

**B. The Judgment of the Law (James 2:10-13)**

1. The unity of the law (James 2:10-11)
 - a. The unity of guilt (James 2:10)
 - (1) The backwards look—"For" (see James 2:9)
 - a) "But if ye have respect to persons"
 - b) "Ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors" (see Leviticus 19:15).
 - (2) The attempt at perfection
 - a) "For whosoever shall keep the whole law"
 - b) "And yet offend in one point" (i.e., Leviticus 19:15)
 - (3) The outcome of falling short—"he is guilty of all."
 - a) To some degree, this principle was established in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 27:26).
 - b) The apostle Paul would later expose the great conundrum this presented (Galatians 3:10).
 - c) This is why Paul could readily suggest that the intended purpose of the law was to serve as man's condemnation rather than his justification (Romans 3:10, 19-20; see also Galatians 3:24-25).
 - (4) The unique position
 - a) Interestingly enough, the writer of this epistle was about to venture into the deep end as it pertained to the relationship between faith and works and the resulting justification.
 - b) Before proceeding, he pointed out the impossibility of fulfilling the obligations of the law.
 - c) The following must be remembered:
 - i) The Jews maintained, at this point, a strong allegiance to the law (Acts 21:18-21).
 - ii) At the same time, the Jews were incapable of keeping the law (John 7:19).
 - iii) The prominence of works became a stumblingstone for the Jews (Romans 9:30-32).
 - iv) In their zeal for the law, the Jews lost sight of the importance of faith and the Lord Himself.
 - b. The unity of authorship (James 2:11)
 - (1) He that said, "Do not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14)
 - (2) Said also, "Do not kill" (Exodus 20:13)
 - c. An example presented (James 2:11)
 - (1) "If thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill"
 - (2) "Thou art become a transgressor of the law."
 - d. The message conveyed (see Galatians 5:3)
 - (1) You may have offended in only one point.
 - (2) You are convinced of the law as transgressors (James 2:9).
 - (3) This one area of wrongdoing produces guilt or responsibility to the entirety of the law (James 2:10).
 - (4) This guilt brings the curse of disobedience (Galatians 3:10).



2. The influence of the law (James 2:12-13)
 - a. The accountability of the law (James 2:12)
 - (1) The actions of man (Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:12)
 - a) “So speak ye.”
 - b) “And so do.”
 - (2) The actions of the law—“as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty” (see James 1:25)
 - a) A man who failed to obey the law set himself up as a judge of the law (James 4:11).
 - b) Even the apostle Paul was careful not to judge the law (Romans 7:7, 12-13; 1 Timothy 1:8).
 - c) Those who “sinned in the law shall be judged by the law” (Romans 2:12).
 - d) Apparently the law’s judgment or condemnation is the death of the guilty (Romans 3:19-20; Romans 4:15; Romans 7:7-11; 2 Corinthians 3:7-9; Galatians 2:16-19; Galatians 3:10, 22).
 - e) The addressing of the law of liberty (James 1:25) seems to broaden the scope beyond the law of Moses. In fact, it seems to point to the law and ministry of Christ which is backed up by the statements that follow.
 - b. The reciprocation of the law (James 2:13)
 - (1) The Lord’s reactions—A man “shall have judgment without mercy.”
 - (2) To man’s actions—“That hath shewed no mercy”
 - a) This was an understood truth in Old Testament times (Psalm 18:25-26).
 - b) This was certainly promoted as truth during the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus (see Matthew 5:7; Matthew 7:1-2; Matthew 18:23-35).
 - c) However, the apostle Paul seemed to confirm the truth as continuing in his epistle to the Romans (Romans 2:1-5).
 - d) Though James certainly failed to understand all the revelation given to the apostle Paul, in this point, there seems to be a continuation, at least in principle, and that principle would be sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7).
 - (3) “And mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”
 - a) Those who demonstrate mercy rejoice in knowing that they too shall receive mercy at the time of their own judgment.
 - b) It must be remembered that these things were written prior to the full revelation of the gospel of the grace of God given to the apostles and specifically the apostle Paul.
 - c) The law itself had little to no mercy (Hebrews 10:28), but in the kingdom gospel, there was an indication that mercy extended would yield mercy received. As Paul later proved, mercy was simply a product of what Christ did on the cross, but a principle of sowing and reaping remained.



