

The Book of James
Chapter 2
“Have You Been Changed?”

Return To
All Commentary

In a recent survey of 7,441 Protestant pastors, 51% of the Methodists, 35% of the Presbyterians, 30% of the Episcopalians, and 33% of the American Baptists said that **they did not believe in the Physical Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!**

Among those same 7,441 pastors, they were asked **if they believed that the Bible is the inspired, without error, Word of God.** 87% of the Methodist pastors said NO, 95% of the Episcopalians said NO, 82% of the Presbyterians said NO, 67% of the American Baptists said NO (*Pulpit Helps, December 1987*)

In 1963 a Report from George Gallup asked Americans **if they believed the Bible was the Word of God**, 2 out of 3 said they did.

By 1999, the number of Americans who said they believed the Bible was the Word of God had changed to **1 out of 3**.

At the same time **Wicca**, the Pagan Religion of old, has grown from **8,000** people in **1990** to **134,000** in 2001.

Muslim Churches grew by **42%** from 1990 to 2000, while the average Christian church grew by only **12%** in that same 10 year period.

Today, they cannot even mention the name of Jesus in the California public schools while at the same time, they teach students the religion of Islam and how to pray to Allah.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

Luke 18:8 Jesus Said:

... Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

We are the final generation that will be alive when Jesus returns from heaven to Earth.

- ☞ **Jesus told us** that when even His own people, those who have called upon His Name for Salvation and Forgiveness, begin to fall away from Him, Know that the end is near...
- ☞ **Today, in Marriages, in Families**, in Homes and Communities, there is very little difference between the word and the Christian.
- ☞ **We divorce at the same rate** as the rest of the world, are just as selfish, Unforgiving, Unthankful, and Unloving as the rest of the world.

*If we claim to know Jesus and have a personal relationship with Him. If we say that we believe that He died on a Cross for our sins and that by believing in Him we have eternal life, **but we are not changed, ARE WE REALLY SAVED?**

Jesus said that we are not saved, unless we can see that we have been changed.

- ☞ **On the day that Jesus returns** for all those who love Him, the criteria that He will use to prove to us whether or not we really belong to Him, is whether or not our claim to know Him, has changed us.

Matthew 7:21-23

21 **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven**, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

22 Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?”

23 And then I will declare to them, **“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”**

Now truly belonging to Jesus and truly being saved does not mean that you will be perfect.

- ☞ **You will always struggle** with sin in your life.
- ☞ **As long as you live**, you will make mistakes, have a problem with anger, impatience, selfishness, and greed.
- ☞ **But you will be changing**, day by day, and you as well as others will notice that there has been a change.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new

2 Corinthians 3:18 NLT

And all of us have had that veil removed so that we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. **And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him** and reflect his glory even more.

The Book of James, takes a serious look at the claims that we make as believers and followers of Jesus, and puts our claims to the test:

- ☞ **Do we see ourselves differently now**, I am just A sinner who Jesus has saved?
- ☞ **Do we see other people differently now**, As precious, more important than ourselves, no matter how vile or difficult they may be, If they just knew Jesus, everything would change.
- ☞ **Do we see the world differently now**, Lost, on a collision course with ultimate destruction, so we have great compassion and love for the people in the world.
- ☞ **Has our faith in Jesus really changed us**, is there some kind of evidence that we really are saved?

James chapter 2 begins with a test of some of our claims:

James 2

- 1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, **with partiality.**
- 2 **For if there should come into your assembly** a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,
- 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, “You sit here in a good place,” and say to the poor man, “You stand there,” or, “Sit here at my footstool,”
- 4 **have you not shown partiality** among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?
- 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has **God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith** and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?
- 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?
- 7 Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?
- 8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well;
- 9 but **if you show partiality, you commit sin**, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

2,000 years ago, when Jesus church first began, a man who was wealthy wore rings on every finger of his hand, except his middle finger, even his thumb had a ring on it.

- ☞ **In fact**, you could tell how wealthy a man was, by how many rings he had on each finger, the more rings per finger, the wealthier he was.
- ☞ **You could even rent rings** to put on your fingers, if you wanted to appear wealthy and influential to someone.

