

“IF” Statements of the Bible IX Epistle of James #1

Fred Coulter—December 25, 2010

I got an email from someone saying, ‘Oh, you scare me with your sermons’; that is on the financial things. I thought, ‘Well, if that scares you, what are you going to do when it arrives?’—because *it is going to arrive!* So I’m not going to talk about financial things this week. I think I’ll talk about it sometime the first part of January. It’s like we thought years ago. ‘Isn’t it good to live in the end-time. Oh, we’ll be alive when Jesus returns. Won’t that be wonderful. When the trumpet sounds, we’ll be caught up into the air and meet Jesus.’ Forgotten all about the tribulations and difficulties that lead up to it. So, when they come along, you can’t have a change of mind.

Just like in the movie *The Robe*. They had all of the Christians in the Roman Coliseum. Down below they had them in their little cubicles down there and they were going to feed them to the lions. You heard them praying. One cried out said, ‘Lord’—because they were going to be fed to the lions next—‘You didn’t tell us about this.’ *Well, yes He did!* He told them about that.

We know for sure, all you have to do is just look at your own individual finances and you’re laden down with debt, having a hard time paying it, you’re going to be surprised how bad the world is. So, I’ll save that for another sermon, but what you need to get you through is, you need to have faith. You need to have the *faith of God, God’s faith!* So what I’m going to do is tie this together with the **IF** statements beginning in the Epistle of James.

Now, in James there are 18 **IF** statements. A lot of it has to do with *behavior and faith*. A lot of it has to do with *behavior and wisdom*. We can learn from this and understand and see exactly what God wants us to learn. Let’s look at the first one, James 1:1, because this is interesting. Lots of times when we’re studying, we’re studying so we can get to what we think is important and then doing that we miss important things. If you were going to write a letter, would you write a letter to someone that you didn’t know where they were?

Notice what he says here in James 1:1: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes, which *are* in the dispersion: Greetings!” So, this tells us they knew where the lost ten tribes were and some of the Jews were out there also—right? They were scattered abroad, dispersion or Diaspora whichever one you want to name it.

A little later on we will see that this was written very early on. If you read the commentary in the front of *The Bible Holy Bible in Its Original Order*, you will see that it was written about 41, 42, 43_{A.D.} Contrary to what a lot of people say, that everything was passed down verbally and then written later by people putting down the verbal traditions. You know what happens verbally—you get it all mixed up, and you know what happens with tradition, all you have to see is how it is in the world. So it was *written*.

Also, if you don’t the digital version of the Bible, you can write in for it or you can email the website and Ron will send it to you. But the digital version of the Bible has all the commentary from the New Testament. And there’s a whole lot more commentary in the New Testament that for the sake of space we had to abbreviate it to put it in the Bible. So there is a lot of commentary, especially *Through the Lens of Scripture*.

- How do we translate?
- How do we look at things?
- How do we evaluate things?
- How do we know that the Word of God is True?

All of that is there. So if you want that, it’s very important for you to get it, because in the New Testament commentary about James, I show that Matthew had to be written first. Matthew was who? *He was a Levite!*

Now just to give you a little heads-up on it. Acts 6 takes place within the first year of the ministry of the apostles. And of course, they started out at Jerusalem and they were there every day teaching in the temple and in the houses, and so forth.

Acts 5:42: “And every day, in the temple and in the houses... [So we have *Church at Home* today, so we’re back to the future—right?] ...they did not cease teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Now for all of you died-in-the-wool evangelicals out there who believe in the evangelical Bible of two verses, the fast track to salvation, where you say that you don’t have to follow the Gospels either because that was for the Jews—well, are the Jews people? *Yes!* What did God promise? *He promised first to the Jews*—right? So He had to fulfill that. Do they have the same salvation as anyone else? *Yes, they do!*

Acts 6:1: “Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a complaint by the Greeks against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.... [So when they would come together, they would have food for the widows, and so forth.] (v 2 becomes very important): ...And after calling the multitude of disciples to *them*, the twelve said, ‘It is not proper *for us* to leave the Word of God in order to wait on tables.... [They had to first take care of the Word of God. What did they have to have ready within the first year?] ...Therefore, brethren, search out from among yourselves seven men of good repute, full of *the* Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; **But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word**’” (vs 1-4).

Now what do you suppose the ministry of the Word was? What did they have to have ready for all the thousands of new converts? In Jerusalem, Acts 5, it said there were thousands, that even the passing of the shadow of Peter healed those who were laying alongside the roadway. What was the most important thing for them to have written down, be inspired of God—because Jesus said, ‘The Spirit of Truth will lead you into all things, teach you all things—and that’s of what He said. What is the most important thing for them to learn? that had to be ready?

