wrong reaction to any trial, then we can see that both *peirasmos* and *peiradzo* have the capacity to incorporate the idea of a **trial** in which we are **tempted** to react wrongly. Often the idea of **temptation**, a solicitation to commit evil, seems prominent (as in Luke 4:13, where Satan "finished every temptation" of Christ). At other times, however, the connotation of an extremely difficult time may seem more prominent (as in Acts 20:19, where Paul says that He served the Lord "with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews"). Jesus urged his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane to watch and pray, lest they fall into *peirasmos* (Matt. 26:41), and in the "Lord's Prayer" the disciples are instructed to ask God not to lead them into *peirasmos* (Matt. 6:13). In both cases, what did Jesus mean? A trial or a temptation? My answer is, "Why not both?" Again, when we encounter a difficult trial, we are tempted to react the wrong way, are we not.

It would seem then that a *peirasmos* is a difficult situation which tends to influence us to distrust or disobey God. It might be a solicitation to evil or a difficult time during which we might be tempted to doubt or disobey God. The KJV translates all occurrences of *peirasmos* as "temptation", whereas the NASB distinguishes between solicitation to evil ("temptation") and a difficult time ("trial"), which may influence us to doubt God's love and goodness. To what does James allude in James 1:13-14? Most commentators say he there speaks of solicitation to do evil. Why can he not be referring to both trials and temptations? God never gives us a hard time and He never tempts us to sin. But God does allow in our lives hard times (trials) and He also allows us to be tempted, whether by Satan or some person or by our own evil desires, the point being made in James 1:13-14. So it is, that in my outline titles, I combine both ideas, as in the B2 title at James 1:2, "**Counting It Joy to Undergo Trials / Temptations.**"

Thomas Constable, *Notes on Matthew* (<http://www.soniclight.org/constable/notes/pdf/matthew.pdf>), 2010 Edition, p. 103, commenting on "Lead us not into temptation" in Matthew 6:13, states the following, in which he combines both meanings:

**B 3 Gaining Endurance in Trials / Temptations 1:3-4**

- C 1 The awareness of endurance: {3} knowing that the testing<sup>7</sup> of your faith produces endurance.<sup>8</sup> 1:3
- C 2 The maturation of endurance 1:4
- D 1 The caution: {4} And let endurance have *its* perfect result,<sup>9</sup>
- D 2 The completion: so that you may be
- E 1 perfect and complete,<sup>10</sup>

"Temptation" is the Greek *peirasmos* and means "testing." It refers not so much to solicitation to evil as to trials that test the character. God does not test (*peirasmos*) (sic; actually, *peiradzo*) anyone (James 1:13-14). Why then do we need to pray that He will not lead us into testing? Even though God is not the instrumental cause of our testing He does permit us to experience temptation from the world, the flesh, and the devil (cf. 4:1; Gen. 22:1; Deut. 8:2). Therefore this petition is a request that He minimize the occasions of our testing that may result in our sinning. It articulates the repentant disciple's felt weakness to stand up under severe trials in view of our sinfulness (cf. Prov. 30:7-9).

<sup>7</sup> James 1:3 - testing of your faith: "Testing" is *dokimion*, [1383](#). God doesn't send (James 1:13-14), but permits *peirasmos* ([3986](#)) – trials/temptations – in our lives for the purpose of testing or perhaps better, the *proof* (*dokimion*, [1383](#)) of our faith. *Dokimion* is used only twice in the NT – here, and in 1 Peter 1:7. That is a very instructive passage.

There, Peter blesses God, who in His great mercy and through Jesus, caused us to be born again to a living hope (1:3). He did so in order that we might obtain an imperishable inheritance, reserved in heaven for us (1:4). We are the ones protected by God's power through faith for a salvation "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1:5). In this we rejoice, though now, if necessary, we are being distressed by various trials/temptations (*peirasmos*, [3986](#)) (1:6), the purpose for which is the proof (*dokimion*, [1383](#)) of our faith, which, "being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:7).

So one can readily see that, though God never *sends peirasmos* (trials/temptations) (see James 1:13-14), he definitely *permits* them so that our faith can be proven (by fire, which, as in a smelter, burns off all the impurities) to endure and result in praise and honor at the revelation (literally, unveiling, *apokalupsis*, [602](#)) of Jesus (see the entire Book of Revelation, noting especially Rev. 1:1)!

<sup>8</sup> James 1:3 - the testing of your faith produces endurance: The "testing" or proof (*dokimion*, [1383](#)) of our faith produces "endurance" (*hupomone*, [5281](#)). *Hupomone* is a compound word, combining *hupo*, under, and *meno*, to remain. It has the idea of *remaining under* a difficult situation instead of crumbling under it or fleeing from it. *Hupomone* is translated in the NASB as perseverance (21X), endurance (7X), steadfastness (3X), and patient enduring (1X). Much as one patiently endures the discomfort of getting one's tooth filled at the dentist's office, or much as an NFL player perseveres through an arduous training camp, the Christian is to realize that when he encounters *peirasmos* (trials/temptations) with a quiet joy, this is proving his faith. As his faith is being proven, so also his perseverance and patient endurance is being expanded. As Peter noted, this will result in praise and glory and honor at the unveiling of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:7)!

<sup>9</sup> James 1:4 - perfect result: Steadfast endurance (*hupomone*, [5281](#)), is like yeast in bread dough, which quietly, but steadily and inexorably transforms our Christian character. The purpose or end result of steadfast endurance is a "perfect" or completely mature (*teleios*, [5046](#)) Christian. For example, Paul exhorted the Corinthians not to be children in their thinking, but rather to be mature (*teleios*, [5046](#)) (1 Cor. 14:20). So also in Hebrews 5:13-14, the milk of the Word is for infants, but the solid food of the Word is for the mature (*teleios*, [5046](#)).

<sup>10</sup> James 1:4 - perfect and complete: "Perfect" repeats the word *teleios*, [5046](#), meaning completely mature. "Complete" is *holokleros*, [3648](#), a compound word from *holos* ([3650](#)), meaning whole, and *kleros* ([2819](#)), meaning, literally, a lot used in gambling. So, by extension, *kleros* means an allotment, or that which the lot secures. Sometimes *kleros* is translated "inheritance." In our context, this compound word, *holokleros* ([3648](#)), means that

E 2 lacking in nothing.

#### B 4 Asking for Wisdom in Trials / Temptations 1:5-8

C 1 The shortage of wisdom: {5} But if any of you lacks wisdom,<sup>11</sup> 1:5

C 2 The obtaining of wisdom: let him ask of God<sup>12</sup>

D 1 Giving to all men generously: who gives to all generously<sup>13</sup>

D 2 Not reproaching: and without reproach,<sup>14</sup>

C 3 The assurance of wisdom: and it will be given to him.<sup>15</sup>

when endurance is finished in our lives, we are fully mature as Christians and God has the “whole allotment” of us which He had planned on from the beginning. Thus we are “lacking in nothing” from His original design for our usefulness for His purpose.

<sup>11</sup> James 1:5 - if any of you lacks wisdom: Wisdom is *sophia* (4678), almost universally translated as *wisdom*. Growing up, I was always instructed that this verse was grounds for asking God for wisdom in making decisions about any and all situations. While that policy is certainly commendable, even advisable, it really does not do justice to the context here. James has been discussing the trials/temptations which these Christian Jewish exiles faced. These trials/temptations would bring difficulties into their lives that might be expected to cause them to question God’s love for them or His fairness. When we are tempted to question God’s love or goodness, we need to ask God for wisdom so that we can understand why God is permitting us to struggle.

The first step in this equation is that one must recognize his own need – that of needing wisdom. The condition of needing wisdom is assumed as a matter of fact. “If” (ei) assumes the inevitability of needing wisdom. Still, one must recognize that need..

<sup>12</sup> James 1:5 - let him ask of God: whose policies regarding dispensing wisdom include the following – generosity and non-reproach. In the context, James 1:5 encourages us to ask for wisdom in understanding our trials/tribulations. This is the second step in the equation. The human being must ask of God. This is not optional – it is an imperative – he is commanded to ask of God. Furthermore it is an ongoing imperative – [present](#) tense. The first two steps involve human responsibility: (1) recognition of need; (2) asking for wisdom from God. The remainder of 1:5 deals not with the human condition, but the Divine condition. God is more than willing to provide wisdom needed, for He is generous.

<sup>13</sup> James 1:5 - who gives to all generously: “Generously” translates *haplos* (574). The definition for *haplos* is “simply, openly, frankly, sincerely.” The difficulty is that *haplos* is used only once in the entire NT. It is used in the LXX in Proverbs 10:9, where it speaks of one who lives his life in *integrity*. Probably *haplos* here means that, when asked for wisdom in understanding and dealing with trials/temptations, God will give wisdom for that purpose sincerely and unstintingly. We should note that God is no respecter of persons. No matter what status one has as a Christian, whether mature or immature, a leader or a follower, it makes no difference to God. To each and every Christian who asks for wisdom to understand the trials/tribulations he is facing, God will grant him that request. God gives sincerely – He has no hidden agenda driving His response.

<sup>14</sup> James 1:5 - without reproach: Literally, “and not reproaching.” “Reproaching,” *suneidizo* (3679), is a [present participle](#) here. When asked for wisdom to understand trials/temptations, God consistently is giving wisdom sincerely and unstintingly to all without insulting, reproaching, or denouncing them for having asked.