So, James says, “When someone comes into our church building and has on expensive jewelry or nice clothing, or they arrive in an expensive car, do we show them favoritism?

- ☞ **It is our nature** to elevate people with money, position or power.
- ☞ **That is why** Hollywood exists.
- ☞ **We have a fascination** with celebrities, the Rich and the Famous.

But, if Jesus has truly changed us, we no longer should show any favoritism to those who have more, over those who have less.

- ☞ **If a man or woman arrives here** and comes into our sanctuary and they have on Old clothes, have no car or appearance of prosperity, how will we treat them?

- ☞ **May I suggest to you**, Jesus expects us to treat everyone that comes here, exactly the same.

We are to love them Extravagantly, Bless them, give to them, irrespective of how they look or what they have.

1 Corinthians 1:27-29

27 But **God has chosen the foolish things of the world** to put to shame the wise, and **God has chosen the weak things** of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;
28 and **the base things** of the world and the **things which are despised God has chosen**, and **the things which are not**, to bring to nothing the things that are,
29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

James 2

5 Listen, my beloved brethren: Has **God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith** and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

In actuality, the Lord has chosen those who have nothing or little, to be the ones who have the greatest faith among all of us.

- ☞ **Jesus has chosen those** who the world considers nothing, to have and become everything.
- ☞ **He has chosen** those who see themselves as weak and without confidence, to be the very ones that He wants to speak and teach others about who He is.
- ☞ **He did this on purpose**, so that no one would think that when something awesome begins to happen in His church, anyone would give praise to the people in the church, they would know that it must have happened because of the Lord Greatness.

This is one of the reasons that I want to serve Jesus.

- ☞ **I know** that there is nothing good in me, except Jesus.
- ☞ **I know that I have nothing** to offer to Him.
- ☞ **I know that I am nothing**, I am the foolish, the weak, the base...1 Corinthians is talking about

But I know that He delights in using what the world sees as Nothing, to bring about amazing things.

- ☞ **This is why I want to be here in Winslow**, where the wind has blown constantly for the last 7 days straight.
- ☞ **I want to be here in the Town** that no one thinks any good thing could come out of.
- ☞ **I know that this is the exact realm** that the Lord of heaven works His best works in, the places where people do not think anything can happen.
- ☞ **I believe the Lord has chosen Winslow** as the very town where He will do such a great work here, that people all over the world will hear of it and be utterly amazed.'

- ☞ **All those who also believe** that this is what the Lord wants to do, will also see His glory here as he does these amazing things.

Do you count yourself as nothing, having no abilities, no strength, or power to do anything for the Lord?

- ☞ **Then you also are perfect** for Jesus to work through, to bring about His will for the people of Winslow.

But it starts with a humble servants heart that watches every person that comes thorough our doors, whether they seem to be wealthy or poor, and you will love them and treats them all exactly the same.

Now, continuing with testing our claim as to whether or not we really do belong to Jesus or not, James confronts our desire to try any be acceptable by the things we do...

James 2

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

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

There are the vast majority of people on the earth today, that seem to hold the opinion that “*If they are just a good enough person*”, God will accept them into heaven.

- ☞ **If we went out into the streets of Winslow** this morning and asked people if they thought that they were going to heaven when they die, most would say Yes.
- ☞ **If we asked them why** they believed that most would say: “*Well because I am a pretty good person...I try to do good things as often as I can...*”
- ☞ **As if the Lord of the universe** judges people on some sort of a “**Curve**”, *Well those who are pretty good, better than the average, I will accept them...*”

In reality, the bible teaches that Good People Do not Go to Heaven, only Saved People Go to Heaven.

Matthew 19:17

Jesus said:... **No one is good** but One, that is, God.

Psalms 14:3

They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

Psalms 53:3

Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.

Romans 3:10

As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;

Romans 3:12

They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.”

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

In reality, even on our best day, we still always come up short.

- ☞ **That includes** even the nicest of people.
- ☞ There is not a single person on this planet that has ever been born, except Jesus, who are good enough to be acceptable to God.

