



### View #1

Eternal life is by faith plus works. Dead faith cannot produce works and thus cannot lead to eternal life.

### View #3

Genuine faith necessarily leads to works. Dead faith cannot produce works and cannot lead to eternal life.

### View #2

Eternal life is lost by lack of works or by grievous sin. Dead faith cannot produce works and thus will lead to loss of eternal life.

### View #4

A Christian's faith will die without works. Thus, a Christian can have dead faith. Though justified in one sense, he can be not justified in a different sense.



# Analyses of the Four Views



- True or genuine faith must be followed by good works or the believer forfeits eternal life.
- A dead faith or a faith that has died cannot produce works and thus cannot lead to eternal life.
- faith + works = eternal life.
- This view is held by Catholicism.

# Catechism of the Catholic Church



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"Our Lord tied the forgiveness of sins to faith and Baptism ... Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of forgiveness of sins because it unites us with Christ ..."

# Catechism of the Catholic Church



Libreria Editrice Vaticana

"Baptism cannot be her only means of using the keys of the Kingdom of heaven ... The Church must be able to forgive all penitents their offenses ... It is through the sacrament of Penance that the baptized can be reconciled with God and with the Church."

[*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1994) 255]



## The Council of Trent 1545-1563

"And this sacrament of Penance is, for those who have fallen after baptism, necessary unto salvation; as baptism itself is for those who have not as yet been regenerated."

Council of Trent, XIV, 2.

## The Council of Trent 1545-1563

CANON IX.-If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.

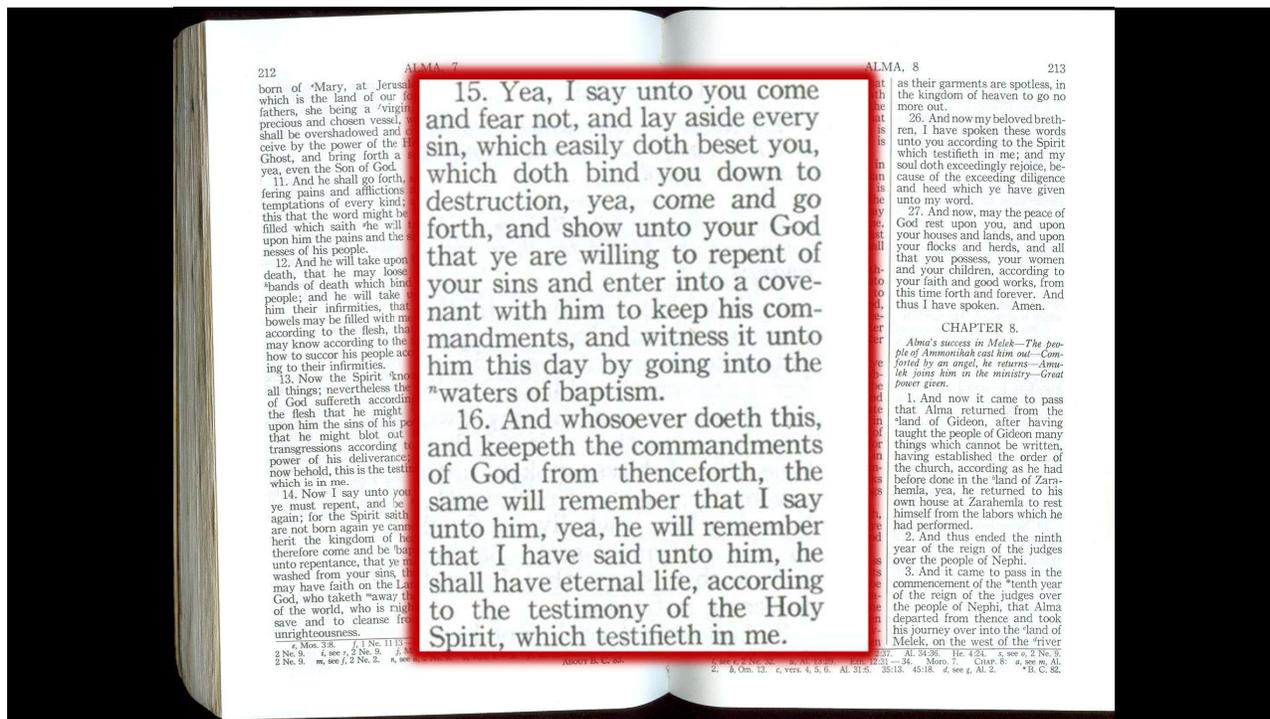
## The Council of Trent 1545-1563

CANON XII.-If any one saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified; let him be anathema.

This view is also held  
by Mormonism.

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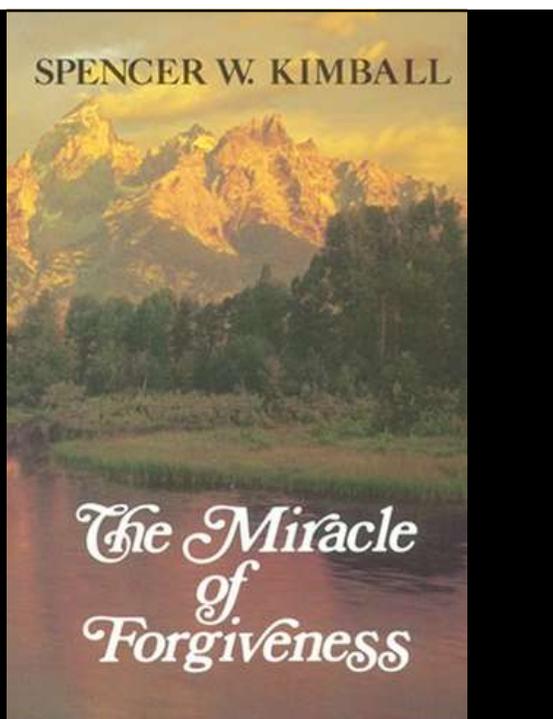
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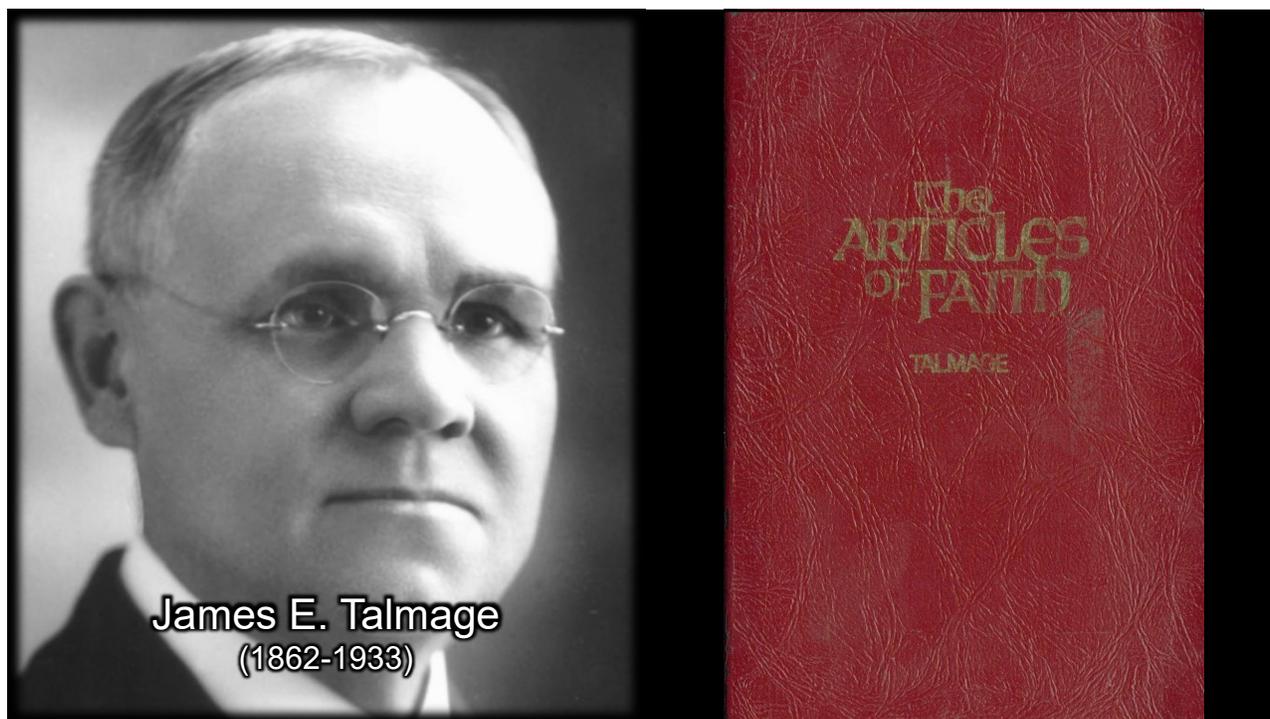
Spencer W. Kimball  
(1895-1985)