<sup>15</sup> James 1:5 - and it will be given him: Up to this point, the process has described the human responsibility: (1) recognition of need; (2) asking for help. In the next portion of 1:5 James discussed the generous character of God. Now, James states very simply, “It will be given to him.” It is a future passive statement of fact. D. Edmond Hiebert (*James*, p. 70.), quotes John Blanchard (*Not Hearers Only. Bible Studies in the Epistle of James*, p. 44) as saying, “it is characteristic of the unbeliever to see God with a clenched fist; it is characteristic of the believer to see Him with an open hand.”

- C 4 The condition for wisdom: 1:6-8
- D 1 The content of the condition 1:6
- E 1 {6} But he must ask in faith <sup>16</sup>
- E 2 without any doubting,<sup>17</sup>
- D 2 The reason for the condition
- E 1 The exclusion: for the one who doubts <sup>18</sup>
- E 2 The simile: is like the surf of the sea,<sup>19</sup>
- G 1 driven <sup>20</sup>
- G 2 and tossed by the wind.<sup>21</sup>
- D 3 The non-fulfillment of the condition 1:7-8

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<sup>16</sup> James 1:6 - But he must ask in faith: There is one qualification for receiving wisdom from God to understand trials/temptations. That qualification is that he who asks must be asking ([present](#) tense imperative) in faith. Hebrews 11:6 states that it is impossible to please God without faith. He who comes to God must believe that He exists, but also that He is a rewarder of those who really seek Him. The one who asks God for wisdom to understand must believe that God will reward Him with wisdom.

<sup>17</sup> James 1:6 -without any doubting: James qualifies faith even further. There can be no doubting. “Doubting” translates the [present participle](#) of *diakrino* (1252). It has here the idea of someone debating within himself – will God give me wisdom or won’t He? We might say, “without debating” or “without misgivings.”

<sup>18</sup> James 1:6 - the one who doubts: Once again, the [present](#) participle of *diakrino* (1252) appears here. The one engaging in this inner debate about whether or not God will really give him wisdom to understand trials/temptations is like the billows in the ocean, tossed here and there by circumstances, unguided by rock solid faith.

<sup>19</sup> James 1:6 - is like the surf of the sea: Better, “is like a wave at sea.” The word translated “surf” is *kludōn* (2830). “Surf” is not the best translation, for it calls to mind the very regular surf that rolls in upon an ocean shore. The idea is more a billow far out at sea that is whipped about by the wind. A sea billow is irregular, inconsistent, and completely dominated by the wind around it. The person who engages in inner debate about whether or not God will or won’t provide wisdom to understand trials/temptations bases his misgivings upon outward circumstances, not the character of God. Having no fixed point of reference, he is as unreliable in his attitude toward God as a sea billow is in relation to the fixed shoreline. That kind of person will have a tumultuous life, and he cannot expect that God will grant him wisdom to understand his trials/temptations. The fault is his, not God’s. He wavers in his faith in God, and so God will not come to the rescue and provide perspective for someone who doesn’t really trust Him.

<sup>20</sup> James 1:6 - driven: translates *anemidzō* (416), a “*hapax legomenon*,” meaning it appears only here in the Greek NT. *anemidzō* (416) appears as a [present](#) passive [participle](#). It’s noun, *anemos* (417) means simply “wind.” So *anemidzō* means, literally, “wind-driven” or “wind-blown.”

<sup>21</sup> James 1:6 - and tossed by the wind: This phrase translates the two words “and” (*kai*) plus the word “tossed” (*hripidzō*, 4494). The verb is a [present](#) passive [participle](#). It is a synonym for *anemidzō*. For the sake of differentiation, *anemidzō* could be translated “wind-driven” and *hripidzō* “wind-tossed.” In either case, they describe a person who is like a nameless wave out at sea, completely at the mercy of the elements. This condition describes the one who debates within himself whether or not he should trust God to give him wisdom to understand his trials/temptations. Since he doubts God, he will never receive the wisdom for which he seeks.

- E 1 The disappointment: {7} For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,<sup>22</sup> 1:7
- E 2 The character flaw 1:8
- G 1 {8} *being* a double-minded man,<sup>23</sup>
- G 2 unstable in all his ways.<sup>24</sup>

## B 5 Maintaining Perspective in Light of Trials / Temptations 1:9-11

- C 1 The brother of humble circumstances: {9} But the brother<sup>25</sup> of humble circumstances<sup>26</sup> is to glory in his high position;<sup>27</sup> 1:9

<sup>22</sup> James 1:7 - anything from the Lord: “The negative *mē* with the [present](#) imperative demands that he must stop entertaining any thought of receiving an answer to his prayer” (Hiebert, p. 74). “Faith unlocks the divine storehouse, but unbelief bars its doors” (Curtis Vaughan, *James, A Study Guide*, p. 24, quoted by Hiebert, p. 74). If a man will not trust God, he has no hope whatever of establishing any kind of relationship with Him. “Without faith, it is impossible to please Him...” (Heb. 11:6a).

<sup>23</sup> James 1:8 *being* a double-minded man: A man who vacillates back and forth – “Will God provide me with wisdom or not?” – “Does it make any difference if I pray or not?” – is a double-minded man. “Double-minded” is a good translation of *dipsuchos*, [1374](#), coming from *dis* ([1364](#)) (twice or doubly) and *psuche* ([5590](#)), from which we derive our English word “psyche.” A double-minded man has two different psyches which battle one another. We are to have the single-minded focus of faith in God, not the divided psyches of trust and misgiving.

<sup>24</sup> James 1:8 - unstable in all his ways: Unstable (*akatastatos*, [182](#)) is used only twice in the NT, here, and in James 3:8: “But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless (*akatastatos*, [182](#)) evil and full of deadly poison.” The man who cannot trust God to supply him with wisdom to understand his trials and temptations is double-minded, and he is *unstable* and *restless* in all his ways. He will not receive anything from the Lord.

<sup>25</sup> James 1:9 - brother: James speaks here of the Christian brother who finds himself in humble circumstances. Presumably this means that he has little wealth (see the context), and perhaps is poverty stricken. It may mean also that he has little power and little influence. He is simply one of the “unwashed masses”, but he is a Christian man among the masses.

<sup>26</sup> James 1:9 - humble circumstances: These two words translate the one Greek word *tapeinos* ([5011](#)). Jesus uses this Greek word of Himself “... I am ... **humble** in heart” (Matt. 11:29). The virgin Mary stated, in regard to God’s having blessed her with the honor of becoming the mother of the Messiah, “He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were **humble**” (Lk. 1:52). Paul urged Roman Christians not to “be haughty in mind, but associate with the **lowly**” (Rom. 12:16). Paul spoke of God comforting the **depressed** (2 Cor. 7:6), and he spoke of himself as the Corinthians had caricatured him, “I who am **meek** when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent” (2 Cor. 10:1). James used it twice, once here, “the brother of **humble circumstances**” (1:9) and also in 4:6, quoting loosely from Ps. 138:6 and perhaps Prov. 3:34, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the **humble**.” Peter also quoted the same text from the same passage(s) (1 Pet. 5:5). (All emphases are mine.) As one can see, James did not mean someone who exhibited a mousy, cringing, self-deprecating demeanor. Rather he spoke of a Christian brother without the trappings of wealth and power.

<sup>27</sup> James 1:9 - is to glory in his high position: The verb “is to glory” translates the third person singular imperative of *kauchaomai* ([2744](#)). This Christian brother in humble circumstances is commanded continually to be glorying in his high position in Christ. He has little of this world’s goods; he lacks power and influence, yet he is to glory in his spiritual position – he has been blessed with incalculable spiritual blessings; he was chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before God; he was lovingly predestined to become a son of God through Jesus; he has been redeemed through Jesus’ blood; he has a personal relationship with the most important human in the universe – the Anointed King; due to His position in Jesus he has an enormous inheritance coming (Eph. 1:3-12). In these, which are all acts of grace, accessed by trusting in Jesus, this humble Christian is

- C 2 The rich man: {10} and the rich man<sup>28</sup> 1:10-11
- D 1 The instruction: *is to glory* in his humiliation,<sup>29</sup>
- D 2 The reason: because like flowering grass he will pass away.<sup>30</sup>
- D 3 The analogy 1:11
- E 1 {11} For the sun rises with a scorching wind, and withers the grass;
- E 2 and its flower falls off
- E 3 and the beauty of its appearance<sup>31</sup> is destroyed;<sup>32</sup>

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commanded to glory and exult!

<sup>28</sup> James 1:10 - and the rich man: Literally, “moreover, the rich [one] in his humiliation. “Rich man” translates the single word *plousios* (4145), [nominative](#) masc. singular. There are those who argue that James is speaking of a wealthy unbeliever, absent the presence of the term *adelphos* (80), brother. But James is merely writing good Greek. He means the wealthy Christian brother, omitting the term “brother,” just as he omits the parallel verb, “let him glory” (*kauchaomai*, 2744). While it may be imprecise English, it is good Greek. D. Edmond Hiebert (p. 78) quotes Lenski’s very literal rendering: “Now let him boast, the brother, the lowly one, in his high position; on the other hand, the rich one, in his lowly position!” R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James*, p. 541.) “The word ‘rich’ (*plousios*) denotes ‘one who does not need to work for a living’” (Hiebert, quoting William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 679).

<sup>29</sup> James 1:10 - is to glory in his humiliation: In what was the Christian rich man to boast? In his humble position, as defined in the remainder of James 1:10-11. NASB’s “humiliation” (translating the noun *tapeinōsis*, 5014) is, in my judgment, not the best translation, for it carries a negative connotation. *Tapeinōsis* (5014) is easily identifiable as being related to the word *tapeinos* (5011), “humble circumstances,” in James 1:9. As *tapeinos* had no negative connotation in James 1:9, neither can *tapeinōsis* in James 1:10. A more appropriate translation would be simply, “humble state,” as it is so translated in Luke 1:48 and Philippians 3:21. Just as the Christian brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position in Christ, so this Christian brother who has been blessed with wealth in the physical, material realm is to glory in the reality of his own mortality. In that regard he is just like his brother of humble circumstances. Both will die, and neither of them can take anything with them into the life hereafter. Death, after all, is the great Leveler, and realizing that helps the wealthy brother maintain his proper spiritual equilibrium.