That is what this verse here in James is all about:

James 2

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

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

The basis for all human behavior has always been the 10 commandments. (Ex20)

1. Worship no other God except the Lord.
2. Don't make any images of God to worship them.
3. Don't use the Lord's name in a way that is meaningless or empty.
4. Resting one day a week.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. Do not kill.
7. Do not have a sexual relationship with someone who is not your wife
8. Do not Steal.
9. Do not lie.
10. Don't desire what someone else has

And yet, if we are truly honest, we all have to admit, that at one time or another in our life, we have all broken all of these.

- ☞ **Now, Some people would say,** “*No Pastor Rob, I have never murdered anyone, I have never committed Adultery...*”

One day Jesus confronted the Pharisees with this very same issue, they also believed that they were Good men and righteous, because they had never killed anyone or Committed the act of Adultery.

Matthew 5:21-22

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’

22 **But I say to you** that **whoever is angry with his brother** without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, “Raca!” shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matthew 5:27-28

27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’

28 **But I say to you** that **whoever looks** at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

The real issue with the God of heaven is not so much your outward actions, but what is going on in your heart.

- ☞ **There is not a person here this morning** that has never been angry with someone. To Jesus the maker of everything, He knows that when we are angry, we are capable of killing.
- ☞ **There is not a man here today** who has never looked at a woman to lust after her.

John 8:4-9

4 they said to Him, “Teacher, **this woman was caught in adultery**, in the very act.

5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?”

6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But **Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger**, as though He did not hear.

7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”

8 And again **He stooped down and wrote on the ground**.

9 Then **those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last**. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

I believe that what Wrote on the ground, is what convicted the men that were watching Him, and caused them to walk away.

- ☞ **There is a good possibility** that Jesus wrote each of their names, and their sin, when they saw it, they knew they were guilty.
- ☞ **The older a person becomes**, the greater they are aware of their sin and their inability to do the right thing, so the older men walked away first, then the younger men.

Let’s suppose that you have been a really good person in your life, never lied, never stolen never lusted in your heart, never been angry...

Has The Lord always been the first love of your life? Have you always loved Him with all of your Heart, all of your Soul, All of your Mind and All of your strength?

- ⊕ **No, of course not**, and that is the first commandment!
- ⊕ **Take your pick**, any one of these James says, makes us guilty of breaking all of the commandments of God.
- ⊕ **God's standard for our life is perfection**, because we were made in His image, we are to be like him, Perfect...
- ⊕ **It is not just Goodness, or a kind heart**, We must be Perfect, God demands it!

Because not one of us is capable of this, there is not one of us who can come to God and say "I think you should accept me into heaven..."

- ⊕ **This was the purpose** for which Jesus came.
- ⊕ **We were all guilty** of breaking Gods law, and therefore under his condemnation.
- ⊕ **Jesus came and became a man like us**, yet never sinned Himself, therefore He was qualified to take our place, to take the punishment we deserved.
- ⊕ **On the Cross, Jesus took all of the punishment** for every person that has ever lived, for every sin that has ever been committed.

Forgiveness and Eternal life are already a reality. All any person has to do is to believe it and accept the Free Gift that Jesus offers to them.

- ⊕ **Why then** doesn't God just save everyone based on what Jesus has already done?
- ⊕ **It would be a violation of your own free will** for God to just force you to have eternal life and His forgiveness.
- ⊕ **There are some people**, many people who do not want God's forgiveness, they don't want To be forgiven, they do not believe they have done anything wrong, and they like living their lives only for themselves.

John 3:19

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

- ⊕ **To give these Forgiveness and eternal life**, would violate their own will, God will never do that!
- ⊕ **So it is necessary** for every person that is born on this earth to make up their own mind whether or not they will accept Gods forgiveness through what Jesus has done.

James 2

12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. **Mercy triumphs over judgment.**

"Mercy Triumphs over Judgment..."

- ⊕ **The definition of "Mercy"**, is "Not getting what we really deserve."
- ⊕ **The Lord said** that any soul, any person that sins, is worthy of eternal death.

Ezekiel 18:4

“Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die.