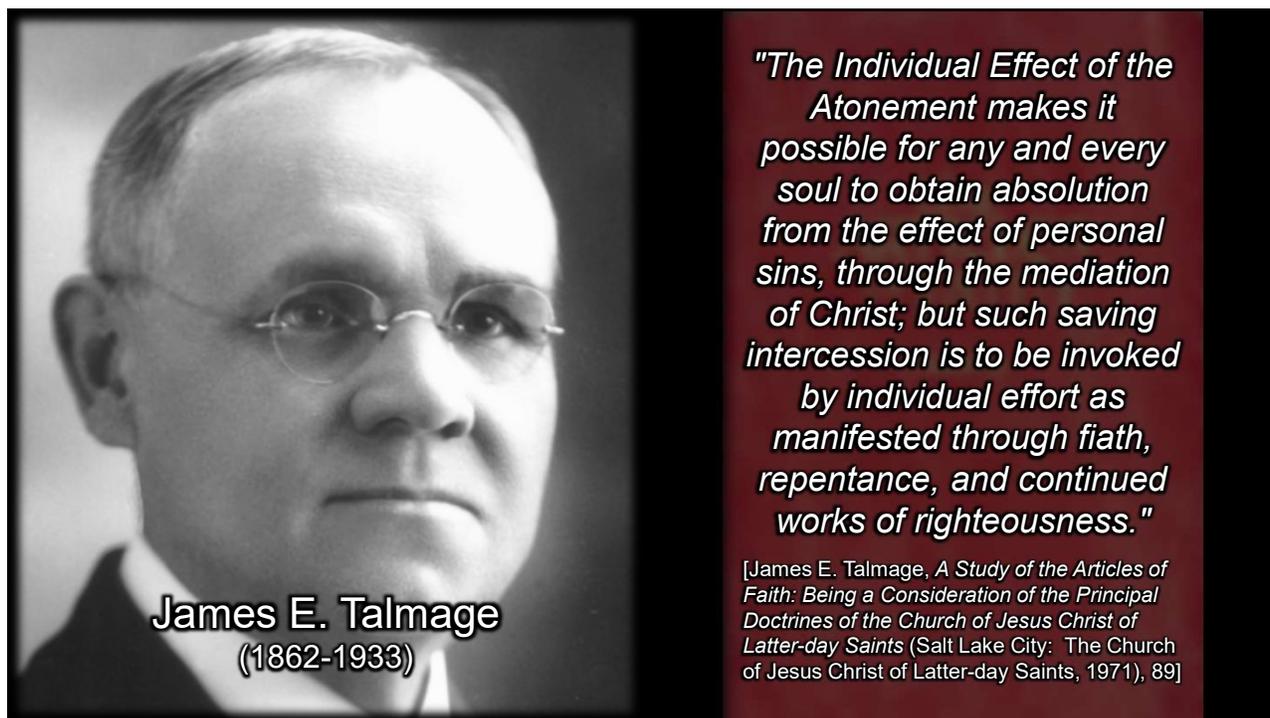
Spencer W. Kimball  
(1895-1985)

*"One of the most fallacious doctrines originated by Satan and propounded by man is that man is saved alone by the grace of God; that belief in Jesus Christ alone is all that is needed for salvation."*

[Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 206]



**James E. Talmage**  
(1862-1933)

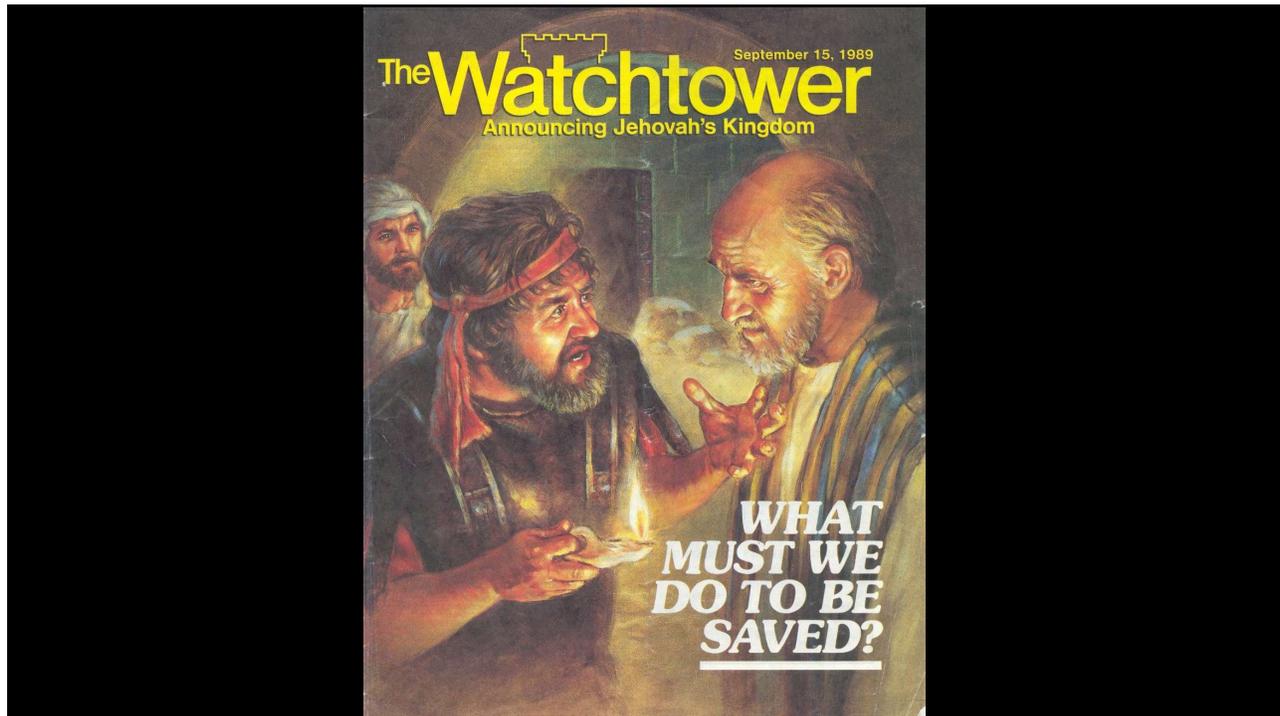


**James E. Talmage**  
(1862-1933)

*"The Individual Effect of the Atonement makes it possible for any and every soul to obtain absolution from the effect of personal sins, through the mediation of Christ; but such saving intercession is to be invoked by individual effort as manifested through faith, repentance, and continued works of righteousness."*

[James E. Talmage, *A Study of the Articles of Faith: Being a Consideration of the Principal Doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1971), 89]

This view is also held by  
Jehovah's Witnesses.



The Philippian jailer did not 'shut off his mind' when the apostle Paul answered his question, "What must I do to get saved?" And Paul and Silas did not mount an 'assault on his emotions' and plead for a large financial contribution. Rather, "they spoke the word of Jehovah to him." Reasoning with the man, they helped him to come to a clear understanding of God's provisions for salvation.—Acts 16:32.

#### "Believe on the Lord Jesus"

Those Christian missionaries opened the jailer's mind to a fundamental truth about salvation. It was the same truth that the apostle Peter explained when the Christian congregation was first established. Peter pointed to the central role of Jesus Christ in the matter of salvation, calling him "the Chief Agent of life." That apostle also said: "There is no salvation in

anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved." (Acts 3:15; 4:12) Paul and Silas directed the Philippian jailer to this same Agent for salvation when they said: "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will get saved."—Acts 16:31.

What does it mean, though, to believe on the Lord Jesus? Why is there no other name but that of Jesus by which we can get saved? Will everyone eventually attain salvation? Did the apostles believe in the idea of "once saved, always saved"? These are important questions because, despite the fact that the words and actions of many modern religionists have tended to downgrade the term, we still need salvation. All of us need a satisfying, reasonable answer to the question: "What must I do to get saved?"

## What we must do to be saved

**W**HY do we need to be saved? Because all of us suffer the disastrous consequences of sin: imperfection, pain, sickness, grief, and finally death. The apostle Paul explained that this is so because our forefather Adam rebelled against God's law. Paul wrote: "Through one man [Adam] sin en-

tered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." (Romans 5:12) Why did Adam's sin cause death to spread to all men? Really, this was because of the natural outworking of things.

When Adam sinned, he was condemned to death in accord with divine law. This was both just and necessary. It was just, for life is not a right but a gift from God. By sinning deliberately, Adam forfeited all claim to that gift. (Romans 6:23) Adam's condemnation to death was necessary because nothing imperfect can be permitted to survive and pollute the universe indefinitely. Thus, when Adam sinned, he began to die and no longer possessed perfect, sinless life to hand on to his children as an inheritance. He could only give them life tainted with imperfection and sin.—Romans 8:18-21.

We should not, however, forget that it

Some suggest that belief in Jesus is the end of the matter.

However, to concentrate on only one essential requirement for salvation to the exclusion of the others is like reading one crucial clause in a contract and ignoring the rest.

Yes, believing in Jesus is crucial to our salvation, but more is needed.

## “He That Has Endured . . . Will Be Saved”

Yes, there are various things involved in getting saved. We must take in accurate knowledge of God’s purposes and his way of salvation. Then we must exercise faith in the Chief Agent of salvation, Jesus Christ, and do God’s will the rest of our lives. (John 3:16; Titus 2:14) Salvation is sure for those who follow this course.

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### What Do Jehovah's Witnesses Believe?

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As Jehovah's Witnesses, we strive to adhere to the form of Christianity that Jesus taught and that his apostles practiced. This article summarizes our basic beliefs.