<sup>30</sup> James 1:10 - like flowering grass he will pass away: James begins to spell out the truly humble circumstances of even the well-to-do Christian. He is just as mortal as anyone else. Glorifying in this fact keeps the well-to-do Christian humble and grateful, fending off the debilitating temptation of pride. Here and in the next few verses, James’s soliloquy reminds one of Isaiah 40:6-8:

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, “Call out.” Then he answered, “What shall I call out?” All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. <sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. <sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

Peter echoes the same thoughts (1 Pet. 2:24).

<sup>31</sup> James 1:11 - appearance: Literally, “face” (*prosopon*, 4383).

<sup>32</sup> James 1:11 - destroyed: *apollumi*, 622, used in such verses as John 3:16, “...whoever believes in Him shall not **perish**, but have eternal life.” John 10:10 “The thief comes only to steal and kill and **destroy** ....” John 10:28 “and I give eternal life to them, and they will never **perish** ....” James 1:11, “...and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed ....” James 4:12, “There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy ....” 1 Pet. 1:7, “so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is **perishable**, even though tested by fire ....”

D 4 The point: so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.<sup>33</sup> 1:11

### **B 6 Anticipating Reward from Trials / Temptations 1:12**

C 1 The qualification for being blessed – persevering under trial: {12} Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial;<sup>34</sup>

C 2 The reward for being approved: for once he has been approved,

D 1 The reward: he will receive the crown of life

D 2 The promise: which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.

### **B 7 Understanding the Source of Trials / Temptations 1:13-18**

C 1 What **is not** the source of trials/temptations 1:13

D 1 The forbidden statement: {13} Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God";

D 2 The impossible situations

E 1 for God cannot be tempted by evil,

E 2 and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

C 2 The real source of trials/temptations 1:14-15

D 1 The enticement of temptation: {14} But each one is tempted 1:14

E 1 when he is carried away

E 2 and enticed by his own lust.

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(all emphases mine).

<sup>33</sup> James 1:11 - so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away: On October 5, 2011, Steve Jobs, co-founder (with Steve Wozniak) of Apple Computer, died. In March of 2011 Jobs was said to be worth \$8.3 billion. But his wealth could prevent neither his pancreatic cancer surgery in 2004, nor his liver transplant in 2009, nor his death in 2011. Steve Jobs caught a bit of the spirit of James' advice, but not the right conclusion. Here is what he said at a commencement speech at Stanford University in June, 2005, about 18 months after he had been diagnosed with cancer:

“Remembering that I’ll be dead soon ... is the most important tool I’ve ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything - all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important.... Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.”

James would agree almost with every word Steve Jobs spoke, but not his conclusion. “There is no reason not to follow Jesus.”

<sup>34</sup> James 1:12 - trial: *peirasmos*, [3986](#), the same word as that which James used in 1:2, “Count it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various **trials** ... (emphasis mine).

- D 2 The progression of temptation 1:15
  - E 1 Conception: {15} Then when lust has conceived,
  - E 2 Birth: it gives birth to sin;
  - E 3 Accomplishment
    - G 1 and when sin is accomplished,
    - G 2 it brings forth death.
- C 3 The source of all good: God, whose goal was to give birth 1:16-18
  - D 1 The warning against deception: {16} Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 1:16
  - D 2 The description of good 1:17
    - E 1 {17} Every good thing given
    - E 2 and every perfect gift
  - D 3 The description of the source of good 1:17
    - E 1 The location
      - G 1 is from above,
      - G 2 coming down from
    - E 2 The description of God: the Father of lights,
    - E 3 The immutability of God: with whom there is no
      - G 1 variation or
      - G 2 shifting shadow.
  - D 4 The goal of the good God with respect to believers 1:18
    - E 1 His Divine prerogative: {18} In the exercise of His will <sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> James 1:18 - In the exercise of His will: The Bible is more concerned to present the Free Moral Will of God than it is the so-called free moral will of man. Adam and Eve, prior to their sin, were, indeed, as free as they would ever be in their mortal bodies. Since the fall, no man has been free as they. According to Ephesians 2, fallen man is bound--he is dead in trespasses and sins (2:1); he is dominated by the world (2:2); he is dominated by Satan (2:2); he is dominated by his flesh and mind (2:3). Under total bondage, he is by nature the offspring of God's wrath (2:3), to which he is doomed apart from the active mercy and love of God (2:4)! God is free. Fallen man is not. God is free - fallen man is responsible (Romans 1:18-20).

Observe that God is so powerful He does not have to use any mechanical apparatus such as arms or legs or armies to accomplish anything. He simply wills things into existence! The one adaptation to human frailty he makes is conversation! -- Exercising His will, He employs the words that we need ("the word of truth") to respond to His

- E 2 His Divine begetting: He brought us forth
- E 3 His means of begetting: by the word of truth,
- E 4 His objective for us believers: so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.<sup>36</sup>

## A 2 USING GOD'S WORD 1:19-27

### B 1 Avoiding A Pitfall -- Wrath 1:19-20

- C 1 The common knowledge about wrath: {19} *This* you know, my beloved brethren. 1:19
- C 2 The directives concerning wrath: But everyone must be 1:19
  - D 1 Understanding: quick to hear,
  - D 2 Cautious: slow to speak
  - D 3 Patient: *and* slow to anger;<sup>37</sup>
- C 3 The reason for the directives about wrath: {20} for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. 1:20

### B 2 Receiving the Word 1:21

- C 1 That which must be put aside to receive God's Word
  - D 1 {21} Therefore, putting aside all filthiness
  - D 2 *and all* that remains of wickedness,
- C 2 The posture to receive God's Word: in humility
- C 3 The command to receive God's Word: receive the word implanted,
- C 4 The benefit of receiving God's Word: which is able to save your souls.

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powerful begetting impetus.

<sup>36</sup> James 1:18 - so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures: This means either that God wanted the Church to be a kind of down-payment on the masses of humanity who would ultimately be ushered into His family, or else a down-payment on the redemption of all His Creatures (cf. Rev. 5:13).

<sup>37</sup> James 1:19 - slow to anger: The word is *οργη* (3709), meaning wrath. Most of its 34 usages describe God's wrath against sin and sinners as displayed in judgment (John 3:36; Rom. 1:18), and could be translated as "righteous indignation connoting coming judgment." Christians are instructed to live peaceably with all men and thus forbidden to take vengeance for themselves. They are rather to "leave room for God's wrath" (NIV) [lit., "the wrath". "God's" is not in the original, but supplied, probably correctly, by the NIV. Murray agrees, *Romans*, p. 143, as does *TBKC*, II, 490.] , for vengeance belongs to God (Rom. 12:18-19). The Christian is to put wrath away (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8). Men are to pray without wrath (1 Tim. 2:8), and here, to be slow to wrath because man's wrath "does not bring about the righteous life that God desires" (NIV) (Jas. 1:19-20).

**B 3 Doing, Not Just Hearing, the Word 1:22-25**

- C 1 The command to be doers of God's Word 1:22
  - D 1 The positive: {22} But prove yourselves doers of the word,
  - D 2 The negative: and not merely hearers
  - D 3 The danger: who delude themselves.
- C 2 The description of those who only **hear** God's Word 1:23-24
  - D 1 The condition: {23} For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, 1:23
  - D 2 The simile: he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 1:23-24
    - E 1 Perception: {24} for *once* he has looked at himself 1:24
    - E 2 Departure: and gone away,
    - E 3 Amnesia: he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.
- C 3 The description of those who **do** God's Word 1:25
  - D 1 Observant: {25} But one who looks intently at
    - E 1 The complete nature of the Word: the perfect law,
    - E 2 The liberating nature of the Word: the *law* of liberty,<sup>38</sup>
  - D 2 Obedient: and abides by it,
    - E 1 Negatively: not having become a forgetful hearer
    - E 2 Positively: but an effectual doer,
  - D 3 Rewarded: this man will be blessed in what he does.

**B 4 Applying the Word: Worthless and Pure Religion 1:26-27**

- C 1 Worthless Religion: An unbridled tongue 1:26
  - D 1 The self-perception: {26} If anyone thinks himself to be religious,
  - D 2 The unbridled truth: and yet does not bridle his tongue
  - D 3 The self-deception: but deceives his *own* heart,

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<sup>38</sup> James 1:25 - the *law* of liberty: The Bible constricts the world; it liberates the obedient Christian!

D 4 The futility of his religion: this man's religion is worthless.

C 2 Pure, Undefined Religion: Visiting orphans and widows and keeping oneself unspotted 1:27

D 1 {27} The characterization of genuine religion: Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this:

D 2 The activities of genuine religion

E 1 Visitation: to visit orphans and widows in their distress,

E 2 Spiritual purity: *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

### A 3 THE SIN OF PARTIALITY 2:1-13

#### B 1 The Injunction Against Partiality 2:1

C 1 Those addressed: {1} My brethren,

C 2 The relational imperative: do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ

C 3 The incongruous discrimination: with an *attitude* of personal favoritism.