- ☞ **Since all people have willingly sinned themselves**, every person is guilty and therefore worthy of punishment.
- ☞ **Gods Mercy says**, “*I do not want to give you eternal death and punishment, I want to forgive you...*”

* God wants to forgive, that is why He did everything He could do to forgive you, He gave to you His own Son to die in your place, to take the punishment you and I deserved, so that He could exercise His mercy and forgive us.

“Mercy has triumphed over Judgment...”

I love when the Lord really confronts us when we make certain claims...

- ☞ *“I believe that Jesus died for me, I accept His offer of salvation...”*
- ☞ *“I have asked Jesus to be the Lord, the boss of my life...”*
- ☞ *“My life no longer belongs to me, it is totally in the Lord’s hands...”*

Oh really, the Lord says... Lets See...

- ☞ **Has your confession** and your claims about me **really changed your life Rob?**

James 2

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

15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

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

This is where Reality comes together with Religion.

- ☞ **If I say I have faith** in what Jesus has done, shouldn’t there be some evidence of that other than just a claim I make?

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new**

- ☞ **Has my claims** that Jesus is now my Savior, Affected how I see other people?

If I see someone here in our church that is without food, clothing, shelter and I come in here on Sunday morning and hug them and say to them “*Hey the Lord bless you my Brother...Be Warmed and be Filled*”

- ☞ **But then my heart is not moved** with love and compassion to give up of my own resources, my finances, my material possessions, to meet the needs of this Brother or Sister, Am I REALLY SAVED?
- ☞ James **says** that Without some physical tangible evidence of my claims about Jesus being in my life, **there is no basis to believe I am really saved.**

There are some of you who I know struggle with this whole issue all of the time, whether or not you really are saved or not.

- ☞ **You look at your attitudes and your behavior** and you come away with the thought, *“How can I think this way, how can I say these things and do these things if I am really saved...”*

***Then when we announce that we are having an outreach at Clear Creek or at the park, your heart is moved because you know how much these kinds of outreaches cost.**

***These very same ones that were just struggling with whether or not they really are saved are the very same ones that write out a check for 1 thousand dollars to help pay for all of the food or equipment that is needed to make it possible to do these kinds of events.**

They are the very same ones that give up their free time to come out and pray and support the efforts by setting up the equipment, preparing the food, cooking and serving.

- ☞ **They are the same ones** that are constantly teaching the kids in Sunday School.
- ☞ **Cleaning up after everyone** else has eaten and gone home.
- ☞ **The ones who Come in hours before everyone else does** to prepare the worship so we can lead the people into the presence of God.
- ☞ **They are the ones** that come and clean the toilets, the sanctuary The Café **after everyone else leaves their mess.**
- ☞ **They are the ones** that look around the sanctuary every Sunday and Wednesday, looking for **that one person that they can go an give a hug to, to encourage or pray with them.**

They are all of the people that it takes to make ministry to other people possible...

They are the ones who's Faith and their Works are working together...

James 2

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

It isn't just a confession that "**Jesus is Lord of my life**", it is also a demonstration of how we give up what we have, money, time, our life to serve each other that proves that Jesus really is Lord of our life.

- ☞ ***And it also isn't just doing things**, serving, sacrificing that proves Jesus is Lord of our life, we must also confess that Jesus is Lord of our life and that we do live for Him, as we are around other people.

It takes both

- ☞ **Confessing Jesus** as Lord to other people.
- ☞ **Doing something with it**, serving, giving, pouring out our life so other people can also come to know this wonderful Jesus we know and love.
- ☞ **It is Living in such a way** that people can see that Jesus Is Lord of our lives..

Some people say "**Yeah, I believe in God...**" They think that because they believe in God, they are going to heaven...

[James 2](#)

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

Hey, just saying "I believe in God, I believe in Jesus is not good enough!