- God.** We worship the one true and Almighty God, the Creator, whose name is Jehovah. (Psalm 83:18; Revelation 4:11) He is the God of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.—Exodus 3:6; 32:11; John 20:17.
- Bible.** We recognize the Bible as God's inspired message to humans. (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16) We base our beliefs on all 66 of its books, which include both the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament." Professor Jason D. BeDuhn aptly described it

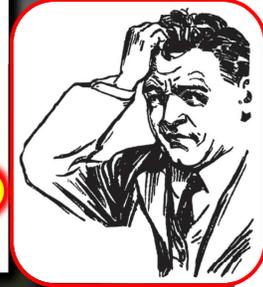
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5. **Salvation.** Deliverance from sin and death is possible through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. (Matthew 20:28; Acts 4:12) To benefit from that sacrifice, people must not only exercise faith in Jesus but also change their course of life and get baptized. (Matthew 28:19, 20; John 3:16; Acts 3:19, 20) A person's works prove that his faith is alive. (James 2:24, 26) However, salvation cannot be earned—it comes through "the undeserved kindness of God."—Galatians 2:16, 21.

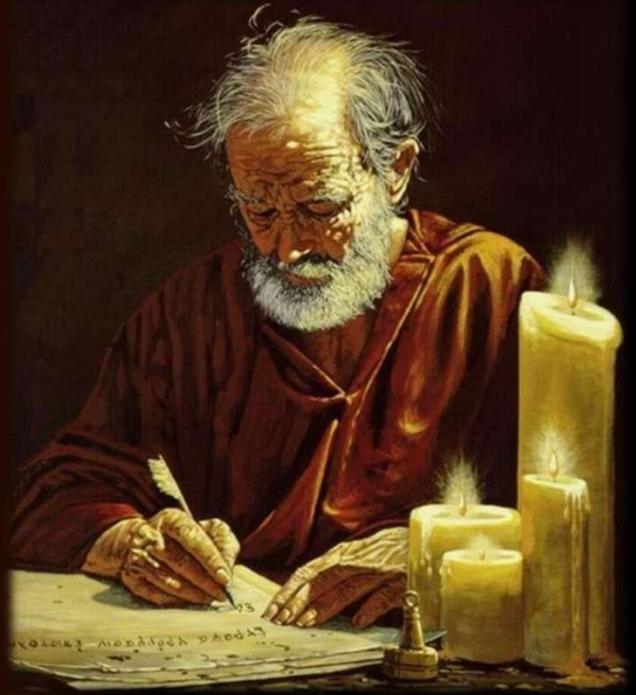


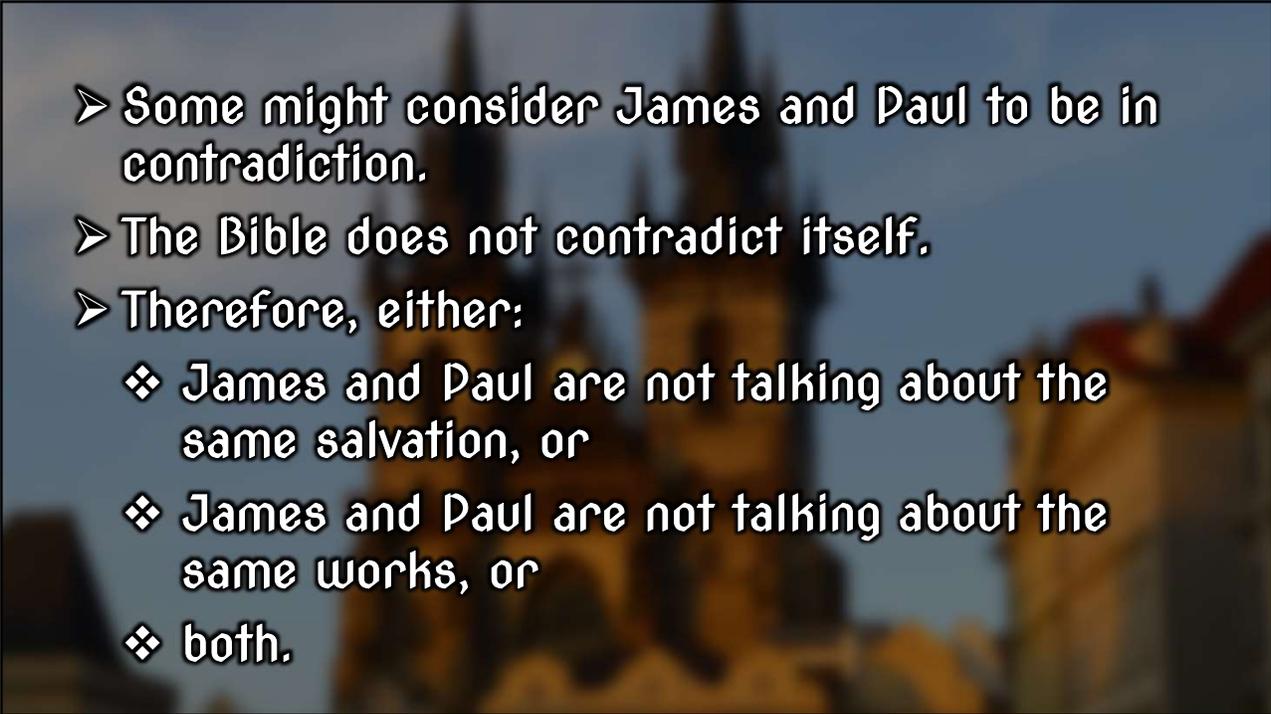
# ∞ Critiquing View #1 ∞ Eternal Life Is by Faith Plus Works

➤ Some might consider James and Paul to be in contradiction.

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

James 2:14



- 
- Some might consider James and Paul to be in contradiction.
  - The Bible does not contradict itself.
  - Therefore, either:
    - ❖ James and Paul are not talking about the same salvation, or
    - ❖ James and Paul are not talking about the same works, or
    - ❖ both.



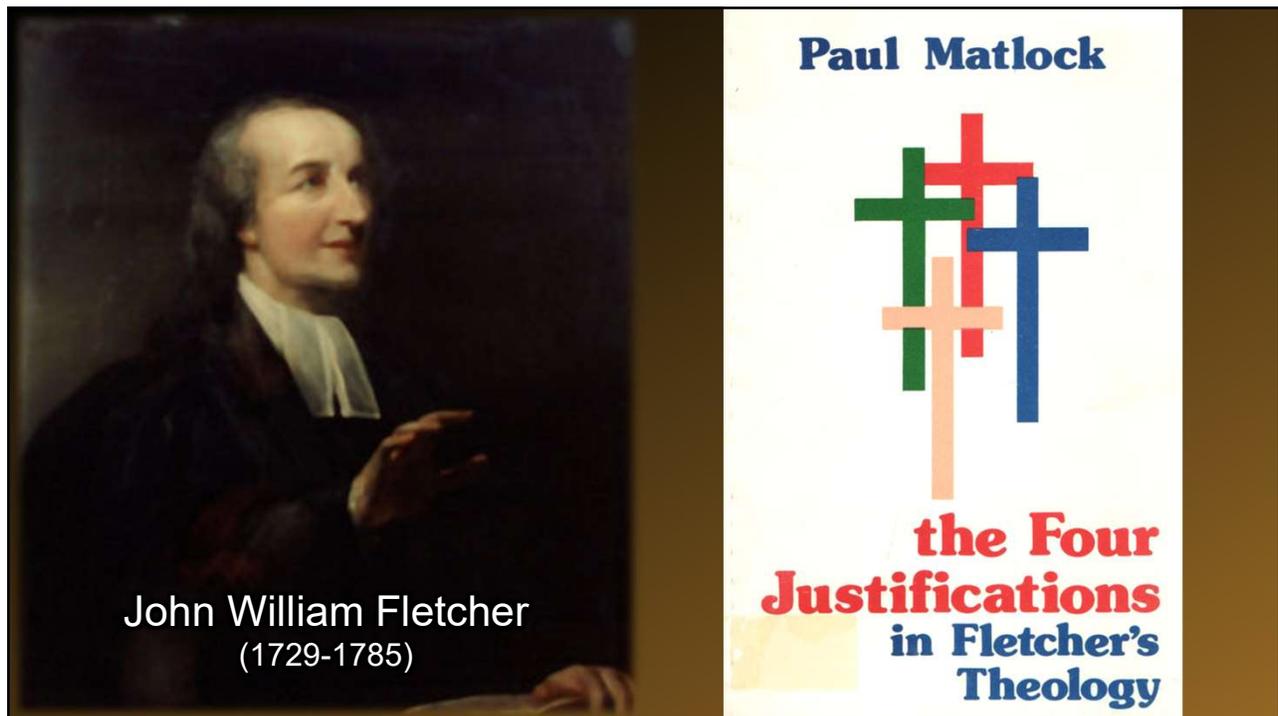
∞ Unpacking View #2 ∞  
Eternal Life Is Lost by  
Lack of Works or by  
Grievous Sin

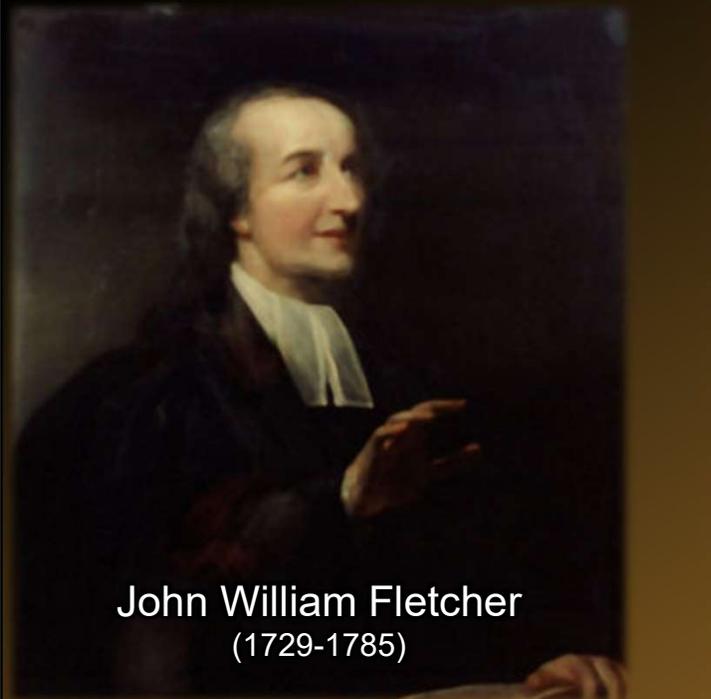
- According to this view, James is not denying that faith is necessary for eternal life.
- But this view maintains, however, that initial faith does not guarantee eventual eternal life.
- Thus, this view concludes that if a Christian fails to exemplify works or falls into grievous sin, the Christian will lose his eternal life.