#### B 2 A Hypothetical Case Illustrating Partiality 2:2-4

C 1 The characters: A well-dressed man and a poor man in dirty clothes 2:2

D 1 {2} For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,

C 2 The partisan actions of the church: Giving a good place to the well-clothed and ostracizing the poor man 2:3

D 1 {3} and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,"

C 3 The judgment against the church: they have become evil judges 2:4

D 1 {4} have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

**B 3 The Incongruity of Valuing Wealthy People Over Poor 2:5-7**

C 1 The worth of the poor man 2:5-6a

D 1 God's stance on the poor: {5} Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world 2:5

E 1 Chosen to be wealthy in faith: *to be* rich in faith

E 2 Chosen to royalty: and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

D 2 The church's stance: {6} But you have dishonored the poor man. 2:6a

C 2 The rich man 2:6b-7

D 1 Oppressors of the powerless poor: Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? 2:6b

D 2 Impudent towards God: {7} Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? 2:7

**B 4 The Scriptures and Partiality 2:8-13**

C 1 Fulfilling the "Royal Law" is good 2:8

D 1 The content of the "Royal Law" in Scripture: {8} If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,"

D 2 The commendation on fulfilling the "Royal Law:" you are doing well.

C 2 Violating the "Royal Law" 2:9-11

D 1 The assessment of partiality: Guilty of sin! 2:9

E 1 {9} But if you show partiality,

E 2 you are committing sin

E 3 *and* are convicted by the Law as transgressors.

D 2 The seriousness of partiality: Guilty of violating the whole Law! 2:10-11

E 1 The reasoning behind this assessment 2:10

G 1 {10} For whoever keeps the whole Law

G 2 and yet stumbles in one *point*,

G 3 he has become guilty of all.

E 2 The proof of this assessment 2:11

G 1 The singularity of the Law-Giver

H 1 {11} For He who said "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,"

H 2 also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER."

G 2 The unity of the Law

H 1 Major premise: Now if you do not commit adultery,

H 2 Minor premise: but do commit murder,

H 3 Conclusion: you have become a transgressor of the law.

C 3 Anticipate judgment under the Law 2:12-13

D 1 {12} So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by *the* law of liberty 2:12

D 2 {13} For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; 2:13<sup>39</sup>

D 3 mercy triumphs over judgment.

#### A 4 FAITH AND WORKS 2:14-26

**B 1 The Basic Question About the Relationship Between Faith and Works:** Can a faith devoid of works be a saving faith? **2:14-17**

C 1 The question about faith without works 2:14

D 1 The negative cast to the question: {14} What use is it, my brethren,

D 2 The conditions to the question

E 1 The major premise: if someone says he has faith

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<sup>39</sup> James 2:13 - For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy: I recently have been convicted that, if I show no mercy in evaluating others, Jesus will show me no mercy in His evaluating of me at the [Judgment Seat of Christ](#). Lord, help me to be merciful in my assessment of others!

- E 2 The minor premise: but he has no works? <sup>40</sup>
- D 3 The essence of the question: Can **that** faith save him? <sup>41</sup>
- C 2 The illustration of faith without works 2:15-16
  - D 1 The hypothetical situation: {15} If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 2:15
  - D 2 The inadequate response 2:16
    - E 1 Positive speech: {16} and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,"
    - E 2 Absence of action: and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body,
  - D 3 The assessment of worthlessness: what use is that? 2:16
- C 3 The conclusion about faith without works: {17} Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself. <sup>42</sup> 2:17

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<sup>40</sup> James 2:14 - if someone says he has faith but he has no works: James' whole point is that a valid faith will be accompanied by works. If there are no works, the faith is invalid – it is not a saving faith. See, for example, Paul's important discussion of the relationship between faith and works in Eph. 2:8-10. We are saved by grace through faith alone, apart from any works (Eph. 2:8-9). But God has created us in Christ for the purpose of good works (Eph. 2:10).

<sup>41</sup> James 2:14 - Can **that** faith save him (emphasis mine): Lit., "can the faith save him? NASB has caught the thrust – "Can *that* kind of faith save him? The expected answer is "NO." The noun "faith" is *pístis* (4102). The verb "save" is the [Aorist](#) Infinitive of *sō' dzō* (4982). I believe by "save" James has in mind eternal salvation. He is saying that a faith that does not result in works is not a saving faith. To quote him, it is a dead, or could we say, abortive faith (James 2:17, 26). James cannot be taken to mean that works contribute to our salvation. That view would be in defiance of Paul's clear statements in Romans 4:1-5 and Eph. 2:8-9. But James' statements can be taken to question the validity of a faith that does not produce works. After all, that is the inevitable result of salvation (Eph. 2:8-10).

<sup>42</sup> James 2:17 - Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself: "The faith" is *hē pístis* (4102). "The faith" is the faith under discussion, referenced without the article in James 2:14. If the faith under discussion is unaccompanied by works (plural of *ergon*, 2041), in this context, acts of serving God and man, that faith is dead (*nekrós*, 3498), "figuratively, of what is of no benefit morally or spiritually *utterly useless, completely ineffective* (Heb. 6:1; James 2:26b)" ([Friberg](#)). The reason that kind of faith is dead is that it is "by itself." In the same way, a man "by himself," without a wife, cannot be said to be married, nor, to use James' own illustration, can a body without spirit be said to be alive (James 2:26).

We must be careful to guard against the notion that good works can, in any sense, contribute to one's merit before God. That, Scriptures elsewhere make abundantly clear. For example, Paul explicitly states that, "to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). Moreover, in Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul explicitly states, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." So works can in no sense contribute to my salvation. Nevertheless, as Paul immediately maintains, works are the result of my salvation, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Paul is saying that works cannot contribute to my salvation, but they are a result of my salvation. James takes the latter clause one step further. He says that works are a necessary result of my salvation, and that, if I do not have works, I am not even saved, for I lack a Biblical faith. A Biblical, saving faith will result in works of service for God and man. It is in that sense that James says that we believers are justified (declared righteous, or vindicated, *dikaiōō*, 1344) by our works (James 2:21, 24, 25).

**B 2 The Discussion About the Relative Importance of Faith and Works 2:18-20**

- C 1 The claim of equal importance: {18} But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; 2:18
- C 2 The counter-claim that works are an indispensable evidence of faith 2:18
- D 1 The position unsupported by evidence: "show me your faith without the works,
- D 2 The position supported by evidence: "and I will show you my faith by my works."<sup>43</sup>
- C 3 The absurdity of faith without works 2:19
- D 1 The assumption of faith in the unity of God: {19} You believe that God is one.
- D 2 The tongue-in-cheek commendation: You do well;
- D 3 The condemnation-by-association: the demons also believe, and shudder.<sup>44</sup>
- C 4 The conclusion about faith without works: {20} But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?<sup>45</sup> 2:20

**B 3 Examples of Faith Accompanied by Works 2:21-26**

- C 1 Abraham 2:21-24

<sup>43</sup> James 2:18 - and I will show you my faith by my works: Works are not essential for salvation. Works are essential to prove salvation. Saving faith is demonstrated by works. This agrees with what Paul said in Eph. 2:8-10. For those of us who have trusted in Christ, God has good works that He has prepared beforehand in order that we would walk in them. In other words, if someone has exercised saving faith, good works are inevitable.

<sup>44</sup> James 2:19 - the demons also believe, and shudder: The implication is that merely believing in the unity of God is insufficient unless there are good works that ensue. That kind or degree of faith that results in no works is inadequate or insufficient. In the writer's estimation, there are here two different kinds of faith. What is being proposed here is a belief in facts about God, not a reliance upon God. If one trusts in God, rather than merely believing in certain facts about God, he will not shudder, as do the demons, but will obey the God in whom he trusts.

By way of example, I am aware of a number of different Bible scholars. There are a number of scholars who I am convinced are committed Christians, but I don't trust them in areas of hermeneutics and eschatology. So I do not follow their exegetical explanations, and in most cases, I don't even bother reading them. I believe they are Christians, but I don't trust their exegesis. So my faith in them as Christians is a dead faith insofar as my relying upon their commentaries.

Faith in Jesus, reliance upon Jesus, will inevitably result in good works on His behalf. The absence of good works on behalf of Jesus evidences an absence of a living faith.

"Shudder" is *phrissō* (5425), to shudder or shiver from fear or dread – to be extremely afraid ([Friberg](#)). This is its only use in the entire NT.

<sup>45</sup> James 2:20 - faith without works is useless: "Useless" is *argós* (692). Literally, it means "non work" or "not work." So it means idle or inactive. It is used of people who are idle, or unemployed (Matt. 20:3, 6); of people who are lazy and lacking industry (1 Tim. 5:13 [twice]; Tit. 1:12; of words spoken carelessly, without thought (Matt. 12:36); of a faith (James 2:20) or a lifestyle that is useless, unprofitable, or worthless (2 Pet. 1:8) (adapted from [Friberg](#)). So faith without works is a faith that is useless, unprofitable, or worthless.

- D 1 The question about justification by works: {21} Was not Abraham our father justified by works <sup>46</sup> 2:21
- D 2 The occasion: when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>47</sup> 2:21
- D 3 The completing aspect of works accompanying faith: {22} You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; <sup>48</sup> 2:22
- D 4 The fulfillment of Scripture: {23} and the Scripture was fulfilled <sup>49</sup> which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED

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<sup>46</sup> James 2:21 - Was not Abraham our father justified by works: “Justified” is the [Aorist](#) tense, passive voice of the verb *dikaiōō* (1344). “Works” is the [genitive](#) plural of the noun *érgon* (2041). James goes on to assert through his question (which expects a “yes” answer) that Abraham was justified by works “when he offered up his son Isaac upon the altar” (James 2:21). James alludes to the historical event found in Genesis 22:1-19. I believe James was using the word “justified” in the sense of “shown to be righteous” or “demonstrated to be righteous.”

