

Pure Doctrine for Holy Living

A Study of the Epistle of James

Faith Without Works is Dead!

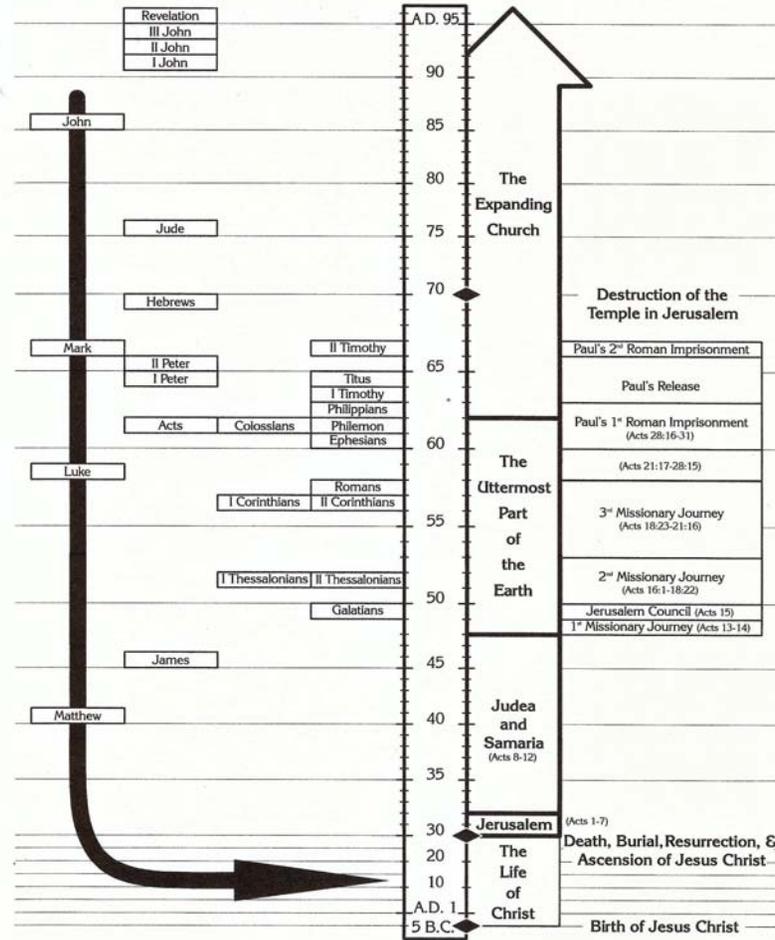
Lesson 3

James 2:14-26

Trinity Bible Church Sunday School
January 20, 2019

The Development of the New Testament

Key Verse: Acts 1:8



The New Covenant Age

- ▶ Began at Pentecost
- ▶ Identified by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Isa 32:11-18; Eze 36:22-30)
- ▶ Linked to the restoration of Israel
- ▶ The Law of Moses to be replaced by “a New Covenant” (Jer 31:31-34)
- ▶ The spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles
- ▶ In fact, the judgment of Israel intensified – destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70)

The *Mystery* Age

- ▶ Ephesians 1:9 – “the mystery of His will”
- ▶ The need for new instruction for this new age
- ▶ The promise of new instruction (John 16:12-15)
- ▶ The apostles and prophets brought new revelation (Eph 2:20; 3:9-10)
- ▶ The apostles recorded the new revelation: Gospels and Epistles
- ▶ The earliest epistles (AD 45-52): James, Galatians 1&2 Thessalonians
- ▶ The life of faith - the Law - the return of the Lord

James

- ▶ To the 12 tribes dispersed abroad
- ▶ Servant of God – an Old Testament description of the saints
- ▶ The perfection of the saints through trials
- ▶ The need for wisdom
- ▶ Blessedness through trials – the long-promised crown of life
- ▶ The goodness of God in regeneration
- ▶ The plan of God to have a “first fruits among His creature”
- ▶ Doers of the Law of the King – the Law of Liberty
 - Bridle your tongue
 - Visit orphans and widows
 - Keep unstained by the world
 - Do not show partiality

Faith Without Works is Dead

- ▶ Martin Luther: James “mangles the Scriptures and thereby opposes Paul and all Scripture.”
- ▶ James: “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.” (2:24)
- ▶ Paul: “By the works of the Law, no flesh will be justified.” (Gal 2:16)
- ▶ Paul: “A man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law.” (Rom 3:28)
- ▶ What is faith and what does James teach about faith?

