

FRUITS OF CHRISTIANITY

BIBLE TEXT : James 2:1-26

LESSON 449 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

James 2:1-26

¹ My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.
² For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;
³ And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:
⁴ Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?
⁵ Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?
⁶ But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?
⁷ Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?
⁸ If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:
⁹ But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.
¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.
¹¹ For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Respect of Persons

1. If we have respect of persons we are partial in our judgment, James 2:1-4;
Deuteronomy 1:17
¹⁷ Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; *but* ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment *is* God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring *it* unto me, and I will hear it.
Matthew 22:16
¹⁶ And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men.
2. The poor are often rich in faith, James 2:5;
Isaiah 57:15
¹⁵ For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.
1 Corinthians 1:26-28
²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:
²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;
²⁸ And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:
3. Rich men often oppress one and bring one into judgment, James 2:6, 7;
Acts 15:12
¹² Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.
4. The Royal Law is, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," James 2:8;
Leviticus 19:18
¹⁸ Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.
Matthew 22:39
³⁹ And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
Romans 13:8-9
⁸ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.
⁹ For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
Galatians 5:14
¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
5. If we have respect of persons, we commit sin and transgress the law, James 2:9.
Deuteronomy 27:26
²⁶ Cursed *be* he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this
6. Whosoever offends in one point of the Law is guilty of all, James 2:10-12;

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

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

¹⁴ What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

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

¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

²⁰ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

²² Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

²³ And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

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

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

law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Matthew 5:19

¹⁹ Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

7. He that showed no mercy shall receive judgment without mercy, James 2: 13;

Proverbs 21:13

¹³ Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

II Faith and Works

1. Can faith without works save a man? James 2:14-16

Matthew 7:26

²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

2. Faith without works is dead, being alone, James 2:17-20, 26.

3. Abraham's faith was followed by his works when he offered up Isaac, James 2:21-24;

Genesis 22:1-18

¹ And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am*.

² And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

³ And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

⁵ And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

⁷ And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?

⁸ And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

⁹ And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

¹⁰ And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

¹¹ And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here *am* I.

¹² And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me.

¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said *to* this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

way?

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

¹⁵ And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

¹⁶ And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

¹⁷ That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

¹⁸ And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Romans 4:3

³ For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Galatians 3:6

⁶ Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Hebrews 11:17

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

4. Rahab was justified by works, proving her faith, when she received the spies, James 2:25;

Joshua 2:1-22

¹ And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there.

² And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.

³ And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

⁴ And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were:

⁵ And it came to pass *about the time* of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them.

⁶ But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

⁷ And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

⁸ And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof;

⁹ And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

¹¹ And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

¹² Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token:

¹³ And *that* ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

¹⁴ And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter

not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

¹⁵ Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house *was* upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall.

¹⁶ And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

¹⁷ And the men said unto her, We *will be* blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.

¹⁸ Behold, *when* we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.

¹⁹ And it shall be, *that* whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood *shall be* upon his head, and we *will be* guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood *shall be* on our head, if *any* hand be upon him.

²⁰ And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.

²¹ And she said, According unto your words, so *be* it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

²² And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought *them* throughout all the way, but found *them* not.

Hebrews 11:31

³¹ By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

NOTES:

Respect of Persons

To bring out the teaching regarding respect of persons, James lays the foundation by addressing them as "brethren." If we are all brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, then are we all on one common level. When we have been born of the Spirit of God, into the family of God, we are equal so far as class is concerned. One may have more talents than another. We notice that the one who was given two talents, and gained other two talents, received the same warm plaudit as the one who was given five talents and gained five more.

Moses told the Children of Israel not to have respect of persons in judgment. They should hear the small as well as the great and should judge righteously between every man and his brother. Even the Pharisees recognised that Jesus regarded not the persons of men.

James says, "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:9, 10).

The Law is spoken of as a seamless garment; if you have broken it in any one place, you have broken the whole. If you have offended the Law in any one point you are as liable to condemnation as though you had offended in every point. It is as in musical harmony: one discordant note spoils the whole.

The Poor, the Rich

If you give the rich man a high seat and the poor man the low seat, you are wrong. If the glory of Christ rests on the poor believer, he should be treated with the same respect as his richer brother. To dishonour one because he is poor, is to dishonour

one whom the Lord honours. Who are we to dishonour one on whom the glory and favour of God rests?

Often the poor and lowly have that simplicity of faith, which makes them rich toward God. They possess a childlike trust in the promises of God that are often overlooked by the high-minded.

Jesus said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

The Royal Law

God is love. The law of love is called the Royal Law. A lawyer asked Jesus which was the great commandment in the Law. Jesus answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22 :37-40).

Paul wrote to the Romans, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10).

The Law of Moses was a law of bondage. The Gospel is a law of liberty. Through God's mercy we are free to love and obey willingly. If we fulfil the Royal Law of love, we do not fear judgment, for "mercy rejoiceth against Judgment."

Justification

Some have thought that Paul and James contradicted each other in their teachings on justification. There is no contradiction: one complements the other. They are talking to two different classes of people.

The class of people that Paul was dealing with believed that their good works justified them in the sight of God and would take them to Heaven. There are many of that class of people in the world, and even in the churches, today. How often do we hear people say, "I have no religion but the Golden Rule"! They ignore completely Jesus' injunction: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Paul was trying to make them understand that without the new birth it would be impossible for them to gain Heaven. It takes the new birth or the quickening of the spirit of man by the Holy Spirit to bring to life the spirit that is dead through sin.

We are born again through faith in the atoning Blood of Jesus Christ. No works that we could do, no merits of our own, could ever win us an entrance into the Pearly Gates. We must come through the Door into the sheepfold, and Jesus is the Door. When we repent, confess and forsake our sins and turn to Jesus with all our heart, then faith swings the door open and we enter into the sheepfold. (**John 10:9** ⁹ I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture..) That brings into our heart a living faith; and a living faith is an active faith. That kind of faith does not sit idly by when we see a brother or sister destitute of daily food, but it does something about it. That brings us to the class of people James is talking about: those who say they have faith and do nothing to help the one in need. James says their faith is dead. With a dead faith there is no action. It matters not how much faith we say we have, if there is no action, the brother is still destitute of food.

"Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). Just as the body is dead without the spirit, so faith is dead without works. James says, "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." He proves that faith apart from works is dead.

Examples

Both Paul and James use Abraham as an example. Paul quotes Genesis 15:6, where the Word tells us that Abraham believed in the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness. James shows us how Abraham's faith was an active faith and produced works when he offered up Isaac on the altar. It was faith expressed by action.

Rahab believed what she heard about the mighty works of the God of Israel and received the spies in peace. She skilfully hid them from the enemy while they searched her house and then let them down over the wall by a scarlet cord. She was taken into the fold of Israel because of her faith in Israel's God and the action she took in protecting the spies.

The Word tells us: "By **faith** Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved** with fear, **prepared** an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" [Hebrews 11:7).

This all clearly shows us that Paul's exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith, and James' teaching of the doctrine of justification proved by-works, are complementary one to the other. They are in perfect accord.

God justifies the ungodly through faith, then that faith is manifested to the world through his words and works.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain why it is wrong to show respect of persons.
2. What places people in one class?
3. What is the Royal Law?
4. Why is it wrong to give the rich the best seat and the poor the low seat?
5. How are we justified before God?
6. Explain how Paul's and James' versions of justification are in harmony.
7. In how many points does one break the Law before one is guilty of the whole?
8. How did Abraham prove his faith in God?
9. How can one be rich toward God?