1. having faith results in gaining eternal life
2. but if either
  - a. no works follow, or
  - b. there is grievous sin

Conclusion: then this results in the loss of eternal life.

This view is held within  
the Wesleyan tradition  
(Methodism; Arminianism)





John William Fletcher  
(1729-1785)

*"The 'ifs' of the New Testament are sufficient to establish the fact that eternal justification is conditional upon continued obedience and perseverance in the faith."*

[Paul Russell Matlock, *The Four Justifications in Fletcher's Theology* (Salem: Schmull Publishers, 1980), p. 85.]

The aspect regarding the possibility of losing eternal life is also held by Catholicism.

# Catechism of the Catholic Church



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*"Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom .... It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, of the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell ..."*

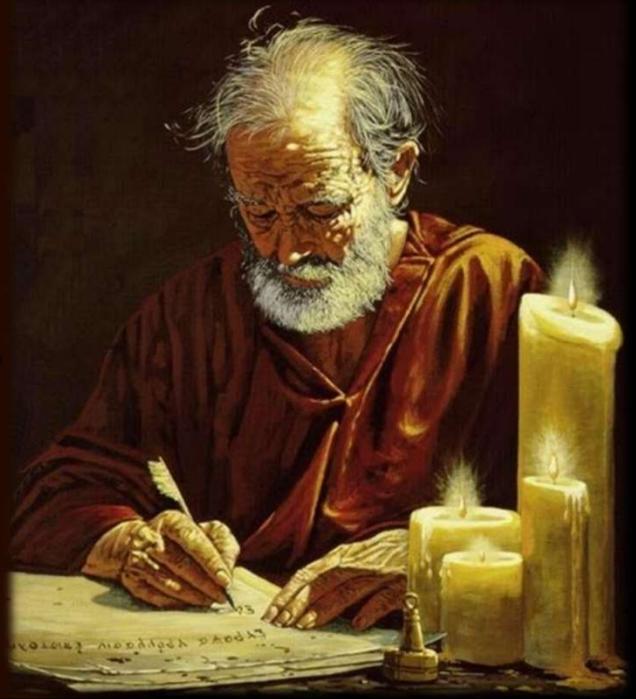
[Catechism of the Catholic Church, (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1994) 456]

∞ Critiquing View #2 ∞  
Eternal Life Is Lost by  
Lack of Works or by  
Grievous Sin

➤ Nowhere does James indicate any concern that his readers would lose their eternal life.

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. {18} Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*

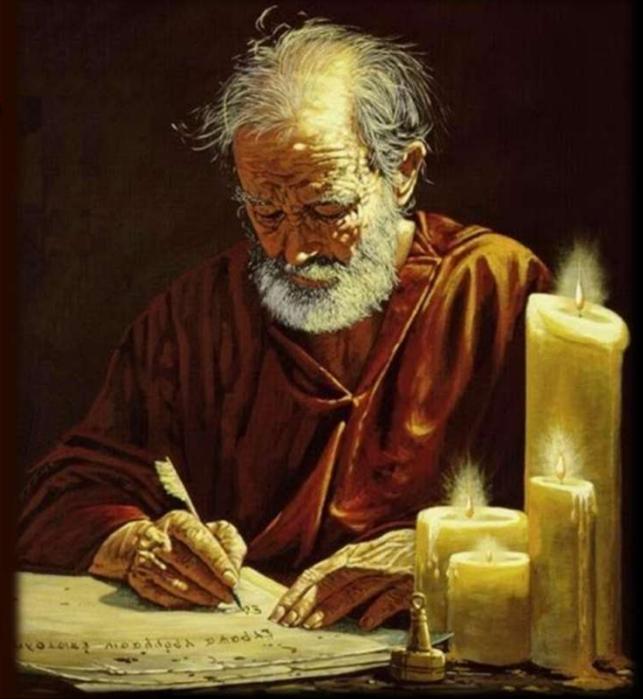
James 1:17-18

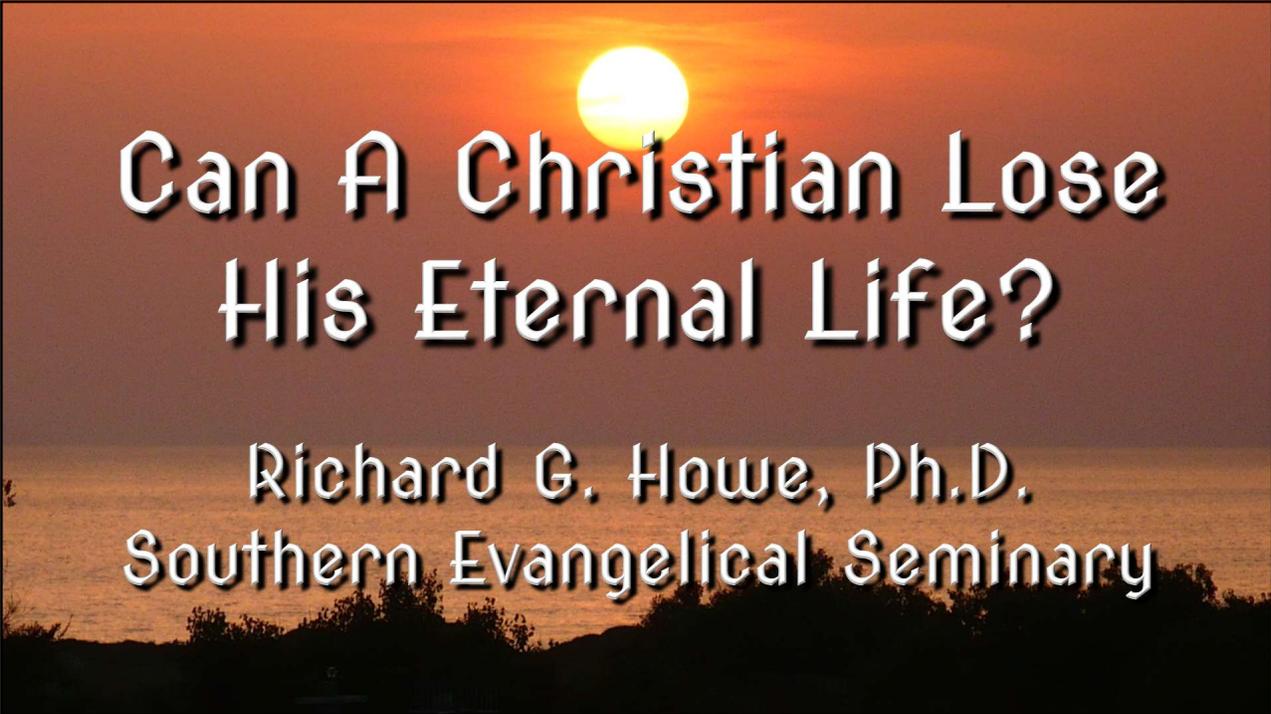


- Nowhere does James indicate any concern that his readers would lose their eternal life.
- There is no reason to take James' comments in 5:19-20 as a warning of losing one's eternal life.

*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, {20} let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

James 5:19-20





# Can A Christian Lose His Eternal Life?

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.  
Southern Evangelical Seminary



∞ Unpacking View #3 ∞  
True, Genuine, or Real  
Faith Necessarily  
Leads to Works

- This view holds that dead faith is the same thing as a false faith.
- False (dead) faith cannot lead to eternal life.
- faith = eternal life + works.
- Though sometimes accused of doing so, this view is not saying that works are necessary to gain eternal life.





- If a professing Christian does not manifest good works, then his faith is dead and not genuine faith.
- This means that he was never a true believer to begin with.
- This view is held within the Reformed (Calvinist) tradition (Presbyterianism, Reformed Baptists, and others).

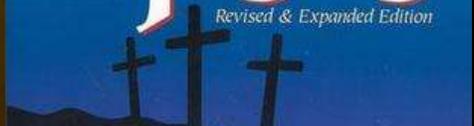


John MacArthur, Jr.

What Does Jesus Mean  
When He Says,  
"Follow Me"?

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JESUS

*Revised & Expanded Edition*



John F.  
MacArthur, Jr.