What is Faith?

- ▶ Dictionary - Strong, unshakeable belief in something without proof or evidence
- ▶ Hebrews 11:1 - “The assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
- ▶ The result of faith
 - Approval by God (Heb 11:2, 6)
 - Eternal life (John 3:16; Heb 10:38; Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11)

What Must I Believe to be Saved?

- ▶ Acts 16:31; John 20:31; Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-6
- ▶ Abel – offered a better sacrifice by faith (Heb 11:4)
- ▶ Abraham
 - Father of all who are “of faith” (Gal 3:6-9)
 - Believed God’s promise of many children (Gen 15:6)
- ▶ Peter - denied the need for the cross (Matt 16:21-23)

Hebrews 11:6 – Saving Faith

- ▶ Must believe that **He is**
- ▶ Must believe that **He rewards** – blesses (Psalm 133:3; Ps 32:1)
- ▶ Must believe that He rewards **those who seek Him**
- ▶ Old Testament examples of saving faith:
 - Abel – offered a sacrifice
 - Enoch – was taken up – “He walked with God”
 - Noah – prepared an ark
 - Abraham – went out . . . lived as an alien . . . offered Isaac
- ▶ Heb 11:39 – gained approval . . . did not receive what was promised”

James Teaches About Faith (2:14-20)

- ▶ Faith without works – can that faith save?
- ▶ Faith AND works — Faith WITH works
- ▶ An illustration of love or compassion (2:15-16)
- ▶ The point: love without works is dead – non-existent
- ▶ The love of God (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)
- ▶ The faith of demons
- ▶ The folly of dead faith – useless faith = faith WITHOUT works
- ▶ James is describing true faith, **NOT** works in addition to faith

Abraham's Salvation (2:21-24)

- ▶ Abraham – “justified by works when he offered up Isaac. . .” (2:21)
- ▶ Justify – to declare righteous (Rom 4:20-22; 5:1, 9; Gal 3:8-9; Titus 3:7)
- ▶ Justify – to be right in a particular matter (Ps 51:4; Matt 12:35-37; Lu 7:35; 10:29)
- ▶ Abraham – declared righteous by faith (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:2-3, 20-22; Gal 3:5-14)
- ▶ Abraham – offered up Isaac *30 years later*
 - “Now I know that you fear God” (Gen 22:12)
- ▶ Faith was perfected – the purpose of the trials of faith
- ▶ Faith was “working with works” – justified by works, and not faith that is alone

Rahab's Salvation (2:25)