Some have interpreted this to mean that James is asserting that Abraham was saved by works, not by faith. But that cannot be James’ meaning, because years earlier in Abraham’s life, he had believed God’s promise that he would be given as many descendants as the stars he could see up in the heavens (Gen. 15:1-5). Moses had then declared, in Gen. 15:6, “Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.” So Abraham had already been *justified*, or *accounted as righteous*, by virtue of his faith, apart from any works before he ever offered his son Isaac on the altar years later. That is the point that Paul made in Romans 4:1-5. There, Paul concluded, in Rom. 4:5, “But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,” (*dikaíosunē*, 1343).

So James cannot be taken to mean that people are saved by their works, or that works can in any way contribute to one’s salvation. He is using a slightly different shade of meaning of the verb “justified” (1344). What James means is that Abraham was *vindicated* or *demonstrated to be righteous* by his works when he offered up Isaac upon the altar. As Zane Hodges explains (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 826), “Works serve as the barometer of justification, while faith is the basis for justification.”

For lexical documentation, Paul, in Romans 4:1-5, was using “justify” “(5) as a religious technical term; (a) of imputed righteousness, as God’s judging and saving activity in relation to persons *justify, declare righteous, put right with* (himself) Rom. 3:24)” ([Friberg](#)). James was using the same verb with a slightly different nuance “(3) as demonstrating that someone is *dikaíos* [righteous, 1342] *vindicate, show to be right* (Luke 10:29)” ([Friberg](#)).

We are saved by grace through faith, apart from any works. But if we are saved, we will produce the good works in which God has pre-ordained us to walk. This is the assertion of Paul in Ephesians 2:8-10. In all fairness, I would have to say that the footnote in the Catholic Bible at James 2:14-26 is not inaccurate. I would probably state it somewhat differently, but the footnote as it stands is not inaccurate (The New American Bible, [footnote 6](#) on James 2:14-26).

<sup>47</sup> James 2:21 - when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar: Abraham’s justification by virtue of his faith was recorded in Genesis 15:6. At that time Abraham was less than 86 years old (Gen. 16:6 – the birth of Ishmael). He was 100 at the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21:5). By the time Abraham offered Isaac on the altar as a strapping teenager (Gen. 22:1-19), in excess of two decades had passed since Abraham had already been declared righteous on account of his faith (Gen. 15:6). The justification to which James refers here in James 2:21 is the declaration, or vindication of Abraham’s righteousness as evidenced by his works.

<sup>48</sup> James 2:22 - and as a result of the works, faith was perfected: “perfected” is the [Aorist](#) tense, passive voice of *teleiōō* (5048). James means that, by virtue of Abraham’s good works, his faith was brought to a point of completion. We can deduce, then, that a faith without works is an incomplete faith.

<sup>49</sup> James 2:23 - and the Scripture was fulfilled: “was fulfilled” is the [Aorist](#) tense, passive voice of *plēróō* (4137). James quotes Gen. 15:6. He is stating that Abraham’s work of obedience recorded in Gen. 22:1-19 two decades after God’s having justified Abraham by faith apart from works in Gen. 15:6 served to fulfill or give full meaning to or bring to a stage of completion the assertion of Abraham’s original justification on account of his faith in Gen. 15:6.

What we learn, therefore, is that God deliberately tests our faith over a period of years, not to prove its invalidity, but to prove its validity. Appropriate works demonstrate the validity of our faith.

- TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," <sup>50</sup> (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3) 2:23
- D 5 The approbation of Scripture: and he was called the friend of God <sup>51</sup> (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8). 2:23
- D 6 The conclusion about the importance of works: {24} You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>52</sup> 2:24
- C 2 Rahab 2:25-26
- D 1 Her justification by works 2:25
- E 1 The rhetorical question: {25} In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works <sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> James 2:23 - AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS: James is quoting Genesis 15:6, most likely from the LXX (the MT does not use the name "Abraham," and uses the designation Yahweh [LORD], not Elohim [God]). If he is quoting the LXX, James does not follow it precisely. Rather, he uses more characteristically Koine Greek idiom. Paul also quotes from Gen. 15:6 in Rom. 4:3. His quotation and James' quotation agree precisely, but each is quoting for a slightly different reason. Paul quotes Gen. 15:6 to prove Abraham was declared righteous on the basis of his faith completely apart from any works. James quotes Gen. 15:6 to demonstrate that Abraham's decades-later offering up of his son Isaac constituted the "good work" that "fulfilled" or "brought to completion" Abraham's prior faith. James' whole point is not that good works save us, but that good works validate our faith. His argument is that a faith unvalidated by works is not a bona fide, saving faith.

<sup>51</sup> James 2:23 - and he was called the friend of God: Both 2 Chron. 20:7 ("Abraham Your friend") and Isa. 41:8 ("Abraham My friend") refer to Abraham as God's friend.

<sup>52</sup> James 2:24 - You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone: There has been a centuries-old argument between Protestants and Catholic as to the proper relationship of faith and works. Protestants' mantra of "salvation ... by faith alone" is probably a bit simplistic. However, it was formulated in the context of the obvious abuses of papal indulgences at the time [Martin Luther's 95 Theses](#). One has only to read [Luther's 95 Theses](#) casually to see how incensed he was over the abuse of papal indulgences. (A word search reveals 35 occurrences of the word "indulgences" in his Theses.) Yet, as one of my sons has suggested, Protestants have probably over-reacted to the abuses of Catholicism, and not adequately balanced the role of works as outlined by James, concentrating instead only upon teaching of Paul in Romans 4:1-5. To me the balance of the whole issue is clearly taught by Paul in Eph. 2:8-10:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

We can see clearly that we are not saved by good works. We are saved by grace through faith apart from any works. But we are also clearly saved to *perform* good works. In fact God has prepared good works ahead of time for us for the express purpose that we should walk in them. So we are saved *apart* from works, but we are saved for the *purpose* of good works. The two cannot be divorced from one another. In all fairness, I really cannot quibble with [footnote 6](#) of the Catholic Bible to be found at James 2:14-26. I would say it a little differently, but that which has been said is not inaccurate.

<sup>53</sup> James 2:25 - was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works: James refers to the incident recorded in Joshua 2:1-21. James, of course, according to his thesis, is demonstrating that a believer is justified, or declared righteous, on the basis of his works. But he is simply presenting what I term "the post-salvation proof" of saving faith. If one examines the narrative in Joshua 2, he discovers that Rahab already had attained a certain level of faith in Israel's God before the spies ever entered her home. No doubt the faith she *already had* gave her the impetus to hide the two men she quickly deduced were Israeli spies. As soon as she deduced who they were, she hid them among the stalks of flax upon her roof. Before nightfall she came up to the men and told them what she already knew and believed –

- E 2 The works in question: when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?
- D 2 The concluding analogy 2:26
- E 1 The physical truth: {26} For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead,<sup>54</sup>
- E 2 The theological truth: so also faith without works is dead.<sup>55</sup>

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(1) that Yahweh, the God of Israel had given the land of Canaan to Israel; (2) that the inhabitants of the land were utterly demoralized and terror-stricken on account of the Israelites; (3) that Yahweh had dried up the Red Sea for them; (4) that Israel had destroyed the two kings of the Amorites beyond the Jordan; (5) that the people of Jericho were utterly demoralized; (6) and that Yahweh their God was God in heaven above and on earth beneath (Josh. 2:8-11). She already believed in certain facts about Israel and Israel's God. But the moment she identified the two Israeli spies and determined to shelter them, her "knowledge" faith turned into an "appropriating" faith. That is, she determined to ally herself with Israel and with the God of Israel. So her "cognizance" level of faith at some point there became, as I stated, an "appropriation" level of faith. She, by her actions, demonstrated her saving faith.

And her subsequent acts *also* demonstrated her saving faith: (1) She plead for the two spies to deal kindly with her and her father's household; (2) she assisted the spies in escaping; (3) she warned her spies to hide out for three days in the hill country before attempting to return to their encampment; (4) and she immediately hung out from her window the scarlet cord that would identify her home as a safe house (Josh. 2:12-21).

Had Rahab not done all those things, she would not have been saved from the destruction of the Israeli armies. Her actions demonstrated the reality of her faith in Israel's God. James is stating that only a faith that manifests itself in tangible actions is a saving faith. People can believe certain things about God and Jesus, but if they don't *trust them*, they never act on behalf of God and Jesus, and thus, they demonstrate by their inaction that they are not saved. James' point is that a saving faith results in actions that reflect one's faith. Absent those actions, it is safe to say that a person is not a genuine believer in either God or Christ. It is in that sense that we are justified, or *declared righteous*, by our works.

If I may, let me give a personal example. Years ago as a teenager I won a prize – all the ice cream I could eat at one sitting at the Peter Pan Ice Cream store in Newton, KS. I won the prize because I had physically brought the most children to Vacation Bible School that day. Intellectually, I believed that the ice cream store would honor my certificate. But for one reason or another, I never made it down to the ice cream store. My faith was not sufficiently strong enough to propel me to the store and eat the ice cream. It was a dead faith, and I never partook of all that ice cream. My absence of works demonstrated my lack of "saving" faith.

Our works vindicate the reality of our faith. That was true in Rahab's life, and it is true in our lives today.