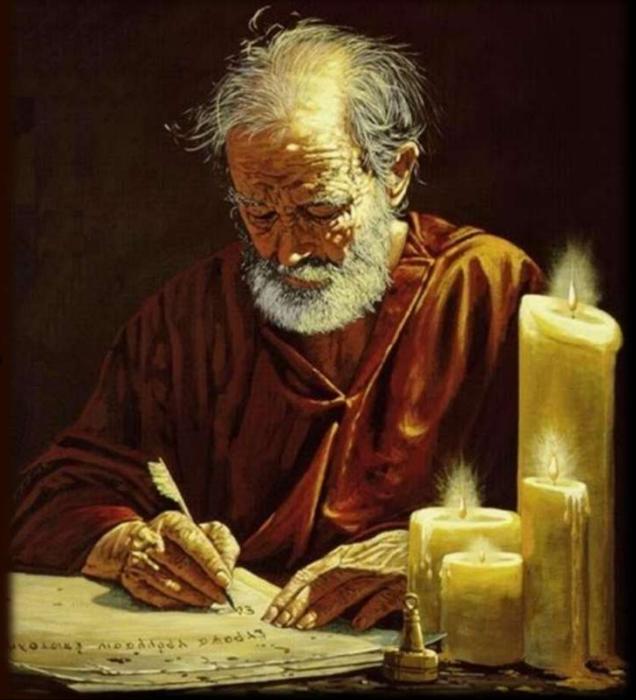
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*"The Bible  
teaches clearly  
that the evidence  
of God's work in  
a life is the  
**inevitable** fruit of  
transformed  
behavior (1 John  
3:10)."*

[John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus: What Does Jesus Mean When He Says "Follow Me"?* Revised and Expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), p. 29]

*In this the children of  
God and the children  
of the devil are  
manifest: Whoever  
does not practice  
righteousness is not of  
God, nor is he who  
does not love his  
brother.*

1 John 3:10



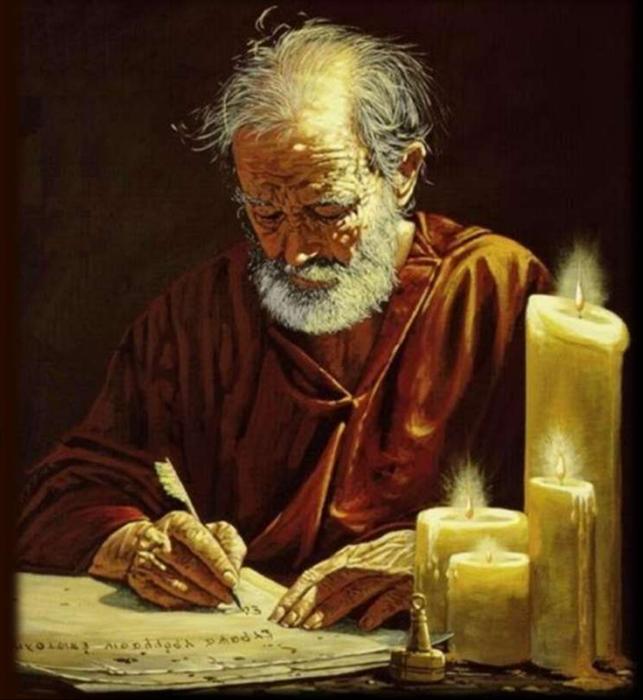
John MacArthur, Jr.

*"Faith that does not  
result in righteous  
living is dead and  
cannot save (James  
2:14-17). ... Professing  
Christians **utterly  
lacking** the fruit of true  
righteousness will find  
no biblical basis for  
assurance of salvation  
(1 John 2:4)."*

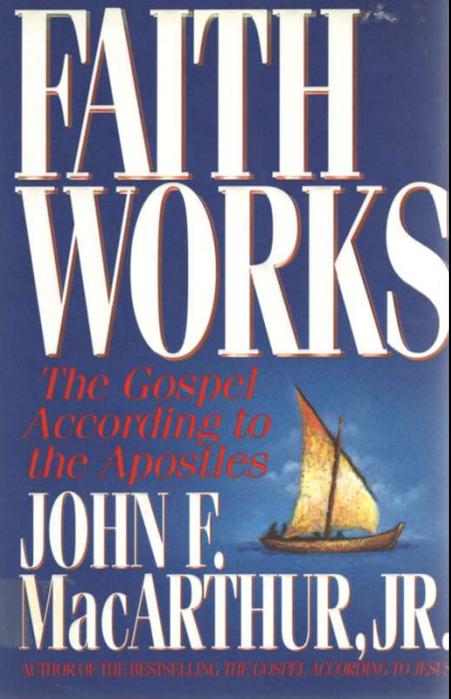
[John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus: What Does Jesus Mean When He Says "Follow Me"?* Revised and Expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), p. 29]

*He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

1 John 2:4



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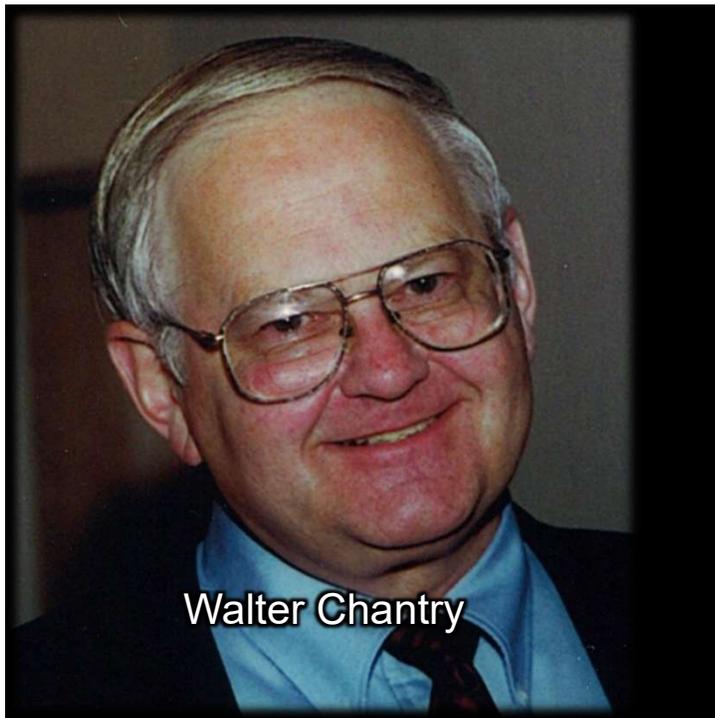




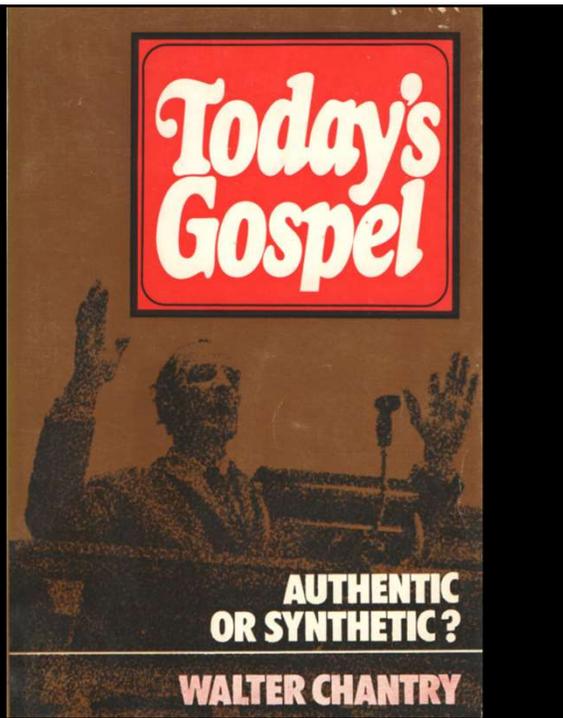
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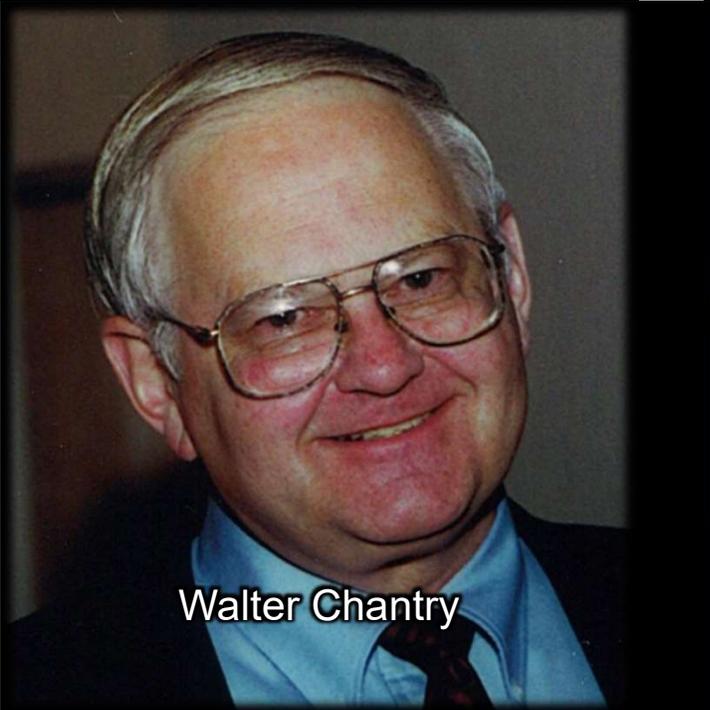
*"James declares that we are saved by faith, which shows itself in works. ... James could not be more explicit. He is confronting the concept of a passive, false 'faith,' which is devoid of the fruits of salvation. He is not arguing for works in addition to or apart from faith. He is showing why and how **true, living** faith always works."*

[John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993), p. 154, emphasis in original]