Let’s look at it this way: The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost—correct? They had until the next Passover about ten months max, if it was an intercalated year say nine months. But what did they have to have ready for the next Passover? *The New Testament Covenant Passover*—right? Who were the only ones that had the Passover with Jesus? *The twelve!* They had to have the words of Jesus ready for the bread, for the wine, for the foot-washing, for the next year. All of these disciples repented and were baptized and had the Holy Spirit of God, so they entered into the New Covenant and the Passover is *the day of establishment and renewal* of the New Covenant. They had to have all of that ready. This is why to say, ‘Well, it was 300 years later that they did it.’ *Nonsense! They had it written down* so it would go out to wherever they were keeping the Passover, and they would be able to keep the Passover.

When James writes to the twelve tribes that are in the dispersion—and we’re going to see when we go through James that also there was no Gentile problem, which means this was *before* the controversy of circumcision. As you go through the book of James, and as you’ll find in the commentary that comes from the New Testament, there are 67 distinct things that James wrote that comes directly

from the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew—being a Levite, the tax collector—he was a record-keeper. Who else did they have? Who else was there a Levite? *Barnabas!* Who else did they have as a Levite? *Mark!* He was the cousin of Barnabas. When he’s writing this, he knows who he’s writing it to.

James 1:2: “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials.” That’s the most difficult thing in the world— isn’t it?—especially when it’s a hard trial. But nevertheless count it all joy, because what did Paul write? Rom. 8:28. This is a good one to remember. So you can have it memorized, so when the difficulty comes on you, you’ll be able to have the Word of God to strengthen you: ‘**All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.**’ *All things*, even the trials; that’s why we are to count it joy.

“Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance” (v 3). So there it is, right at the first, “...the testing of your faith...” A person says, ‘Oh, I believe, I accept Jesus.’ A little trial comes along, a little persecution comes along—remember Matt. 13 and Mark 4, where the seed was sown? And people give up. Like the one there down in the dungeon of the coliseum, ‘Lord, You didn’t tell us about this.’ Well, don’t worry! If you become lion-fodder and you die, you’ll be resurrected.

Let’s come to Hebrews 11; let’s see what faith really is. Faith is not a fleeting agreement that you want Christ. It is not a salve to cover a guilty conscience. *It is the very substance that comes from God and His Spirit which you will be faithful in unto eternal life.* When there is baptism, and when you enter into that covenant, that is irrevocable. It’s a covenant made between God the Father, Jesus Christ, and each one of us individually. The minister is not going to get you into the Kingdom of God. Other friends of yours are not going to get you in the Kingdom of God. *God is going to get you in the Kingdom of God!* So the strength of being together is not foundation. The strength is each individual with faith and God the Father and Jesus Christ, and the Word of God. Then when we come together, then there is strength in our coming together and assembling together on the Sabbath Day. It’s entirely different than what most people think.

Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is *the* substance...” Now this is interesting in the Greek, because this is ‘homeostasis.’ There’s only one other place that it is used, speaking of Jesus Who is the image of the Father—‘homeostasis’—that means the same substance, the same existence, the same character. The *King James*, ‘faith is the confidence’—that comes from the Spirit of God. Is the Spirit of God a spirit substance that comes from

God to you? *Of course it is!* Part of that Spirit then, is the ability to have faith.

That's why calling it: "...*the substance of things* hoped for... [not only just the confidence, but there is something *within* you, the 'homeostasis' of God's Spirit.] ...of *things* hoped for..." What are we hoping for? *Eternal life, the Kingdom of God* and all of those things, in spite of the fact that we may have trials and difficulties.

Now we're at the far end of the Gospel in the Church. We're in the days leading up to the Tribulation and the return of Christ. When they were writing this, they were at the beginning of it. They were just like us, hoping for the return of Christ. Jesus did not reveal it to them until say right about 63_{A.D.} So, when you read the commentaries in the New Testament, you will see where I go through in detail and show the change in what Paul wrote and what Peter wrote and so forth, showing that it would be off in the future.

But if you want someone to go forward the way they need to, they need to understand they have to work at it *as if it's going to happen in their lifetime*. Because the truth is, it will if you're faithful to the end. All conversion, everything must happen within the lifetime of each individual that God calls. So it's not depended upon when Jesus returns. The fulfillment of everything that you hope for is depended upon when Jesus returns and the resurrection.

Now notice what else this kind of faith does. This is what is important. This is what is lacking in today's world. People are so politically correct that they're maneuvering back and forth, and they do this in the Church, too. There are politics in the Church. That's why once of these days I'm going to bring my baseball cap that a woman did for me. She was in the embroidery of letters and words on hats and shirts and different things like that. She sent me a hat, because I said of the Christian Biblical Church of God that is the 'No Hassle, Last-Resort Church of God.' Why? *Because we're not into politics, we are not into merchandizing, we're not into hierarchy.*

The Bible shows if you read what Jesus said those who are serving are underneath. But somehow most of them that squirmed out from underneath and have gotten on top and are working down on the brethren, and Christ said don't do that. So all the elders, ministers, and teachers are to be on the sideline, just like coaches. How does a coach get a winning team? *He has them all trained and all participating*—right? And so that's what God wants. When you do that, then you have what here is called *conviction*. Conviction is that *you know*, because

- you have the Spirit of God

- you have proved what is true
- you have been living and know what is right
- you have studied and learned the Scriptures

All of those things together; *you have conviction!* You can't go anyplace without conviction, because if not, you're going to end up like it talks about here in the first chapter of James, you're going to be like the 'waves of the sea, tossed to and fro.' So you have "...*the conviction of things not seen*. For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report. By faith we understand that the worlds were created by the Word of God, so that the things that are seen were made from things that are invisible" (vs 1-3).