- ☞ **James says**, "*Hey even the demons make that confession that they believe in God, that is not proof you are saved.*"

[Mark 1:23-25](#)

23 Now there was a man in their synagogue with a demonic spirit. And he cried out, 24 saying, "Let us alone! **What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth?** Did You come to destroy us? **I know who You are—the Holy One of God!**" 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"

James challenges our claims that just Moving the words "**I believe in Jesus**" across our lips, does not save you. **Jesus must become personal, He must become everything to you, He must become your life!**

[James 2](#)

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead?** 21 **Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?**

Here it is: "A confession that Jesus is Lord of my life", without some physical evidence that Jesus has changed my life, **is a Dead Faith...**

- ☞ **James gives us an example** of what he is talking about.

- ☞ **In Genesis chapter 22**, the Lord told Abraham to take that which he loved the most in all of his life, His only son, to take Isaac up to mount Moriah in Israel and offer Isaac up to the Lord as a “burnt offering”.

“Hey wait a minute Lord, Isaac was the son that you promised to Abraham and Sarah after they were nearly 100 years old”

“Lord, you promised Abraham and Sarah that you would make so many descendants from Isaac, that no one could count them...What happened to that promise Lord?”

“Lord, If Abraham kills Isaac, how will you fulfill your promise?”

- ☞ **That is exactly the point** that James is making here this morning:
- ☞ **Abraham knew** that Isaac was the son that God said “**He would make so many descendents from that no one could count them.**”

As Abraham raised the knife to plunge it into The Son that He loved more than anything else in his life... The Lord stopped Abraham and said to him:

Genesis 22:11-12

11 ... “Abraham, Abraham!” So he said, “Here I am.”

12 And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; **for now I know that I am first in your life, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.**”

James 2

22 **Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?**

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.

Abraham did not stop believing what God promised him even when his claim that God was first in his life was challenged by something that is hard to imagine...

- ☞ **The Lord asking Abraham** to Give up what he loved the most, His only son.
- ☞ **Yet, Abraham** believed that If God required Abraham to Take his son Isaacs life, that He was also able to raise Isaac from the dead to fulfill His promises to Abraham.

Abraham believed in the Resurrection of an Only Son as the fulfillment of Gods promise!

- ☞ **Wow! That sounds strangely familiar...**There was another Father who also Required His only Son to Go up that same Hill call mount Moriah, 2,000 years after Abraham.
- ☞ **This Son** that went up Mount Moriah also carried the wood of his sacrifice on his back, A CROSS...

- ☞ **AND YET** This Father did not hold back His Only son, but allowed Him to be killed **so that whoever would believe that this Son was Dying for them, should have Forgiveness and Eternal Life!**

Just as Abraham's confession that the Lord was first in his life was tested, so that Abraham could see if the Lord really was first, so also will our claims be tested.

- ☞ **The test this morning** comes through Jesus brother James, *"Is there some physical evidence in our life that Jesus truly lives inside of us?"*
- ☞ **When we suffer loss of things** that are near and dear to us, when we go through tremendous times of trial, **when the Lord requires the knife to be raised in our life upon something that is precious to us, will we be willing to lower the knife on it, if God requires us to?**

Do we really believe that whatever dies in our life, whatever is dying in our life right now, the Lord has the power to raise it back to life...so we do not hold back in our total commitment to Jesus.

James 2

24 You see then that **a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.**

There is a time in our life where our claims concerning what we have said about Jesus being our Lord and Savior will be tested, so that we can see if He truly is Lord of our life...

James 2

25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so **faith without works is dead also.**

Rahab was a prostitute who lived in a community of pagans in the 2nd chapter of the Book of Joshua. And yet when the opportunity came for her to believe in the true and the Living God, she put all of her trust in Him to save her.

- ☞ **The test of that belief for Rahab was simple.** When she hid the two men that Joshua had sent to see what kind of forces Jericho had, she showed by the action of hiding the 2 men, that she really did believe in the living God.

***What is there in our life that we can point to this morning that has changed in us, that we can see that Jesus really is inside of us, working in us, changing us, compelling us to serve Him and bring other people to Jesus so they can also know Him.**

- ☞ **We want to give you the opportunity** this morning to pray right now, examine your own heart to see where you really are with Jesus.
- ☞ **If Jesus has been known to you only in "Belief" or a "Confession"** but not really demonstrated in some real, practical way, right now we want to give you the opportunity to come foreword before the Lord and make a real commitment to Jesus.