Walter Chantry

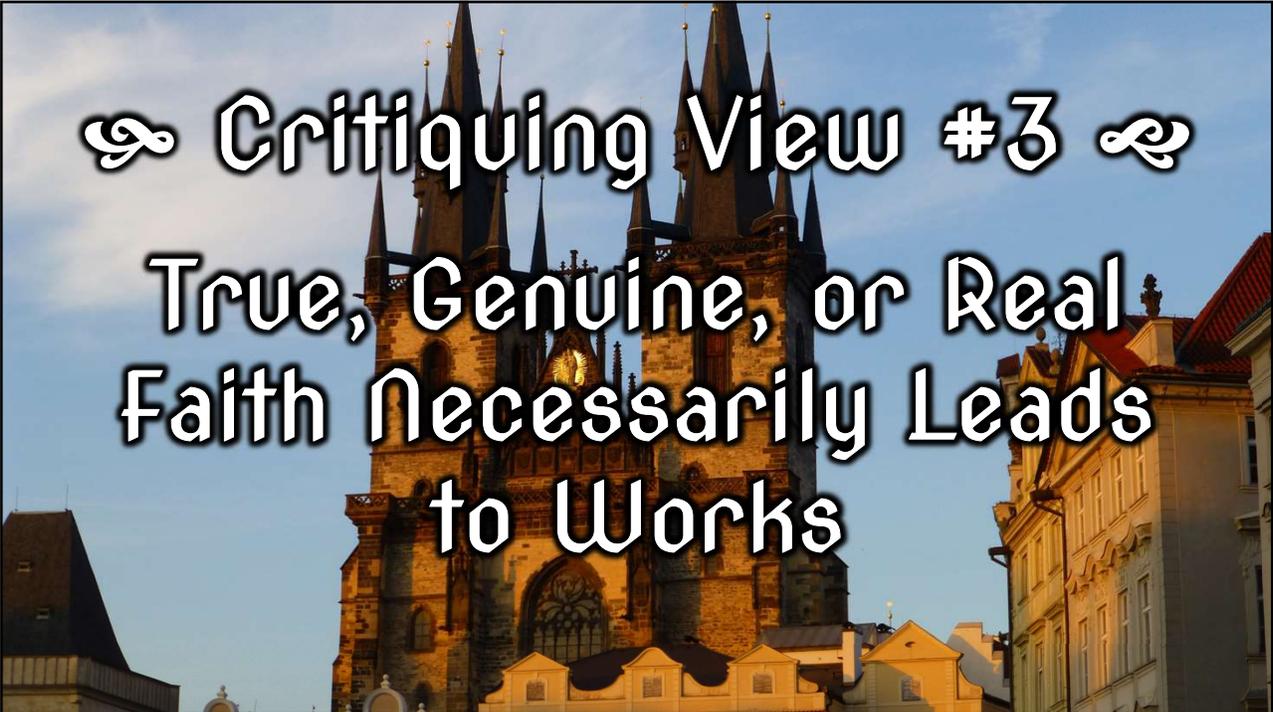




Walter Chantry

*"Only when God is loved supremely and the spirit of the law kept has a man any reason to believe that he has been truly born of God."*

[Walter Chantry, *Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic?* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970), 74]



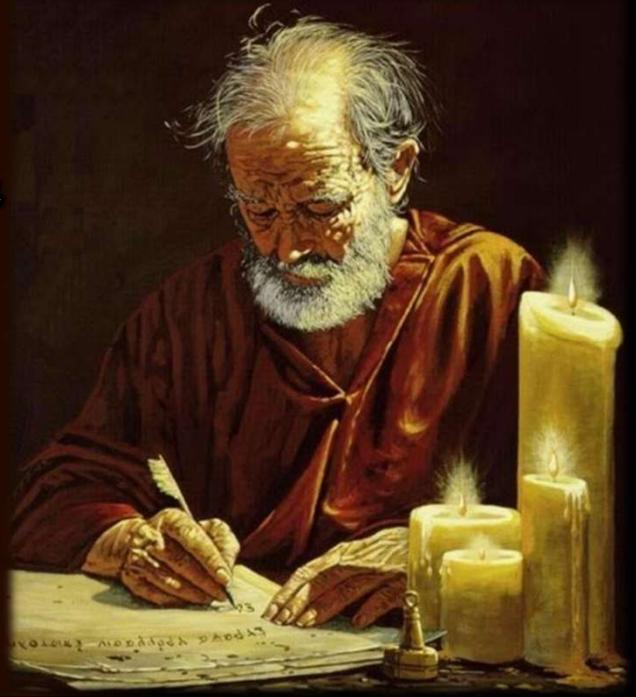
∞ Critiquing View #3 ∞

True, Genuine, or Real Faith Necessarily Leads to Works

- The actual terms in James' text are dead faith vs. (implied) living faith, not genuine faith vs. false faith.
- Note the simile of a dead body and a dead faith.

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

James 2:26



Body without spirit is dead.

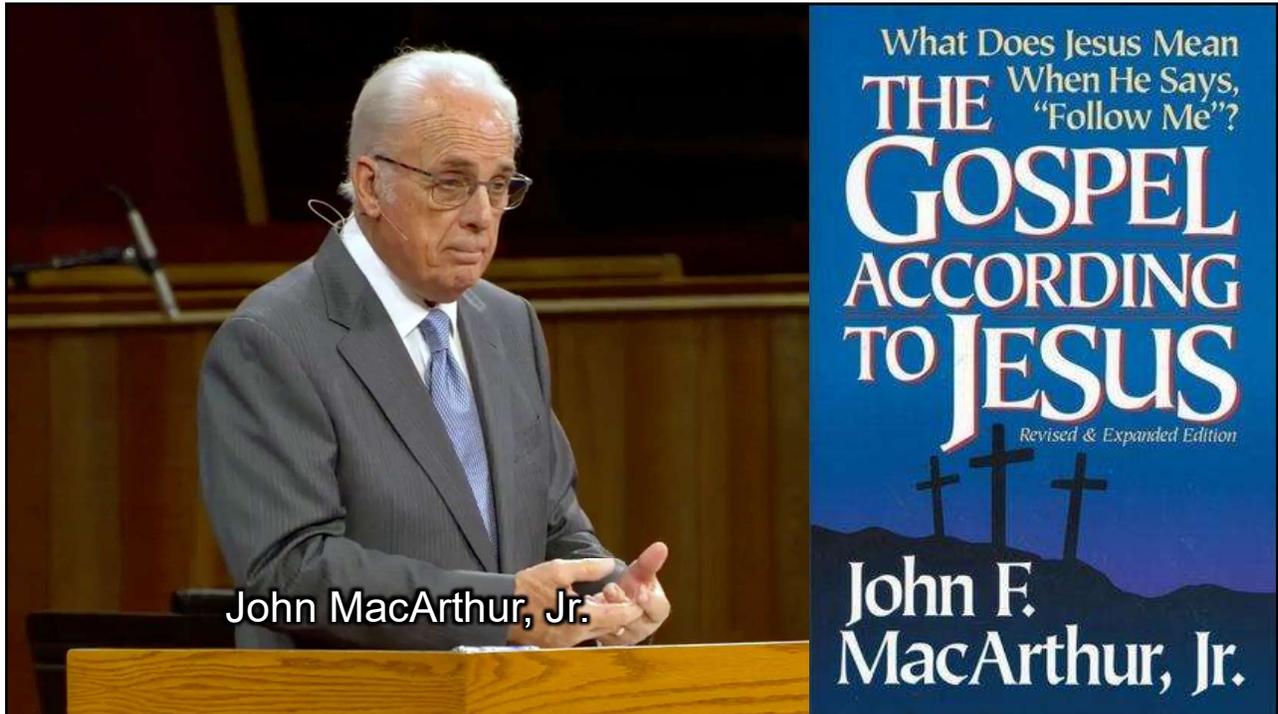


Faith without works is dead.

Spirit gives life to the body.



Works give life to faith.

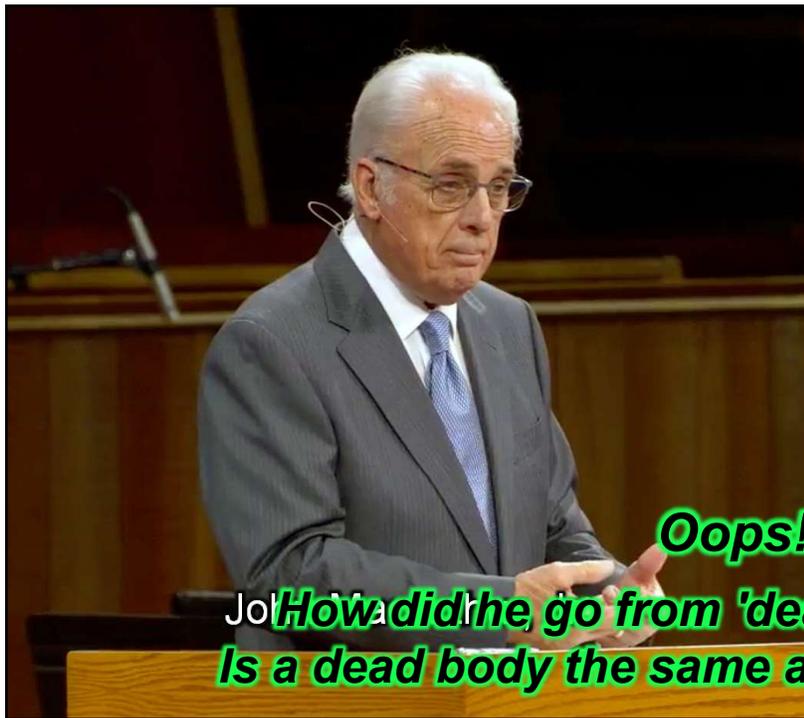




John MacArthur, Jr.