And that is absolutely scientifically proven true today, even going down to the very last smallest particle that they can examine with the most high-powered electronic microscopes that they can possibly create. They still do not know what matter is, even though they can understand about atoms, electrons and protons. The most astonishing thing is quantum physics when they look at a single cell. A single cell is a mini-universe—*every cell!* That's hard to understand, but if you look at every plant, each one has a seed. It's put into the ground. It is watered. The sun gives it strength and energy to come up and it comes up according to what is pre-programmed in that seed—right? There are millions of seeds. Grass does not grow in the trees. Trees do not grow in the grass. Human beings do not come out of mud and muck. They come from procreation as God has designed. And God is upholding everything that there is.

The other day I was watching the Animal World, because the holidays coming up they were running the awesome earth, is what I call it. I don't remember the full title. But they showed about grass, everywhere in the world. It reminded me of where it says there in Isa. 40, 'all flesh is grass.' It showed it in fast motion growing and showed that how all grass flowers. Then there are also flowers out there and they do it in fast time. Even when it's burned down, it starts growing right away. What makes it do that? *God put it there to do it after its kind!*

You might say every animal after its kind, but every seed after its kind. I think of that almost every morning, because every morning we make ourselves a citrus cocktail. I fresh squeeze lemons, oranges, tangerines, grapefruit and lime. Runs all the way from yellow, green, orange, dark red-orange like in the case of tangerines, and then green for limes. And every one of them has a seed in it. God made it convenient for men. Just plant the seed and you'll get the tree. And as Jesus said, how it grows nobody knows and even today with all of the things

that they have scientifically, they know it grows—but how it grows???—dirt and water, then it grows.

Now let's come to Hebrews 1, since I mentioned that and let's see what Jesus Christ is doing. Let's see how this affects our lives and how we can have faith and trust in God. It brings conviction. Conviction brings faith. So here it is. Anytime you're in doubt, just understand this:

Hebrews 1:1: "God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image... ['homeostasis'] ...of His person... [How are we going to look like at the resurrection? *John says 'we'll see Him as He is'*—right? *Yes! That's fantastic!*] ...and upholding all things by the word of His own power... [That's how the universe functions, the earth functions. Every little thing on the earth that God has created functions according to the way He created it to be.] ...when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high" (vs 1-3).

So we're going to have our faith tested, many different ways, from many different sources. But here is what faith produces, James 1:3: "**Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.**" What did Jesus say? Matt. 24, 'the one who endures—that is to the end—shall be saved.' So we need endurance. That's to give us endurance to know what we need to do and continue doing it.

Verse 4: "But let endurance have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything.... [Here's the first **IF** statement]: ...However, **IF** anyone lacks wisdom... [And I find the longer that I live, the more I need wisdom. How many times have you done things and you said, 'Oh, that was stupid. Why did I do that, dumb-dumb?' Especially after you hit your thumb with a hammer and you didn't have enough sense to move it. Or you say something, just blurts out. You thought, 'Oh, that was dumb.'] ...**IF** anyone lacks wisdom, let him as of God, Who gives to everyone freely... [Whatever you need from God, you pray for. He will give it to you.] ...and does not reproach *the one who* asks; and it shall be given to him" (vs 4-5).

Let's look at the things of the character that we need to have here. First of all come to Romans 5; let's see how Paul wrote how the same thing works. Isn't it amazing that different men at different times wrote things that are perfectly in harmony together—right? Why? *Because God inspired them to write it*, that's why. This also helps us with

faith—doesn't it? Jesus said and taught, all the apostles wrote, and they're all in agreement; likewise with the Old Testament—there's unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith..." This is the beginning believing faith that you believe in the sacrifice of Christ. But that you're never to not doubt believing in the sacrifice of Christ, but that's how you start:

- first you have **belief**
- then you have **faith**
- faith then **grows**
- you have **conviction**
- that grows and you have **hope**
- and that it develops into **love**

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.... [As Jesus said, you're going to have tribulation in the world, but 'be courageous, I've overcome the world.' **So can you!** 'I in you, you in Me,' etc. We can overcome the world.] ...Through Whom we also have access **by faith** into this grace in which we stand..." (vs 1-2).