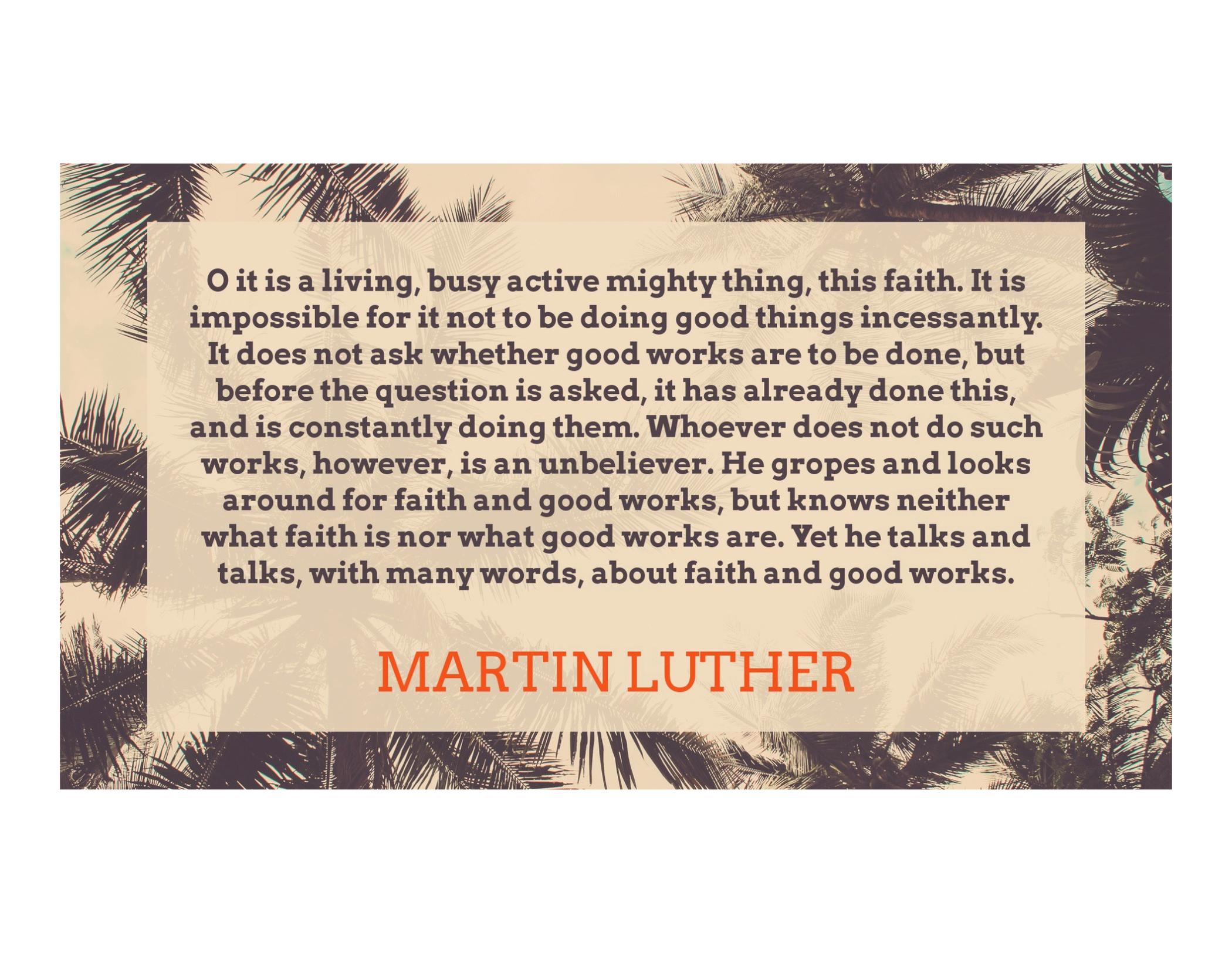
- ▶ Received the spies and sent them out safely (Joshua 2)
- ▶ She knew that YHWH, Israel's God, was God in heaven and earth
- ▶ She knew God was rewarding Israel with the land
- ▶ She sought approval from *this* God. She feared *this* God!
- ▶ Her faith was not alone. She was justified by such faith.

An Analogy from Life (2:26)

- ▶ The body without the spirit is dead
- ▶ Saving faith without works is dead
- ▶ This is an essential unity
 - The body comes with the spirit in order to be truly alive
 - Faith comes with works in order to be true/saving faith
- ▶ Faith and works are not 2 independent factors bringing salvation

Faith Without Works is Dead

- ▶ James teaches about saving faith
 - It is initiated by God through the new birth (1:18)
 - It is perfected through suffering
 - It is manifest through works
- ▶ Works display the reality of saving faith
- ▶ The response of saving faith is to “look intently” at the Perfect Law (1:25)
- ▶ Saving faith responds to the Word of Truth by being a doer and not a hearer

The background of the slide features a repeating pattern of dark palm tree silhouettes against a light beige background. The silhouettes are scattered across the entire frame, creating a tropical and textured aesthetic.

O it is a living, busy active mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good things incessantly. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done this, and is constantly doing them. Whoever does not do such works, however, is an unbeliever. He gropes and looks around for faith and good works, but knows neither what faith is nor what good works are. Yet he talks and talks, with many words, about faith and good works.

MARTIN LUTHER