*"Not all faith is redemptive. James 2:14-16 says faith without works is **dead** and cannot save. James describes **spurious** faith as ... ."*

[John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus: What Does Jesus Mean When He Says "Follow Me"?* Revised and Expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), p. 186]



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[John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus: What Does Jesus Mean When He Says "Follow Me"?* Revised and Expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), p. 186]

**Oops!**

**How did he go from 'dead' to 'spurious'?**  
**Is a dead body the same as a spurious body?**

Body without spirit is dead.



Faith without works is dead.

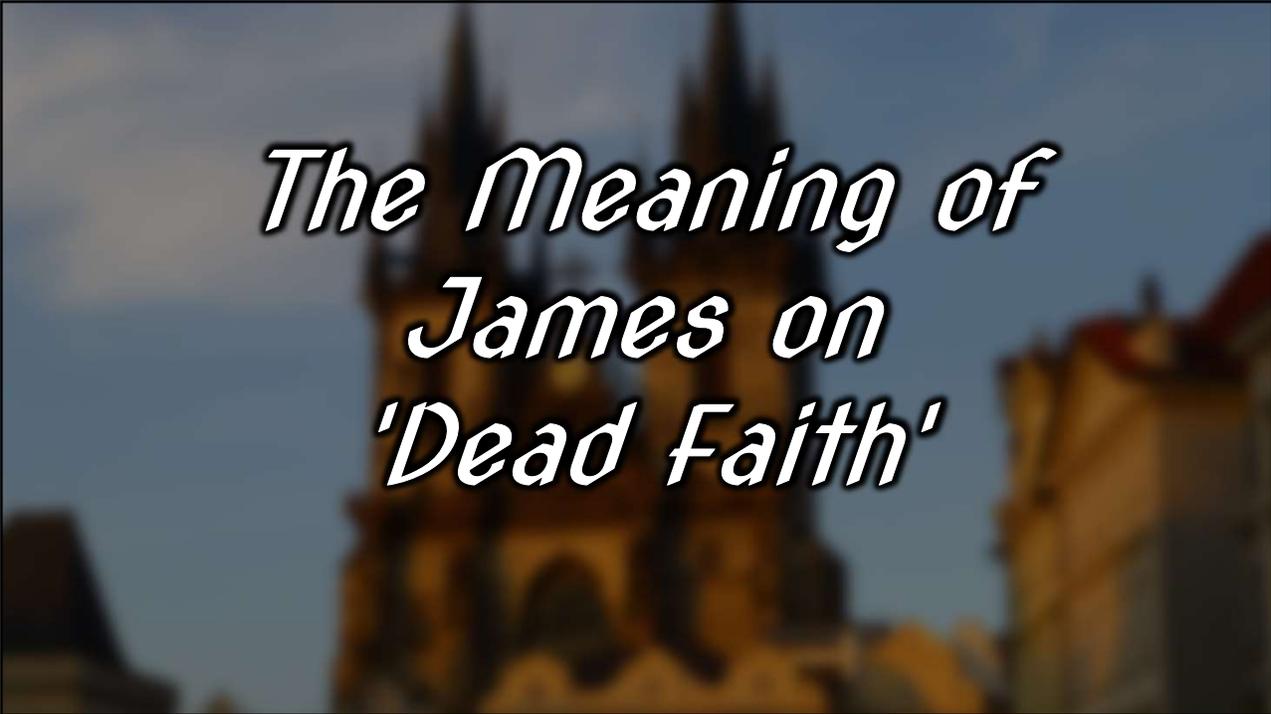
Spirit gives life to the body.

Faith give life to works.



## ∞ Defending View #4 ∞

# James on Dead Faith, Salvation, and Justification

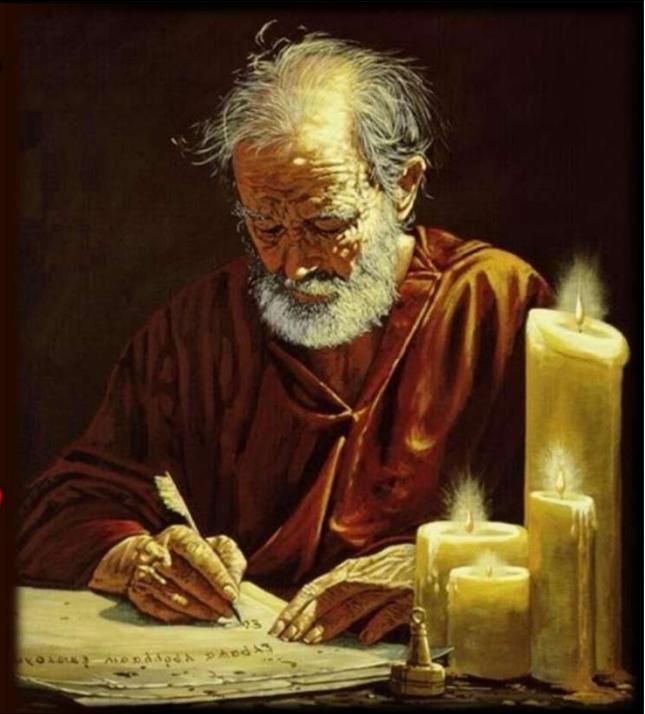


## *The Meaning of James on 'Dead Faith'*

- Just as a dead body is no less a real body than a living body, so a dead faith is no less a "real" faith than a living faith.
- If a Christian does not have works, this shows that his faith is dead.
- However, this does not mean that his faith is absent or false.
- Further, this does not mean that he was not saved in the first place.

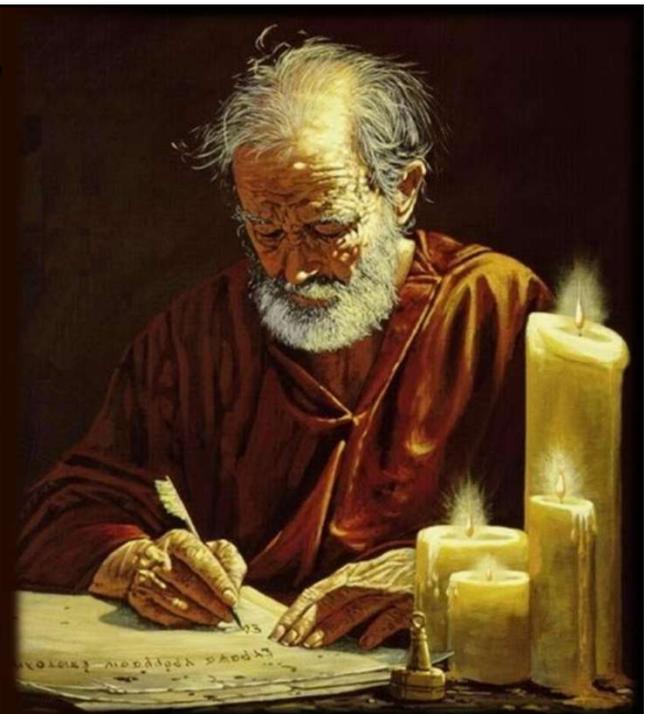
*But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, {6} to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, {7} to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. {8} For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. {9} For he who lacks these things **is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.***

2 Peter 1:5-9



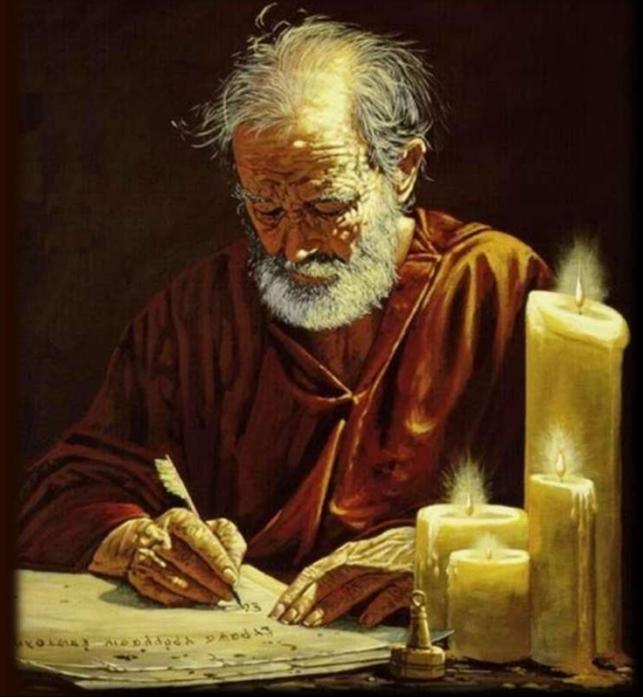
*But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, {6} to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, {7} to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. {8} For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. {9} For he who lacks these things **likely was a false professor and was never saved in the first place.***

2 Peter 1:5-9



## *add*

- ❖ to your *faith* **virtue**
- ❖ to virtue **knowledge**
- ❖ to knowledge **self-control**
- ❖ to self-control **perseverance**
- ❖ to perseverance **godliness**
- ❖ to godliness **brotherly kindness**
- ❖ to brotherly kindness **love**

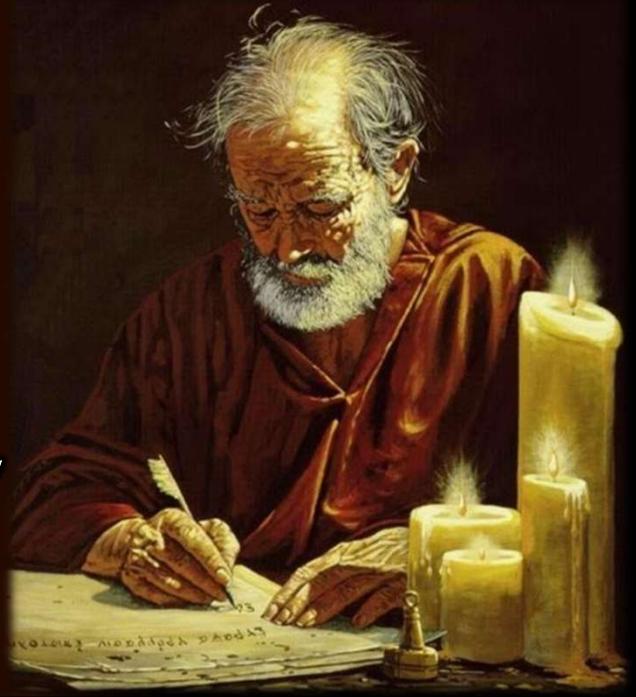


## *The Meaning of James on 'Salvation'*

- James is writing to Christians.
- James believes that eternal life is a gift from God.
- James affirms that faith cannot save him who has no works.