<sup>54</sup> James 2:26 - For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead: Literally, the text reads, "For just as the body (*sō'ma*, [4983](#)) without spirit (*pneû'ma*, [4151](#)) is dead (*nekrós*, [3498](#)) ...." James uses a graphic illustration. I once had the opportunity to accompany a medical student into the morgue of the medical department of the university at which he studied. There I saw, stretched face downward upon a gurney, the body of a dead man. The skin hue of his partly visible face was grayish. His nose was compressed; the exposed thigh of his left leg was in the process of being dissected. I believe his right shoulder area was also being dissected. He had no "spirit," for it had departed elsewhere. He was dead, lifeless, unable to communicate, or to perform any useful action or purpose, other than, involuntarily, to serve as a cadaver for medical students. The body without spirit is dead.

<sup>55</sup> James 2:26 - so faith without works is dead: James' point is that faith (*pistis*, [4102](#)) without works (plural of *érgon*, [2041](#)) is a dead (*nekrós*, [3498](#)) faith, and therefore not a saving faith. James uses the same word, "dead," to describe a faith without works as he did to describe a body without spirit. Just as surely as a man's body without spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.

**A 5 THE TONGUE 3:1-12****B 1 The Caution Against Teaching 3:1-2**

C 1 The warning: {1} Let not many *of you* become teachers, my brethren, 3:1

C 2 The reason for the warning: knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment. 3:1

C 3 The potential for judgment: {2} For we all stumble in many *ways*. 3:2

C 4 The benchmark for perfection 3:2

D 1 The hypothesis – inoffensive speech: If anyone does not stumble in what he says,

D 2 The indication: he is a perfect man,

D 3 The generalization: able to bridle the whole body as well.

**B 2 The Principle Operative with the Tongue: Small entities unduly influence large outcomes. 3:3-5**

C 1 The example of bits and horses 3:3

D 1 The small entity – a bit: {3} Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us,

D 2 The large outcome: we direct their entire body as well.

C 2 The example of rudders and ships 3:4

D 1 The large outcome – the destination of a huge ship: {4} Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds,

D 2 The small entity – the rudder: are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires.

C 3 The parallel with regard to the tongue 3:5

D 1 The small entity – the tongue: {5} So also the tongue is a small part of the body,

D 2 The large outcome: and *yet* it boasts of great things.

C 4 The example of fire and forest 3:5

D 1 The large outcome – a forest fire: See how great a forest is set aflame

D 2 The small entity – a small fire: by such a small fire!

**B 3 The Evil (or Dangers) of the Tongue 3:6-12**

- C 1 The description of the tongue's evil 3:6-8
  - D 1 Its volatility: {6} And the tongue is a fire, 3:6
  - D 2 Its unrighteousness: the *very* world of iniquity;
  - D 3 Its ability to contaminate: the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body,
  - D 4 Its ability to destroy: and sets on fire the course of *our* life,
  - D 5 Its source: and is set on fire by hell.
  - D 6 Its untamability 3:7-8
    - E 1 The pliability of animals: {7} For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. 3:7
    - E 2 The incorrigibility of the tongue: {8} But no one can tame the tongue; 3:8
  - D 7 Its evil: it is a restless evil
  - D 8 Its venom: *and* full of deadly poison.
- C 2 The examples of the tongue's evil 3:9-12
  - D 1 Its hypocrisy toward God and man: {9} With it we bless *our* Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; 3:9
  - D 2 Its inconsistency:
    - E 1 The statement of its inconsistency: {10} from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. 3:10
    - E 2 The rebuke of its inconsistency: My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. 3:10
    - E 3 The absurdity of its inconsistency 3:11-12
      - G 1 The example of a fountain: {11} Does a fountain send out from the same opening *both* fresh and bitter *water*? 3:11

G 2 The example of horticulture 3:12

H 1 {12} Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives,

H 2 or a vine produce figs?

G 3 The example of water: Nor *can* salt water produce fresh. 3:12

## A 6 WISDOM 3:13-18

### B 1 The Proof of Wisdom 3:13

C 1 The claim to be wise: {13} Who among you is wise and understanding?

C 2 The display of wisdom

D 1 Good behavior: Let him show by his good behavior his deeds

D 2 Gentleness: in the gentleness of wisdom.

### B 2 Earthly Wisdom 3:14-16

C 1 The indicators of earthly wisdom 3:14

D 1 Jealousy and ambition: {14} But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart,

D 2 Arrogance and deceit: do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

C 2 The source of earthly wisdom 3:15

D 1 Not from above: {15} This wisdom is not that which comes down from above,

D 2 But from this present realm: but is earthly, natural, demonic.

C 3 The fruit of earthly wisdom 3:16

D 1 The presence of jealousy and ambition: {16} For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist,

D 2 The concomitant of chaos and evil: there is disorder and every evil thing.

**B 3 Heavenly Wisdom 3:17-18**

C 1 The character of heavenly wisdom: {17} But the wisdom from above is 3:17

D 1 first pure

D 2 then peaceable,

D 3 gentle,

D 4 reasonable,

D 5 full of mercy

D 6 and good fruits,

D 7 unwavering,

D 8 without hypocrisy.

C 2 The activity of those possessing heavenly wisdom 3:18

D 1 The production of righteousness: {18} And the seed whose fruit is righteousness

D 2 The production of peace: is sown in peace by those who make peace.

**A 7 SPIRITUAL CONFLICT 4:1-17**

**B 1 Interpersonal Conflict 4:1-2a**

C 1 The Source of Interpersonal Conflict: Hedonism 4:1

D 1 The question about the source: {1} What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you?

D 2 The identification of the source: Is not the source your pleasures<sup>56</sup> that wage war in your members?

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<sup>56</sup> James 4:1 - Is not the source your pleasures: The word is *hedone* ([2237](#)), "pleasure", and the word from which we get our English word hedonism.

C 2 The Description of Interpersonal Conflict 4:2a

D 1 The progression of lust

E 1 The strong desire: {2} You lust <sup>57</sup>

E 2 The disappointment: and do not have;

E 3 The vindictive reaction: *so* you commit murder.

D 2 The progression of envy

E 1 The jealousy: You are envious

E 2 The disappointment: and cannot obtain;

E 3 The vindictive reaction: *so* you fight and quarrel. <sup>58</sup>

**B 2 The Conflict Between Believers and God (Disloyalty) 4:2b-5**

C 1 As illustrated by ineffective prayer 4:2b-3

D 1 The neglect of prayer 4:2b

E 1 The impoverishment: You do not have

E 2 The failure to petition: because you do not ask.

D 2 The misguided use of prayer: faulty motives 4:3

E 1 The request: {3} You ask

E 2 The impoverishment: and do not receive,

E 3 The impure motives: because you ask with wrong motives,

E 4 The real agenda: *so* that you may spend it on your pleasures.

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<sup>57</sup> James 4:2 - You lust: The word is *epithumeo* (1937), meaning "strong desire."

<sup>58</sup> James 4:2 - you fight and quarrel: For an illustration, see "Face to Face With the [Tasmanian] Devil" by Paul Raffaele, p. 130, *Reader's Digest*, Feb., 1996.

"Meet one of the smelliest, greediest, worst-tempered animals on earth." "...the Tasmanian devil has one of the most unsavory reputations in the animal kingdom. A champion eater, the devil punctuates bloody squabbles over its daily feed of carrion and prey with the piercing screams and howls that gave it its satanic name. Given half a chance, the creature will even eat others of its kind and its own young." (p. 131)

## C 2 As caused by spiritual adultery 4:4-5

## D 1 The disloyalty of a Christian's being friendly with the world 4:4

E 1 The shocking label: {4} You adulteresses,

E 2 The anti-God character of worldliness: do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?

E 3 The inimical stance of worldliness

G 1 The desire for worldly friendship: Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world

G 2 The opposition toward God: makes himself an enemy of God.

## D 2 The fierce jealousy of God 4:5

E 1 The truthfulness of Scripture: {5} Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose:

E 2 The jealous longing of God's Spirit (for believers' unwavering loyalty): "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?<sup>59</sup>**B 3 Overcoming Conflict (Humility) 4:6-17**

## C 1 Submission to God 4:6-10

## D 1 The proactive working of God to counter disloyalty 4:6

E 1 His giving a greater grace (than the pull of strong desires and the world) (to those who will submit to Him): {6} But He gives a greater grace.

E 2 His documented opposition to the proud and graciousness to the humble: Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."<sup>60</sup> (cf. Ps. 138:6;

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<sup>59</sup> James 4:5 - He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us: James 4:5 can grammatically be translated several different ways (see *James*, D. Edmond Hiebert. The literal rendering: "Or think ye that vainly the Scripture says: 'To envy yearns the (S)pirit which dwelt in you?'" (*Greek-English New Testament*, Samuel Bagster and Sons, London, 1958). NIV translates, "Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us tends toward envy, 6 but he gives us more grace?", etc. In its marginal readings, NIV has the alternates, Or "that God jealously longs for the spirit that he made to live in us"; or, "that the Spirit he caused to live in us longs jealously." In a context which emphasizes Christians as being adulterous toward God in their friendship with the world, it follows most naturally that God's Spirit would envy or be jealous of these disloyal believers and want them to return, wholly loyal to Himself!

<sup>60</sup> James 4:6 - GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE: Here James evidently is alluding to Psalm 138:6 – "For though the Lord is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly, But the haughty He knows from afar." He also alludes to Proverbs 3:34 – "Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted."