That's why I want you to go through the fourteen sermons, *God's Grace and Commandment-Keeping*, because that is fundamentally the most important thing for us to understand. Our relationship in the New Covenant is based on the Spirit of God. It's not the commandments out here on tables of stone that we read and say, 'Yes, I will do it.' *No!* It's with God's Spirit in here, in our hearts and minds, so that it is written in our hearts and minds. So that what we do is motivated with the Spirit of God from the inside out, rather than having our actions motivated from the outside in.

We stand in that grace, and that is our relationship with God. Everything we receive from God is because of grace. The Protestants have it: grace is the forgiveness of sin. That's the first step, but they never go beyond that. Grace is your relationship with God, so you can

- **keep** the commandments of God
- **use** the Spirit of God
- **understand** the Word of God
- **pray** to God the Father and Jesus Christ directly into the Holy of Holies in heaven above every day

That's all by grace and we stand under the grace of God.

"...and we ourselves boast in the hope of *the* glory of God.... [Did not Paul write of hope back there in Heb. 11? *Yes!* We will see that James writes of hope as well.] ...And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [What did James say? 'Count

it all joy when you have trials.'] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance... [Exactly what James said—right? *Yes!*] ...and endurance *brings forth* character... [that's what God wants us to have] ...and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us" (vs 2-5). This is a tremendous thing!

God's calling and being we normally say 'in the Church of God.' Let's define that a little bit. You don't belong *to* a Church of God, you are part *of* the Church of God, because the Church of God is the body of believers. So we don't do like the world. We don't join a church so we can become 'better' people. We repent to God and receive the Holy Spirit so we can become converted and receive eternal life. Yes, we're going to be better people in the world. Without a doubt we're going to be. That's how we 'let our light shine' and we're the 'salt of the earth,' and all of that sort of thing.

You ask for faith and He will give it. What does it say in Proverbs? 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' With God's grace, with God's Spirit growing in grace and knowledge, we are to grow in wisdom. We're training for eternal life. That's what it's all about. We're in training for eternal life, not just to make ourselves better in this world, but to prepare to rule in the Kingdom of God. That's what it's all about.

James 1:6: "But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the* sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*." Remember the man who brought his son to the disciples to get the demons cast out? Disciples couldn't do it. So when Jesus, Peter, James, and John came down off the mountain, there was this great crowd. They ran up to Jesus and the father of the little child ran up and said, 'I brought my son to your disciples to cast out the demons, but they couldn't do it.' So He asked him how long it was, what was happening, and so forth. He said, 'Bring him to me.' He cast them out and the boy dropped down like he was dead and everyone looked and said, 'He's dead.'

Then Jesus took him by the hand, raised him up, he was alive, gave him to his father. The disciples were there saying later on, 'How come we couldn't do it?' And He said, 'This kind comes out by nothing but by prayer and fasting.' So that's another tool that comes along—fasting. That's all part of it.

Let's come to Mark 11, because this is really an excellent one to put in there about not doubting. Just like the father said when Jesus asked him, in

casting out the demon from his son, He said, 'All things are possible if you believe. Do you believe?' He says, 'Yes, Lord, but help my unbelief,' which is very important for us to realize from this point of view. Is anyone of us perfect in faith? *No!* We are being perfected in faith.

We also need to ask God: Help us to overcome our unbelief. What do you do when something comes along and you have a doubt and you have a lack of faith, what do you do? You say, 'Oh, I shouldn't have doubt,' get it out of your mind. *No!*

- you grab hold of it
- put it right smack in the center of the table
- get out your Bible
- study the subject
- pray about it
- fast about it if you need to
- ask God to help you prove what you need to know so that the doubt is removed

You can't remove it by just dismissing it. 'Oh, well, I shouldn't think that.' No, you need to say, 'Oh, God, help me cleanse my mind with the washing of the water of the Word.'

Now Mark 11:20; this is after Jesus cursed the fig tree: "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from *the* roots. Then Peter remembered and said to Him, 'Look, Master! The fig tree that You cursed has dried up'.... [In one day.] ...And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith *from* God'" (vs 20-22). We couldn't quite translate it directly as it is in the Greek, because in the English it's hard to grasp: *have God's faith*. That's pretty powerful! So this is how we are to grow in faith, to have God's faith. But notice what He says with it to finish the rest of the lesson here:

Verse 23: "'For truly I say to you, whoever shall say to this mountain, "Be taken away and cast into the sea," and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he said will take place, he shall have whatever he shall say.... [Obviously, it has to be if it's the will of God and if it's needful to do so. Not to cast mountains in front of your enemies just for your vanity to prove you're greater than they are.] ...For this reason I say to you, all the things that you ask *when* you are praying, believe that you will receive *them*, and *they* shall be given to you'" (vs 23-24).

You look back on your prayers and see that God has answered all your prayers, one way or the other. *Yes, indeed, He has!* Many cases not in the way that you thought, but you get down the road and you think, 'God has answered that prayer.' *Yes, indeed!* When you do that say, 'Thank you, God.'

