**Faith Made Mature**

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

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

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

*Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect* [brought to its goal]? ([James 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14&t=NKJV), [20-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.20-22&t=NKJV))

[James 2:14-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14-26&t=NKJV) opens with two self-answering questions, and the structure of these questions in the Greek text requires that both be answered in the negative (the Greek negative, “*me*,” appears in the latter question [designating a “no” response], and the integrally inseparable nature of the two questions shows that the first *must* be answered in the same sense). The first question presents the relationship between faith and works in connection with *profit*, and the second question presents the relationship between faith and works in connection with *salvation*. These two questions could possibly be better understood by translating the verse,

“My brethren, if anyone says he has faith, but does not have works, he cannot profit, can he? Faith [apart from works] cannot save him, can it?”

A translation of this nature *must* be recognized or one will miss the force of these two questions, which are not only in complete keeping with the central message in the epistle of James but introduce that which is dealt with in the verses that immediately follow ([James 2:15-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.15-26&t=NKJV)). And, should an individual fail to grasp this central message, he will forever be lost in a sea of misinterpretation when dealing with this epistle.

*Faith and works* appear together in James chapter two relative to teachings surrounding *the salvation of the soul*, introduced in the preceding chapter ([James 1:21-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21-25&t=NKJV)). And this is the place where numerous individuals invariably go wrong when studying the epistle. They seek to relate both faith and works to the salvation that Christians presently possess.

And, doing this, the end result is always the same:

1) A corruption of the biblical teaching concerning salvation by grace.

2) A corruption of the true message in the book of James.

The relationship between faith and works in James (or other corresponding parts of Scripture [*e.g.*, [1 Corinthians 3:12-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.12-15&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:8-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-10&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 11:4ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.4ff&t=NKJV)]) has *nothing* to do with the salvation that we presently possess. Eternal salvation, the present possession of every believer, is wrought by grace through faith, *completely apart from works.*

An unredeemed person cannot perform works to be saved, and a redeemed person cannot perform works to either stay saved or to show that he has been saved. The necessity of *the complete absence* of works in relation to one’s eternal salvation is just as applicable *following* the time one is saved as it is *prior* to the time one is saved. *Works cannot enter in at all*; else salvation would cease to be by grace through faith ([Romans 11:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.6&t=NKJV)).

James, in his epistle, teaching a justification on the basis of works, doesn’t deal with the salvation that man presently possesses. Rather, throughout his epistle, James moves beyond the past aspect of salvation and directs the message to those who are already saved (a characteristic of all New Testament epistles). In this respect, works, as seen in James, have to do solely with those who have *first* been justified by grace through faith. *Only then* can works appear.

This is the way in which the matter is handled at any point in Scripture where faith and works are dealt with. This has to be the case because neither the unsaved nor the saved can exercise any type of works in the realm of eternal salvation. The unsaved can’t produce works in this realm (*e.g.*, works for salvation), for they are spiritually dead; and the saved can’t produce works in this realm either (*e.g.*, works to show that they have been saved), for works would have entered into an area where works cannot exist.  *From a biblical standpoint, man’s works simply cannot enter, after any manner, where eternal salvation is involved.*

(Works surrounding eternal salvation can enter *only* as they pertain to Christ’s finished work at Calvary, or to the Spirit’s work of breathing life into the one having no life [on the basis of Christ’s finished work]. Unregenerate man, “*dead in trespasses and sins*” [[Ephesians 2:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.1&t=NKJV)], *cannot* act in the spiritual realm. *Divine intervention alone can and must occur* [[Ephesians 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.5&t=NKJV)].

And saved man cannot act in this realm either, for God is no longer dealing with him relative to eternal salvation. God is now dealing with him on an entirely different plane — *relative to the saving of the soul, where man’s works can enter, which is the subject matter of James*.)

PAUL AND JAMES

A failure to understand this whole realm of biblical doctrine surrounding faith and works, as set forth in James, has, over the years, resulted in untold confusion among Christians.

Numerous Bible students who have understood that man’s justification must be by grace through faith, completely apart from works ([Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-9&t=NKJV)), have been perplexed particularly by the epistle of James, for James teaches that man *cannot be justified* apart from works. This so perplexed Martin Luther, with his emphasis on the salvation that Christians presently possess, referencing mainly the book of Romans, that he declared the epistle of James to be “an epistle of straw,” questioning whether or not it should be included among the canonical books.

Most attempts among Bible students today to reconcile what they see as justification *apart from works* in the Pauline epistles with justification *by works* in the epistle of James revolve around the thought that “Paul deals with justification in the eyes of God, and James deals with justification in the eyes of man.” In other words, a man is saved by grace through faith, apart from works, in the eyes of God; but he performs works after he is saved, showing, in the eyes of man, *the reality* of his salvation.

This type of approach to works in James is used by many in an attempt to prove the reality or non-reality of one’s conversion by the presence or absence of works. “Living” faith, as opposed to “dead” faith in James ([James 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.17&t=NKJV), [20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.20&t=NKJV), [26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.26&t=NKJV)), is often equated with what some call “saving” faith. The thought is then set forth that if a man possesses “saving [‘living’]” faith, he will evince this fact through good works in the eyes of man.

However, if a man who claims to be saved does not show evidence of his salvation via works in the eyes of man, this proves that he was never really saved in the first place. All he ever possessed was a “non-saving [‘dead’]” faith.