Prov. 3:34)

- D 2 The responsibility of the believer 4:7-10
  - E 1 Submission to God: {7} Submit therefore to God. 4:7
  - E 2 Resisting the devil 4:7
    - G 1 The command: Resist the devil
    - G 2 The result: and he will flee from you.
  - E 3 Drawing near to God 4:8
    - G 1 The command: {8} Draw near to God
    - G 2 The promise: and He will draw near to you.
  - E 4 Personal purification 4:8
    - G 1 From acts of sin: Cleanse your hands, you sinners;
    - G 2 From attitudes of sin: and purify your hearts, you double-minded.
  - E 5 Personal remorse 4:9
    - G 1 Exhibit sorrow: {9} Be miserable and mourn and weep;
    - G 2 Displace gaiety
      - H 1 Let your laughter be turned into mourning
      - H 2 and your joy to gloom.
  - E 6 Personal abasement 4:10
    - G 1 The command: {10} Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord,
    - G 2 The promise: and He will exalt you.
- C 2 Refraining from judging 4:11-12
  - D 1 The command to abstain from judging: {11} Do not speak against one another, brethren. 4:11
  - D 2 The analysis of judging 4:11
    - E 1 The act of judging: He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother,

- E 2 The assessment of judging: speaks against the law and judges the law;
- E 3 The consequence of judging: but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge *of it*.
- D 3 The prerogative of judging 4:12
  - E 1 The rightful Judge
    - G 1 The exclusive right: {12} There is *only* one Lawgiver and Judge,
    - G 2 The powerful right: the One who is able to save and to destroy;
  - E 2 The usurping judge: but who are you who judge your neighbor?
- C 3 Refraining from boasting 4:13-17
  - D 1 The reprimand for boasting: {13} Come now, you who say, 4:13
    - E 1 The assertion of control over (immediate) time : "Today or tomorrow
    - E 2 The assertion of control over matter: "we will go to such and such a city,
    - E 3 The assertion of control over (intermediate) time : "and spend a year there
    - E 4 The assertion of control over energy (activity): "and engage in business
    - E 5 The assertion of control over productivity: "and make a profit."
  - D 2 The presumptuousness of boasting 4:14
    - E 1 Human ignorance of the future: {14} Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow.
    - E 2 The fleeting nature of human existence
      - G 1 Human insignificance: You are *just* a vapor
      - G 2 Human transience: that appears for a little while
      - G 3 Human mortality: and then vanishes away.

- D 3 The alternative to boasting – deference to Divine Sovereignty: {15}  
Instead, *you ought* to say, 4:15
  - E 1 Human planning dependent upon Divine resolve: "If the Lord wills,
  - E 2 Human existence dependent upon Divine will: "we will live
  - E 3 Human activity dependent upon Divine will: "and also do this or that."
- D 4 Their culpability in boasting 4:16
  - E 1 The indictment of their speech: {16} But as it is, you boast
  - E 2 The indictment of their attitude: in your arrogance;
  - E 3 Their guilt: all such boasting is evil.
- D 5 The incentive for refraining from boasting 4:17
  - E 1 The informed conscience: {17} Therefore, to one who knows *the* right thing to do
  - E 2 The violated conscience: and does not do it,
  - E 3 The conviction of sin: to him it is sin.

## A 8 WOE TO THE WEALTHY! 5:1-11

### B 1 The Calling of the Rich to Mourn 5:1

- C 1 The mourning of the rich: {1} Come now, you rich, weep and howl
- C 2 The misery of the rich: for your miseries which are coming upon you.

### B 2 The Catastrophes of the Rich 5:2-3

- C 1 In the present 5:2-3a
  - D 1 The decay of their foodstuffs: {2} Your riches have rotted 5:2
  - D 2 The decay of their clothing: and your garments have become moth-eaten.
  - D 3 The decay of their precious metals: Your gold and your silver have rusted;<sup>61</sup> 5:3a

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<sup>61</sup> James 5:3 - Your gold and your silver have rusted: Better, corroded. Gold and silver do not rust, but silver tarnishes and gold darkens. (See John Peter Lange and J. J. Van Oosterzee, "The Epistle General of James," in *Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, 23:138.

C 2 In the future <sup>62</sup> 5:3b

- D 1 The testimony of materialism: and their rust will be a witness against you
- D 2 The damnation of materialism: and will consume your flesh like fire.
- D 3 The time-frame of materialism: It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

**B 3 The Evils of the Rich** <sup>63</sup> 5:4-6

## C 1 Withholding pay 5:4

- D 1 The labor performed: {4} Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields,
- D 2 The pay withheld: *and* which has been withheld by you,
- D 3 The damning testimony: cries out *against you*;
- D 4 The fearsome judge: and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

## C 2 Luxurious living 5:5

- D 1 Their life of luxury: {15 You have lived luxuriously on the earth
- D 2 Their life of pleasure: and led a life of wanton pleasure;
- D 3 Their coming judgment: you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

## C 3 Subverting the judicial process 5:6

- D 1 Their subversion of the legal system to eliminate innocent victims: {6} You have condemned and put to death the righteous *man*;
- D 2 The helplessness of their victims: he does not resist you.

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<sup>62</sup> James 5:3b, Title - In the future: The essence of these statements is that the corrosion of their wealth will, in the day of judgment, serve as a poisonous testimony to their misplaced emphases in life.

<sup>63</sup> James 5:4-6, Title – The Evils of the Rich: This explanation in 5:4-6 indicates that wealth in and of itself is not that which is evil. It is rather, as Paul says (1 Timothy 6:10), the love of wealth that motivates one to engage in criminal activity to secure it that is evil.

**B 4 Patience (under the Harassment of the Wealthy) until Christ's Return 5:7-11**

- C 1 The Exhortation to Exercise Patience 5:7
  - D 1 The command: {7} Therefore be patient, <sup>64</sup>
  - D 2 The subjects: brethren,
  - D 3 The goal: until the coming of the Lord.
- C 2 The Illustration of Patience: The Farmer 5:7
  - D 1 His waiting: The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil,
  - D 2 His patience: being patient about it,
  - D 3 His reward: until it gets the early and late rains.
- C 3 The Application of Patience to the Christian 5:8
  - D 1 The exhortation to patience: {8} You too be patient;
  - D 2 The exhortation to inner strength: strengthen your hearts,
  - D 3 The motivation – the imminent return of Christ: for the coming of the Lord is near.
- C 4 The Verbalization of Patience 5:9
  - D 1 The prohibition of mutual criticism: {9} Do not complain, brethren, against one another,
  - D 2 The reasons for the prohibition
    - E 1 To incurring of judgment of oneself: so that you yourselves may not be judged;
    - E 2 The proximity of the judge! behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

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<sup>64</sup> James 5:7 - Therefore be patient: The oppressed Christians are therefore, in view of their systematic harassment from the rich, urged to be patient until Christ comes, designated as the Judge (James 5:9) not only of the evil wealthy (implied), but also of themselves!

## C 5 The Examples of Patience 5:10-11

## D 1 The prophets 5:10-11a

E 1 The example: {10} As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 5:10

E 2 The commendation: {11} We count those blessed who endured. 5:11a

## D 2 Job 5:11b

E 1 The patience of Job: You have heard of the endurance of Job

E 2 The compassion of God

G 1 and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings,

G 2 that the Lord is full of compassion and *is* merciful.

## A 9 INTEGRITY 5:12

**B 1 The prohibition of oath-taking:** {12} But above all, my brethren, do no swear,

**B 2 The examples of oaths:** either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath;

**B 3 The proper alternative – perpetual truthfulness:** but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no,

**B 4 The benefit of perpetual truthfulness:** so that you may not fall under judgment.

## A 10 APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO CIRCUMSTANCES 5:13-18

**B 1 To That of Hardship – Prayer 5:13**

C 1 The scenario: {13} Is anyone among you suffering? <sup>65</sup>

C 2 The antidote: *Then* he must pray.

**B 2 To That of Optimism – Praise 5:13**

C 1 The scenario: Is anyone cheerful?

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<sup>65</sup> James 5:13 - Is anyone among you suffering: Notice that in verse 13, the person in question is said to be **afflicted** ([2553](#), *kakopatheo*), and has evidently undergone a harrowing experience. In the only other three occurrences of this word (2 Timothy 2:3, 9; 4:5), the harrowing experiences had to do with difficult ministry experiences. Here the context does not indicate the nature of the difficult experience the subject is undergoing. The emphasis is on emotional, not physical stress. In today's vernacular we would ask, "Is anyone among you going through a hard time?"

C 2 The joyful response: He is to sing praises.

**B 3 To That of Stress, Burnout and / or Depression – the Prayerful Ministry of the Elders 5:14-15**

C 1 The scenario: {14} Is anyone among you sick? <sup>66</sup> 5:14

C 2 The antidote: *Then* he must call for the elders of the church 5:14

D 1 and they are to pray over him,

D 2 anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

C 3 The effectiveness 5:15

D 1 The assumption – believing prayer: {15} and the prayer offered in faith

D 2 The result

E 1 Restoration: will restore the one who is sick,

E 2 The source of restoration: and the Lord will raise him up,

E 3 The concomitant – forgiveness: and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

**B 4 To That of Sinfulness – Mutual Confession, Prayer, and Rescue 5:16-20**

C 1 **Confession** – The exhortation to confess: {16} Therefore, confess your sins to one another, 5:16

C 2 **Prayer** 5:16-18

D 1 The exhortation to pray: and pray for one another

D 2 The result of prayer: so that you may be healed.

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<sup>66</sup> James 5:14 - Is anyone among you sick: The noun “sick” is *asthenéō*, [770](#). While one cannot rule out entirely the possibility that James has in mind physical sickness, the whole context surrounding James 5:14 seems to favor mental / emotional / spiritual weakness, that which we might term depression. The sins to be forgiven would, in this latter scenario, be those of self-pity, or of doubting of God's faithfulness. See also "James", J. Ronald Blue, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, II, 834,835. For a more detailed explanation, see the Appendix at the end of the analysis of James.