But notice the caveat here. It is conditional. Now this is not an **IF**, but this is a **but**: “‘But when you stand praying, **IF** you have anything against anyone, forgive, so that your Father Who is in heaven may forgive you your offenses. For **IF** you do not forgive, neither will your Father Who is in heaven forgive you your offenses’” (vs 25-26). So that’s what we need to do everyday. Don’t hold anything against anyone in your mind.

Look at it this way. Do you want God to forgive all your sins, every single one of them? *Yes, indeed!* He says that He will separate them from us ‘as far as the east is from the west’ (Psa. 103)—correct? *Yes!* Well now, can you in your own mind hold a place of unforgiveness and expect to receive the full forgiveness from God, or expect to receive the full faith from God? *NO!* It’s very hard to do.

Someone is going to say, ‘Yeah, but the one who did it to me has died.’ Do you still remember it? *Yes!* Then what you do is you pray about it and ask God to cleanse your mind with the washing of the water of the Word. Forgive them even though they are dead, because you need to be forgiven yourself and have that erased out of your mind. That’s the whole part of conversion. I’m going to give a sermon here pretty quick on *the washing of the water of the Word, and repentance and conversion* and all of this, because it all ties in together.

(go to the next track)

Let’s look at something that’s very important for us to realize in how we can become more stable, more faithful, and it’s brought out right here in James 1:6-8, because everyone of us are going to have trials. And when they come, you say, ‘Oh, Lord, why did You do this?’ Well, we’ve all been warned they’re going to come. So the question should be, ‘Lord, help me to handle this.’ That’s why the best preparation for difficult times is faith and conviction, which will give you *strength to be able to think* so you can know what you can do, and also *give you the wisdom* to do a little planning ahead of time that you’re not having to go down to the supermarket where they have riots and see if you can get something to eat.

James 1:6: “But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (vs 6-8). You cannot be halfway with God. We do live in the Laodicean age. I think unless we all admit we’re Laodiceans from day one and repent—I mean, who has had everything given to them like we have; this generation. It’s just not the Church; *it’s the whole age*. So therefore, we need to be zealous in doing

what God wants us to do after we repent, not be double-minded. ‘Well, I don’t know about this.’ There are a lot of people out there who are double-minded. We want to be as much like the world as we can, but we want to be close enough to God so in time of disaster He will help us. We can’t be doing that. There are a lot of people with the trials that are currently coming upon the Church right now today as we cover this sermon. And everyone is trying to figure out which church should they attend, and that’s not the question. The question is: Why is God bringing this correction? and God, how can I establish my relationship with You? ***Your relationship is not with the Church; it’s with God!*** So that will help you overcome being double-minded and unstable.

I have given a whole series in the Epistle of James. We have a book called *The Seven General Epistles*. When I first started translating seriously, I began with the General Epistles, and we did Bible studies going through every word. The whole General Epistle series ended up being 79 Bible studies and sermons combined. So I’ll have to check with Jim and see if we have all those digitized. I think we are close to it, but you can get the book, *The Seven General Epistles*, and the whole series of sermons. We don’t send out 79 messages at once. We send out like James and then later we send out 1st & 2nd Peter, then later we send you 1st, 2nd, 3rd John. So I’m not going to go every verse here in the book of James because of that.

But let’s come to the next one where there is the **IF**, v 19: “For this reason, my beloved brethren, let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, because man’s wrath does not work out God’s righteousness” (vs 19-20). Anytime you lose your temper, remember that. Repent, because you’re not working out the righteousness of God.

I remember going through the Church trials when we were going through them. Of course, they were so terrible. I was lying awake one night, two o’clock in the morning, things were so miserable. It was just my wife and I and our family, and that was it. There was nothing else left and all of these men were mean and terrible and horrible to me. So we just had to leave them. I sat up in bed at two in the morning and said, ‘They can’t do this!’ as angry as could be.

Then I sat there and I said, ‘Stupid! They have.’ The anger didn’t work out the righteousness of God, but I can tell you years from that—that’s clear back in 1983—that God has taken care of every one of those men who did what they did in His own way. God has taken care of it. So when something even disastrous happens—what do you do to those who have perpetrated it? ***You pray for them***

and ask for repentance that they would repent! You repent of your anger! Isn't going to do any good to be angry and hold a grudge. What good is that going to do? You know how stupid that was. I look at it now, sat up at 2 o'clock in the morning, and say, 'They can't do that.' They already did it. So take that as an advantage to come close to God.

Here's what we need to do; concentrate on overcoming in your life, v 21: "Therefore, having rid yourself of all filthiness and all *the* abounding of wickedness around you... [don't be taken in by that] ...then in meekness accept for yourselves the implanted Word, which *is* able to save your lives." You need the Word of God in your heart and mind. That's what the New Covenant is about, (Heb. 10:16), written in our hearts and in our minds. And who implants it into us? *God does!* That's conversion.