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

James 2:14



- James is writing to Christians.
- James believes that eternal life is a gift from God.
- James affirms that faith cannot save him who has no works.
- Since James does not contradict Paul, then the term 'save' cannot be referring to eternal life.

## *The Meaning of James on 'Justification'*

- James affirms that faith alone justifies (in agreement with Paul).
- James also affirms that there is a justification by works.
- James never suggests any such thing as a single justification by faith plus works.

The word 'only' does not modify the word 'faith' but rather modifies the implied repeated verb 'justified'.

The word μόνον (monon) cannot be an adjective modifying 'faith' (πίστεως, pisteōs) since they do not agree in gender.

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

The word 'only' does not modify the word 'faith' but rather modifies the implied repeated verb 'justified'.

The word μόνον (monon) cannot be an adjective modifying 'faith' (πίστεως, pisteōs) since they do not agree in gender.

Thus, a better translation would read:

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

- James affirms that faith alone justifies (in agreement with Paul).
- James also affirms that there is a justification by works.
- James never suggests any such thing as a single justification by faith plus works.
- Therefore, the justification by works must be another justification than the justification by faith.

***Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?***

James 2:21

*Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." {2} Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."*

Genesis 22:1-2

*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? {2} For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.*

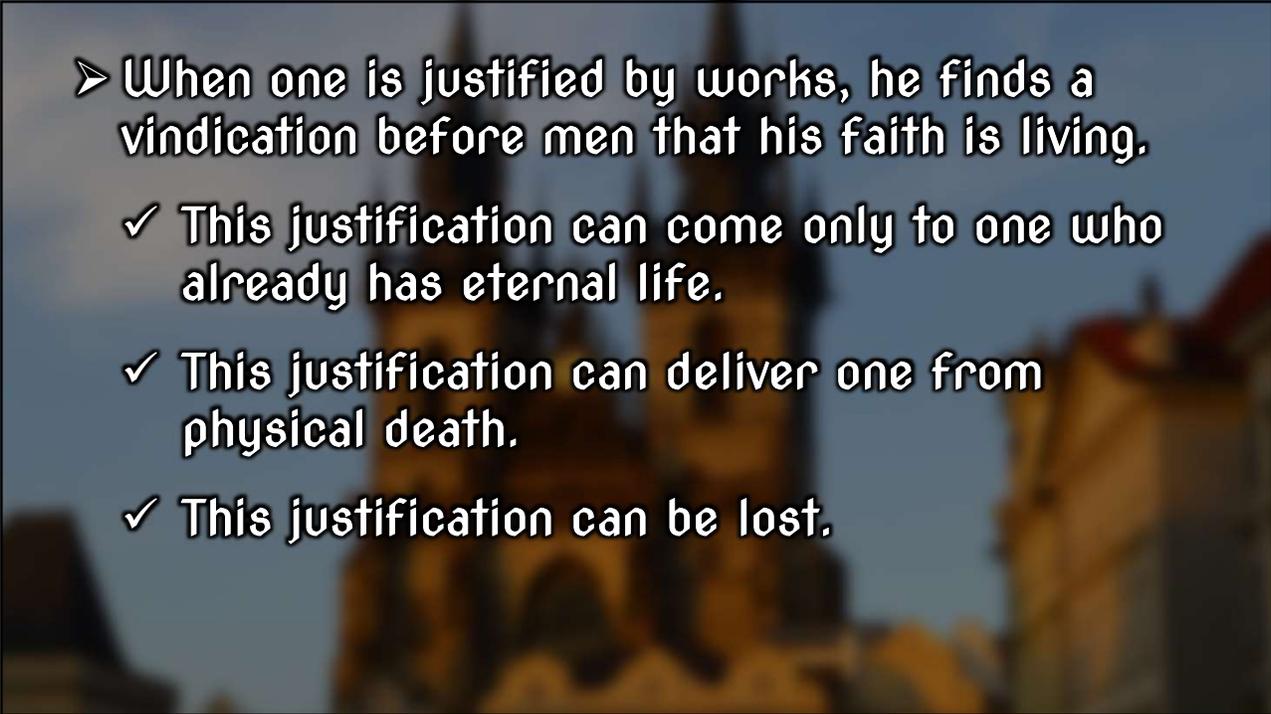
*{3} For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS ACCOUNTED TO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

Romans 4:1-3

*And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." {5} Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." {6} And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*

Genesis 15:4-6

- When a man is justified by faith he finds an unqualified acceptance before God but only God can see this spiritual transaction.
- ✓ This justification leads to eternal life.
- ✓ This justification delivers one from spiritual (eternal) death.
- ✓ This justification cannot be lost.

- 
- When one is justified by works, he finds a vindication before men that his faith is living.
  - ✓ This justification can come only to one who already has eternal life.
  - ✓ This justification can deliver one from physical death.
  - ✓ This justification can be lost.



## Postscript: The Hypothetical Objector

James introduces the hypothetical objector.



{18} But some one will say,

↻ Romans 6:1 ↻  
What shall we say then? Shall we  
continue in sin that grace may abound?

James introduces the hypothetical objector.

Hypothetical objector argues against James.



{18} But some one 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." {19} You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble."

James introduces the hypothetical objector.

Hypothetical objector argues against James.

Some English translations insert quotation marks either here

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James introduces the hypothetical objector.

Hypothetical objector argues against James.

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On the basis of the Greek grammar and context, it is more likely that the objector's words proceed through the end of v. 19.

{18} But some one 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." {19} You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble."

The objector appeals to the Shema in his argument against James that faith and works are not related.

☞ Deut. 6:4 ☞

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

{18} But some one 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. {19} **You believe that there is one God.** You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble."

James responds to the hypothetical objector.

→ {20} But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? {21

James responds to the hypothetical objector.

The conjunction  $\delta\epsilon$  [de] translated 'but'

{20} But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

James responds to the hypothetical objector.

The conjunction  $\delta\epsilon$  [de] translated 'but' indicates a change of the speaker from the hypothetical objector back to James.

{20} But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

James responds to the hypothetical objector.

The conjunction δὲ [de] translated 'but' indicates a change of the speaker from the hypothetical objector back to James.

The second person singular θέλεις δὲ γνῶναι [theleis de gnōnai]

{20} But **do you want to know**, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

James responds to the hypothetical objector.

The conjunction δὲ [de] translated 'but' indicates a change of the speaker from the hypothetical objector back to James.

The second person singular θέλεις δὲ γνῶναι [theleis de gnōnai] and the use of the vocative ὁ ἀνθρώπε κενέ [ō anthrōpe kene]

{20} But do you want to know, O **foolish man**, that faith without works is dead?

James responds to the hypothetical objector.

The conjunction δὲ [de] translated 'but' indicates a change of the speaker from the hypothetical objector back to James.

The second person singular θέλεις δὲ γνῶναι [theleis de gnōnai] and the use of the vocative ὦ ἄνθρωπε κενέ [ō anthrōpe kene] indicate that James is speaking to the hypothetical objector.

{20} But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

James responds to the hypothetical objector.

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The second person singular θέλεις δὲ γνῶναι [theleis de gnōnai] and the use of the vocative ὦ ἄνθρωπε κενέ [ō anthrōpe kene] indicate that James is speaking to the hypothetical objector.

{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?

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The second person singular βλέπεις [blepeis]

{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?

{22} Do you see

James responds to the hypothetical objector.

The conjunction δὲ [de] translated 'but' indicates a change of the speaker from the hypothetical objector back to James.

The second person singular θέλεις δὲ γνῶναι [theleis de gnōnai] and the use of the vocative ὦ ἄνθρωπε κενέ [ō anthrōpe kene] indicate that James is speaking to the hypothetical objector.

The second person singular βλέπεις [blepeis] indicates that James is continuing his response to the objector.

{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?

{22} Do you see

James responds to the hypothetical objector.

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The second person singular βλέπεις [blepeis] indicates that James is continuing his response to the objector.

{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? {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.

James responds to his readers.

→ {24} You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. {25} Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot 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.

James responds to his readers.

This is indicated by the use of the plural 'you' in the phrase 'you see' (ὁρᾶτε, horate).

{24} **You see** then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. {25} Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot 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.