- D 3 The incentive for prayer 5:16-18
  - E 1 The conditions for success: The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. 5:16
  - E 2 The example of success: Elijah 5:17-18
    - G 1 The humanity of Elijah: {17} Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, 5:17
    - G 2 The fervency of Elijah: and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain;
    - G 3 The success of Elijah 5:17-18
      - H 1 The withholding of rain: and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 5:17
      - H 2 The granting of rain: {18} Then he prayed again, 5:18
        - J 1 and the sky poured rain
        - J 2 and the earth produced its fruit.
- C 3 **Rescue:** Retrieving straying sinners 5:19-20
  - D 1 The condition – departure: {19} My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth 5:19
  - D 2 The engagement: and one turns him back,
  - D 3 The benefits: {20} let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way 5:20
    - E 1 Salvation of the physical body: will save his soul from death
    - E 2 Salvation of the corporate testimony: and will cover a multitude of sins.

APPENDIX TO JAMES 5:14, "SICK"  
(*astheneo*, 770)  
Compiled by James T. Bartsch

**Lexical Information, Based on KJV**

[770](#) *astheneo* {as-then-eh'-o}

from 772; TDNT - 1:490,83; vb

AV - be weak (12)

- be sick (10)

- sick (7)

- weak (3)

- impotent man (1)

- be diseased (1)

- be made weak (1) [36]

1) to be weak, feeble, to be without strength, powerless

**A. To be Medically Ill or Physically Disabled**

1. Matthew 10:8 Heal the **sick**, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.
2. Mark 6:56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the **sick** in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.
3. Luke 4:40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any **sick** with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.
4. Luke 7:10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been **sick**.
5. Luke 9:2 And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.
6. John 4:46 So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was **sick** at Capernaum.
7. John 5:3 In these lay a great multitude of **impotent** folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.
8. John 5:7 The **impotent**<sup>67</sup> man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steps down before me.
9. John 6:2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were **diseased**.

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<sup>67</sup> John 5:7 - The impotent man: This man was possessed of some ailment that left him physically disabled and virtually immobile.

10. John 11:1-3, 6 1. Now a certain [man] was **sick**, [named] Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (It was [that] Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was **sick**.) 3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is **sick**. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was **sick**, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.
11. Acts 9:37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was **sick**, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid [her] in an upper chamber.
12. Acts 19:12 So that from his body were brought unto the **sick** handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.
13. Philippians 2:26-27 26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been **sick**. 27 For indeed he was **sick** nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.
14. 2 Timothy 4:20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletus **sick**.
15. Matthew 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was **sick**,<sup>68</sup> and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

**B. Suffering a Physical Handicap or Advanced Age, Making Robust Physical Exertion Difficult or Impossible.**

1. Acts 20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the **weak**, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

**C. A Non-Physical, Often Spiritual Disability or Weakness (as in weak faith or weak (i.e. overactive or legalistic) conscience, or spiritually weak because of one's sinful flesh, or weak as a Christian -- spiritually immature, and easily offended or deterred from following Christ)**

1. Romans 4:19 And being not **weak** in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:
2. Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was **weak** through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:
3. Romans 14:1-2 1. Him that is **weak** in the faith receive ye, [but] not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is **weak**, eats herbs.
4. Romans 14:21 1 [It is] good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor [any thing]

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<sup>68</sup> Matt. 25:36 - I was sick: This would seem to be a physical weakness, inasmuch as being in prison is a physical confinement and being without clothes is a physical deprivation.

whereby thy brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made **weak**.

5. 1 Corinthians 8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are **weak**.
6. 1 Corinthians 8:11-12 11 And through thy knowledge shall the **weak** brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their **weak** conscience, ye sin against Christ.
7. 2 Corinthians 11:21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been **weak**. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.
8. 2 Corinthians 11:29 Who is **weak**, and I am not **weak**? <sup>69</sup> who is offended, and I burn not?

#### D. Perceived Impotence or Seeming Ineffectiveness in Ministry

1. 2 Corinthians 13:3-4 3 Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not **weak**, but is mighty in you. 4 For though he was crucified through **weakness**, yet he lives by the power of God. For we also are **weak** in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.
2. 2 Corinthians 13:9 For we are glad, when we are **weak**, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, [even] your perfection.

#### E. Mental or Emotional Weakness Brought About By Difficult Living Circumstances and Persecution

1. 2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am **weak**, then am I strong.
2. James 5:13-16 13 Is any among you afflicted [JTB = "stressed out"] ([2553](#), *kakopatheo*, <sup>70</sup> to endure an evil experience)? let him pray. Is any merry ([2114](#),

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<sup>69</sup> 2 Cor. 11:29 - Who is weak, and I am not weak: Possibly simply indicates he tries to identify with easily offended Christians and gird them up in their spiritual weakness.

<sup>70</sup> James 5:13 - [2553](#) *kakopatheo*, from the same as 2552; TDNT - omitted, 798; vb

AV - endure hardness (1)  
 - suffer trouble (1)  
 - endure affliction (1)  
 - be afflicted (1) [4]

1) to suffer (endure) evils (hardships, troubles); to be afflicted

2 Timothy 2:3 Thou therefore **endure hardness**, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:9 Wherein I **suffer trouble**, as an evil doer, [even] unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

2 Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, **endure afflictions**, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

*euthumeo*, to be cheerful, optimistic, in a good mood)? let him sing psalms. 14 Is any **sick**<sup>71</sup> [JTB = depressed?] ([770](#), *astheneo*, to be weak, lit., not strong)

among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the **sick** [JTB = exhausted one] ([2577](#), *kamno*,<sup>72</sup> to be weary, faint, or exhausted) and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he

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James 5:13 Is any among you **afflicted**? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

<sup>71</sup> James 5:14 - Is any sick: Although at first glance, the reading seems to suggest physical sickness, a closer examination of the all-important context reveals another possibility. (1) Notice that in verse 13, the person in question is said to be **afflicted** ([2553](#), *kakopatheo*), and has evidently undergone a harrowing experience. In the only other three occurrences of this word (2 Timothy 2:3, 9; 4:5), the harrowing experiences had to do with difficult ministry experiences. Here the context does not indicate the nature of the difficult experience the subject is undergoing. The emphasis is on emotional, not physical stress. (2) The next question calls for someone who is **merry** ([2114](#), *euthumeo*), in an optimistic, cheerful frame of mind, to vent his feelings in a spiritual way through singing psalms. Again, the emphasis is on emotion, not a physical condition. (3) The next question is the significant term under consideration, **sick** ([770](#), *astheneo*), lit., weak, the remedy for which the person is instructed to call for the elders of the church to pray and to anoint him with oil, to which we shall refer momentarily. (4) About this same person, situation #3, it is affirmed that the prayer of faith shall save ([4982](#), *sozo*, the generic word for rescuing from an adverse condition, determined by the context) the **sick** ([2577](#), *kamno*), that is, one who is wearied or about to faint because of his external difficulties. (Observe that the only other two uses of *kamno*, Hebrews 12:3 and Revelation 2:3, both specify weariness brought about by opposition in ministry and/or difficult labor in ministry.) Again, emotional, rather than physical weariness, is emphasized. Again, in James 5:16, the believers are urged to confess their faults to one another, praying for one another that they might be healed ([2390](#), *iaomai*). Here the difficulty seems to be a spiritual ailment, rather than a physical ailment.

In short, in light of the context, this person in James 5:14 who is sick and needs to call for the elders of the church seems to be suffering from mental / emotional / spiritual stress, perhaps from opposition to his Christian lifestyle or ministry. The prayer of faith will rescue him and the Lord will raise him up and his sins will be forgiven, if he has committed them.

In short, the whole scenario certainly lends itself to reflect a spiritual / emotional trial rather than a burden of physical illness. The sickness in situation three may, then, well connote a mental / spiritual / emotional burn-out. The oil which the elders are to bring is to be used in anointing ([218](#) *aleipho*) the suffering one. This anointing is used in one other passage in a context of anointing physically ill people (Mark 6:13), but more often refers to cosmetic anointing, for example, the kind that a good host would provide for his dinner guests (see Luke 7:46). If this be the case, the elders are asked to pray for the person who is mentally and emotionally depressed and provide him with the proper accoutrements of being socially presentable and in a good frame of mind.

While one cannot rule out entirely the possibility that James has in mind physical sickness, the whole context surrounding James 5:14 seems to favor mental / emotional / spiritual weakness, that which we might term depression. The sins to be forgiven would, in this latter scenario, be those of self-pity, or of doubting of God's faithfulness. See also "James", J. Ronald Blue, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, II, 834,835.

<sup>72</sup> James 5:15 - And the prayer of faith shall save the sick: "Sick" = [2577](#) *kamno*, apparently a primary verb; TDNT - omitted,omitted; vb

- AV - be wearied (1)
- sick (1)
- faint (1) [3]
- 1) to grow weary, be weary
- 2) to be sick

Hebrews 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye **be wearied** and faint in your minds.

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the **sick**, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed [JTB = spiritually] ([2390](#), *iaomai*).<sup>73</sup> The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

#### EXPANDED ANALYSIS OF JAMES

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Revelation 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and **hast not fainted**.

<sup>73</sup> James 5:16 - so that you may be healed: Of the 28 verses using [2390](#), *iaomai*, to heal, 16 of them unquestionably refer to physical healing; five unquestionably to spiritual healing; four unquestionably to relief from demonic oppression; one probably to both physical healing and relief from demonic oppression; and one to emotional healing. While James 5:16, the verse in question, could conceivably refer to physical healing, the spiritual and emotional context of the verse lends itself better to a spiritual healing.