After that then he says: "Then be doers of *the* Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves... [It's not that we come to church and we're all inspired on the Sabbath and bam, as soon as we leave and go home and we're back in the world, well, then we don't think of God until next Friday night. *A relationship with God is everyday*—prayer and study everyday. That's how you grow in grace and knowledge.] ...because **IF** anyone is a hearer of *the* Word and not a doer, this one is like a man considering his natural face in a mirror.... [Where he looks and says, 'Oh, yeah, that doesn't look too good.'] ...Who, after looking at himself, went away and immediately forgot what he was like" (vs 22-24).

You forget what you are as a human being and especially if you are righteously indignant and having anger. You *know* you're right! But that doesn't work the righteousness of God.

- the Spirit of God does
- the Word of God does
- the doing of the Word of God does

Verse 25: "But the one who has looked into *the* perfect law of freedom, and has continued in it, this one himself has not become a forgetful hearer, but is a doer of *the* work.... [Now that's interesting—isn't it? *Because you are cooperating with the work of God that He is doing in you!*] ...This one shall be blessed in his actions."

Let's see how Paul wrote of it, Ephesians 2:8. We will see how all the apostles agree, though God inspired them to write each one in his own words what God wanted them to write. He doesn't take away from your personality, He converts and *uses* your personality. That's what He did with all the apostles.

Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace you have been saved through faith... [Just exactly what we've been talking about—correct?] ...and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God.... [What did Jesus say? 'I of My own self can do nothing.' How much less we?'] ...Not of works..." (vs 8-9). That we can say, 'Oh, yes, God, I've done this. Yes, God, I've done that.' Like there was the famous apostle who said, 'Well, I've been faithful so long Satan has no more interest in me.' BAM! And he lost his whole church, after that he died. If that's the case, then Satan would come after him all the more. That's exactly what happened! I was sitting in the Bible study when he said it. I said to myself, 'Oh, oh.'

"Not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship... [God is working a work in us. The greatest work that God is doing is not what a church is doing. That's the work of the ministry. But ***the greatest work that God is doing is what He's doing in us*** to become His very sons and daughters at the resurrection.] ...created..." Salvation is creation.

- That's why we need the relationship with God.
- That's why we need the Spirit of God.
- That's why we need to be doers of the Word

—motivated by the implanted Word and we will be blessed in our actions.] ...created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them" (vs 9-10). James writes it just a little bit differently—doesn't he? *Yes!*

I'm not going to get into religion, because we have the sermon series, *Why God Hates Religion*. We have those on one CD. You can order it. Remember I said I want all of you to read the book of Job? Goes back to what Job was. Job was religious, because he did everything outward and that's what religion means here. We just read that it has to be inward.

Let's see what we have here. James 2:1: "My brethren, do not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons." We are to love all the brethren. I remember when there was this famous evangelist, the golden voice. No one knew that he was also the golden whore-monger and philanderer either. But he had his little clique of friends and he would have them around him all the time.

At the college that they had at that time, they had a handball court. So when it came time for he and his friends to have the handball court, no one else could go in there, only play with them. Then afterwards they would go up in the lounge and they would drink beer and tell dirty jokes. Then when

anyone would look upon them and wonder, 'I wonder what's going on,' they would in disdain and dismissive and lift themselves above, and so forth. That's what they were doing. You're not to do that. We are to love each other *as Christ has loved us*, not have respect of persons.

Now then, he shows this in v 2, and this becomes important to understand the timeframe when this was written: "Now then, **IF** a man comes into your synagogue... [If you have a *King James* it says 'assembly,' but the Greek word there is 'sunagoge'—meaning *synagogue*, because it was written to whom? *The twelve tribes who were scattered abroad, or in the dispersion*—right? He shows how not to have respect of persons.] ...Now then, if a man comes into your synagogue... [congregation] ...wearing gold rings *and dressed* in splendid apparel, *and there* comes in also a poor man in lowly apparel, *And* you give preference to the one who is wearing the splendid apparel, and say to him, 'Seat yourself here in the best place,' and you say to the poor man, 'Stand over there,' or, 'Sit here under my footstool.' Then have you not passed judgment among yourselves, and have made yourselves judges with evil opinions?" (vs 2-4).

Who may have the most humble and contrite heart? The rich man who comes waltzing in with all of his goodness and his gold, his dress? 'Look at, folks, here I am.' Or the other man who is dressed in humble dress and comes in and says, 'I'm so thankful to be here, to be in the presence of God.' Who is God respecting? We are not to be passing judgment on people because of how they look and what they wear, etc. Is God looking to the attire? or is God looking to the heart? We should dress the best that we can, but that doesn't mean that we make it as the world would say, 'the Easter-parade.' God wants us to dress properly, adequately.