III. THE PARTNERSHIP OF FAITH AND WORKS (James 2:14-26)

A. Introductory Thoughts

1. Common misconceptions

a. Concerning James and Paul

- (1) On one hand, there are people who suggest that Paul and James taught everything exactly the same (Acts 15:22-31).
- (2) On the other hand, there are those who suggest that the message of Paul and James contrasted entirely.
- (3) In reality, it is obvious from the text that James was writing to a Jewish audience and early in the transition to a New Testament church. As such, there are things that strongly favour the gospel of the kingdom and Jewish culture and practice. However, this does not suggest the presence of a different means of justification.

b. Concerning the relationship of faith, works, and justification

- (1) Some suggest that James promoted a salvation based upon faith and works because of passages like James 2:14-26.
- (2) Those who make such suggestions believe this solves a problem of interpretation. However, these people fail to acknowledge that Paul's epistles also include passages that strongly associate a man's actions (works) with his spiritual condition (Romans 2:1, 6-10; Romans 6:16-17, 21-22; Romans 8:12-14; Romans 13:2; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; Galatians 5:4; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Timothy 5:11-12).
- (3) That being said, we should never discount a passage to another dispensation just because of its supposed difficulties or we will be left with little to no Bible by which to govern ourselves.

c. Concerning Abraham's dual imputation of righteousness

- (1) Some think Abraham gained righteousness via faith as a Gentile (Genesis 15:1-6), but later as a Jew gained righteousness by works (the sacrifice of his son) (Genesis 22:1-18).
- (2) Yet, this isn't the picture presented by Paul (Romans 4:1-5, 9-25, especially Romans 4:11).

2. Key words or phrases

a. Consider the use of the word *say*.

- (1) "Though a man **say** he hath faith" (James 2:14)
- (2) "And one of you **say** unto them" (James 2:16)
- (3) "Yea, a man may **say**" (James 2:18)

b. Consider the use of the word *shew*—"Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will **shew** thee my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

c. Consider the use of the word *dead*.

- (1) "Faith, if it hath not works, is **dead**" (James 2:17).
- (2) "Faith without works is **dead**" (James 2:20).
- (3) "As the body without the spirit is **dead**, so faith without works is **dead**" (James 2:26).

**B. The Opening Questions (James 2:14)**

1. The question of profit
 - a. Though a man **say** he hath faith
 - b. And have not works
2. The question of salvation
 - a. The question presented—"can faith save him?"
 - b. The question considered
 - (1) First question—"What doth it profit..." (James 2:14).
 - (2) Second question—"can faith save him?" (James 2:14).
 - (3) Third question—"what doth it profit?" (James 2:16).

C. A General Illustration (James 2:15-17)

1. The problem presented (James 2:15)
 - a. The person in need—"If a brother or sister"
 - b. The need
 - (1) Naked
 - (2) Destitute of daily food
2. The inadequate solution (James 2:16)
 - a. The solution presented—"though a man **say** he hath faith" (see James 2:14)
 - (1) Depart in peace.
 - (2) Be ye warmed and filled.
 - (3) Note: The twofold nature of the response
 - a) Depart in peace—a Christian greeting.
 - b) Be ye warmed and filled—a Christian prayer.
 - c) In other words, I am a Christian, but I do not show my faith by resulting action.
 - b. The solution's shortcoming—"and **have not** works" (James 2:14)
 - (1) Notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body.
 - (2) What doth it profit?
3. The truth sought (James 2:17)
 - a. The indication of similarity—"Even so"
 - (1) The beginning of the conversation (James 2:14)
 - (2) The picture of the conversation (James 2:15-16)
 - (3) The return to the conversation (James 2:17)
 - b. The end lesson
 - (1) Faith, if it hath not works (see Hebrews 11)
 - (2) Is dead, being alone
 - a) The entire chapter has dealt with man's relationship and condition in the sight of other men.
 - b) The emphasis is upon showing faith for justification in the eyes of man.
 - c) Faith, by itself, yields no profit to others (James 2:14, 16).
 - d) Faith, by itself, is incomplete (James 2:17, 20, 22).