Is righteousness equated with how you dress? *Of course not!* For example, if a woman is going to poison someone, she makes herself the best that she can be—right? So he won't suspect her evil motive within. If you watch history of Attila the Hun—the history of it was that he came into a village and killed all but this one young girl in the family. Then she was taken off to be one of the servants in Attila the Hun's headquarters. And in her heart she's going to have revenge. So as she grew and developed, she let herself be attracted to Attila the Hun so that he would be attracted to her. To make a long story short, he ended up marrying her because he couldn't do without her. She went along with the whole scheme with full zeal because on their wedding night she poisoned him. So you never know what's in a person's heart and you can't judge

it by how they appear. We can *know people by their fruits, by what they produce spiritually.*

Here's why, v 5: "My beloved brethren, listen. Did not God Himself choose the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which He has promised to those who love Him?" *Yes, He did!* What is the calling? How did Paul express that in 1-Cor. 1? He says, "You've seen your calling, brethren, how not many wise, not many noble, not many highborn are called"—right?

Verse 6: "But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and do they *not* drag you into *the* courts?" What are we also dealing with here? *We are dealing with a combined congregation of converted and unconverted*—right? *It's a Jewish synagogue*; you may have converts there, and you may have some attending who are following Judaism more than they're following Christianity.

So he goes on saying here, v 7: "Do they not blaspheme the worthy name by which you are called?... [This could also be rich people outside the synagogue, the ones who hire you to work, etc.] ...**IF** you are truly keeping *the* Royal Law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well" (vs 7-8). **IF**, there it is, "...you are truly keeping the Royal Law..."

Another thing about Protestantism that I have found is this: They don't like to read the Scriptures which talk about commandment-keeping or the law. That's because they're viewing the law from the outside, not from the inside out. Which basically shows—and in doing the series that I did, *Quitting Church*, and in the soon coming book, *Lord, What Should I Do?*—Protestantism no longer has even the Spirit of God with them except in very rare cases. That is because they for so long have neglected and put down the law and said you don't have to keep it. So that's why *God's Grace and Commandment-Keeping* is important, that you understand it must come from a converted heart and mind from within. Like James says, the implanted Word.

Now notice how he follows this up here in v 9: "But **IF** you have respect of persons, you are practicing sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.... [You're not loving your neighbor as yourself. You're not loving the brethren as Christ has loved them; that's practicing sin. So then he makes a statement.] ...For **IF** anyone keeps the whole law, but sins in one *aspect*, he becomes guilty of all" (vs 9-10).

The Protestants say, 'Well, no one can keep the law, so you don't have to keep it. You don't have

to do anything about it, because no one can keep it.
Yes, you can keep it with the Spirit of God!

- This is showing the problems of the conversion of those who are double-minded
- This is showing the problems of the unconverted who have not yet come to understand
- This is also showing the problems of the converted that they can't be acting like and practicing things like the unconverted

Verse 11: "For He Who said, 'You shall not commit adultery,' also said, 'You shall not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you commit murder, you have become a transgressor of *the law*." And how do you murder? *From within*. Jesus said hatred—right? *If you hate your brother!* That's what John wrote. Boy, this is trampling on a lot of toes here today—aren't we? Not here in the congregation, but those who are going to hear this.

"In this manner speak and in this manner behave: as those who are about to be judged by *the law of freedom*.... [We're all going to be judged by the Law of God.] ...For the one who has dealt without mercy *will be* judged without mercy.... [Always remember that. You always give mercy and forgiveness. How many times a day did Peter ask? 'Lord, seven times a day?'] Jesus said, 'No, I say to you, seventy times seven.' Because the time will come when you need mercy, I need mercy, and if we haven't been merciful, we're not going to receive it.] ...But mercy triumphs over judgment" (vs 12-13).

Why—even though we're to have righteous judgment, which is another entirely different subject—does mercy triumph over judgment?

- It *leads to repentance*, and that's what God is interested in, in repentance
- Repentance leads to what? *Change!*
- Change leads to what? *Conversion!*
- Conversion leads to what? *Faith and hope and love!*

Doesn't it? *Yes!*

Now v 14; we have some *IFs* here. "My brethren, what good *does* it do, **IF** anyone says *that he has faith*, and does not have works? Is faith able to save him?" Well, we need faith for salvation, but what does this tell us? *Faith requires works!* You have to do something. Heb. 11, and every example that Paul gives there:

- *by faith* Abel offered a sacrifice that was righteous
- *by faith* Enoch was transported; they were hunting him down because he was speaking the Truth of God

- *by faith* Noah built an ark; it wasn't 120 years

The Flood came in his 600th year. The Flood was going to come regardless of what Noah would do. If he didn't obey God, God would have raised someone else up to do it. So every time you have faith, it requires works. It requires action.

- You believe in God, *then obey Him*
- You believe in His commandments, *then keep them*
- You believe in the Sabbath, *then observe it*—and use it as a spiritual tool to grow in grace and knowledge; that's what God wants us to do.

So he gives a very simple example. We can all understand this. "Now then, **IF** there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food, And one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; be warmed and filled... [Shut the door, go in the house and sit down in front of your warm fireplace.] ...and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it?... [It isn't!] ...In the same way also, faith, **IF** it does not have works, is dead, by itself" (vs 15-17).

Just like this Sabbath/Sunday controversy, every Sunday-keeping preacher knows that the Bible only teaches the Sabbath. If they don't, they are truly deluded. But they don't have the faith, they claim they have faith, but they don't have the faith to change and keep the Sabbath. You could add many other examples to that.

This next verse is very interesting, because the *King James* does not translate it correctly, because this is a challenge to faith. So here is the correct translation, v 18: "But someone is going to say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works."

Whatever amount of faith you have, you will have the equivalence of the works. If your works do not prove your faith, what he's saying is, you don't have faith. But everybody believes! From Proverbs: 'There is a way that seems right to man. The ends thereof are the ways of death.' And his life acts upon that belief which is faith. But he doesn't have faith to do what is right, so his faith, of not doing what is right, are his works or evil works. You can look at it another way: 'Every way of a man is right in his own eyes.' So his works are based upon that. If you love God, your works will be based upon that. If you have faith in God and believe Him, your works will be based on that.

Verse 19: "Do you believe that God is one?... [or there is one God] ...You do well *to believe this*..." That's a good start. However, what

category are you in? Are you counted as faithful, because you believe that God exists?

What do we read in Hebrews 11:6?: "...the one who comes to God to believe that He exists... 'that is in everything that He is] ...and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

He's writing, **IF** you believe there is one God and you don't act upon that, he's saying: "...Even the demons believe—and tremble *in fear*".... [because they know what their judgment is] ...But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead?**" (vs 19-20).

There are two things that are talked about with the *faith of Abraham*.

1. The one that Paul talks about is the faith of when God took Abraham out when He was establishing His covenant with him, and said, 'Now look to the heavens and number the stars if you're able to count them.

Well, obviously he couldn't do that. God said to him, 'So shall your seed be.' So he believed the Lord, because there was no work to do.

2. In the case of Isaac, which it's talking about here, God said, 'Take your only son Isaac, one whom you love, and go to a mountain of Moriah, that I will show you and offer him there as a burnt offering. Now then he had something to do.

So this is what he is talking about here. And why did he do it? A lot of people say, 'Well, why would God require that of Abraham?'

1. to test his faith
2. to know whether he would do what God said

But it's recorded in Heb. 11 that he did so, because he counted God able to raise him from the dead. He was conceived when Abraham was 100-years-old and Sarah was 90, so that's as good as from the dead. So he said, 'All right, I believe in God. He's able to raise him from the dead.' He went out and did exactly what God said.

Now let's look at it here, v 21: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works... [By the work which he was commanded to do. God intervened and you know the rest of the story. Stopped him from slaying Isaac and replaced it with a substitutionary sacrifice.] ...Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar? Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and by his works *his* faith was perfected?... [He believed God and acted upon what God said.] ...And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Now Abraham

believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness'; and he was called a friend of God. You see, then, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (vs 21-24). *The two go together!* Let's look at it this way. You all know what water is—H₂O—right? Two atoms of hydrogen, one atom of oxygen, together makes water. Isn't it interesting that both of them separately can produce fire, but when combined together in water can put out fires? They work together just like that.

"Now, in the same manner also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when, after receiving the messengers, she sent *them* out a different way? **For as the body without the spirit is dead, in the same way also, faith without works is dead**" (vs 25-26).

Have you ever seen someone who's on life support, but there are no brain waves? The reason there are no brain waves is because they have died. When they die, the spirit has gone back to God. They're keeping the body alive for organ transplants. So they have it breathing, they keep the temperature up and they feed it for a while, but it's still dead. You've got to have the *spirit of man* in you to have life. So likewise, with the Spirit of God, if you don't faith and the works of God and His workmanship, then faith is dead. So you say:

- Oh, well, I believe in the Sabbath, but, hey, I've got to go to this ball game today.
- Oh, I know the Bible says I'm not to eat unclean meat, but I gotta have my pig.
- I know that the Bible doesn't sanctify Christmas or Halloween or New Years, but those are so much fun.

You don't believe in God. *You have to have the works.*

Scriptural References:

- 1) James 1:1
- 2) Acts 5:42
- 3) Acts 6:1-4
- 4) James 1:2-3
- 5) Hebrews 11:1-3
- 6) Hebrews 1:1-5
- 7) Romans 5:1-5
- 8) James 1:6
- 9) Mark 11:20-26
- 10) James 1:6-8, 19-25
- 11) Ephesians 2:8-10
- 12) James 2:1-19
- 13) Hebrews 11:6
- 14) James 2:19-26

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 8:28

- Matthew 13
- Mark 4
- Isaiah 40
- Matthew 24
- Psalm 103
- Hebrews 10:16
- James 1:26-27
- 1-Corinthians 1

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *God's Grace and Commandment-Keeping*
- *James*
- *General Epistles*
- *Why God Hates Religion*
- *Quitting Church*

Books:

- *The Seven General Epistles* by Fred R. Coulter
- *Lord, What Should I Do?* (coming soon)

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