The entire concept of justification by works in the eyes of man though is fallacious from one end to the other, and so is the concept behind calling “dead” faith a “non-saving” faith (“dead” faith will be discussed later in this chapter). A man *cannot show*, via works, the reality of his justification by grace through faith. If he could, then justification would cease to be by grace through faith. Works, after some fashion, would have entered into an area where works cannot exist. The pure gospel of the grace of God would have been corrupted, for,

*. . . if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.* ([Romans 11:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+11.6&t=NKJV))

The key to a correct understanding of the epistle of James lies in recognizing that the central message of this book deals, not with the salvation that we presently possess (salvation of the spirit), but with *the salvation to be revealed at the time of our Lord’s return* (salvation of the soul). God *does not* deal with Christians today in relation to the salvation of their spirits. This is a past, completed act, *never* to be dealt with as an issue beyond the point of the birth from above. God deals with the regenerate *solely on the basis* of the fact that they have been saved, *never in relation to* the salvation that they presently possess.

(Note the central Old Testament type in the preceding respect — the Israelites under Moses. Following the death of the firstborn [[Exodus 12:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+12.1ff&t=NKJV)], God dealt with the Israelites on *an entirely different plane*. God then dealt with them *relative to the land set before them*, not relative to that which was a past, finished matter — the prior death of the firstborn in Egypt.

And so it is with Christians under Christ in the antitype. This is more fully developed in Chapters 6, 7 of this book, [Salvation of the Soul](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php), in this site.)

The place that “works” occupy in James must be understood in this respect. “Works” can only appear in the realm of God’s present dealings with Christians. Consequently, they can never pertain to the salvation of the spirit; rather, they must always pertain to the salvation of the soul alone.

But going to the Pauline epistles and seeking to contrast them with James in the realm of faith and works *is not* the correct way to approach and explain the matter. Paul *has not* written about one thing and James another. Rather, both Paul and James have written about *the same thing*. They have both dealt with *exactly the same thing, from different perspectives.*

It is wrong, for example, to contrast Romans (or any of the other Pauline epistles) with James (or any of the other general epistles) and say that one (Romans) deals with the salvation that Christians presently possess and the other (James) deals with the salvation of the soul. The central message throughout all of the epistles, beginning with Romans and ending with Jude, has to do with the same thing — *the salvation of the soul*, not with the salvation that Christians presently possess.

Martin Luther, as most Bible students since that time, was wrong in his approach to the message of Romans in relation to the message of James. Both books deal with *the same message, from two different perspectives* (*e.g.*, *cf*. [Romans 4:3-22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+4.3-22&t=NKJV); [James 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14&t=NKJV), [21-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.21-23&t=NKJV)). And a failure to understand this is where the confusion lies.

In the final analysis, Romans possibly contains the highest and most intricate form of all teachings surrounding the salvation of the soul. In this respect, rather than Romans being a book dealing with primary doctrine surrounding salvation by grace, it is, instead, a book dealing not only with the salvation of the soul but, as previously stated, possibly with the highest and most intricate form of this doctrine to be found in Scripture. In effect, Romans is a book that Christians should probably study only after they have come into a good understanding of the salvation of the soul, not a book that those proclaiming the message of salvation by grace are to reference, seeking to show individuals how to be saved (for this is *not* the central message of Romans).

PROFIT … SALVATION

The key words in [James 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14&t=NKJV) are “*profit*” and “*save*.” These two words are linked together in such a manner — not only here, but elsewhere in Scripture — that one cannot be realized apart from the other. That is, apart from an accrual of “*profit*,” *salvation* cannot be realized; or, to state the matter another way, an accrual of “*profit*” leads to (is for the purpose of) the realization of *salvation* (at a future date). And James specifically states that *neither can be realized by faith alone. Works must enter and have their proper place.*

One cannot profit apart from an initial investment, and one is in no position to procure the salvation of which James speaks apart from presently possessing salvation. The Greek word translated “*profit*” is derived from a root word which means “to increase”; and the thought of an “increase” does not enter into the picture until one has an initial supply, making an “increase,” or “*profit*,” possible.

The concept of “*profit*” is always something in addition to that which one already possesses. Initial investments, from which individuals can profit, are possessed *only by the Lord’s own servants* (*Christians*). Thus, there is no such thing as the word “*profit*” being used in this sense in connection with the unsaved, for they have *no* initial investment in this realm.

The parable of the talents ([Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV)) and the parable of the pounds ([Luke 19:11-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.11-27&t=NKJV)) provide two of the best Scriptural examples concerning “*profit*” on an initial investment in relation to the Lord’s servants during the present day and time. As brought out in these parables, the Lord has delivered *all* of His goods to all of His servants and has left them with the command, “*Do business till I come*” (KJV: “*Occupy till I come*”).

The Lord’s servants are to trade and traffic in the Lord’s business during His time of absence. Those who do so, under the leadership of the Lord, will realize “a *profit*” (*cf*. [Matthew 25:16-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.16-17&t=NKJV), [19-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.19-23&t=NKJV); [Luke 19:15-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.15-19&t=NKJV)). By realizing a profit, an increase on the initial investment, they will save their souls. On the other hand, those who refuse to use the initial investment will not only remain profitless but they will, as a consequence, suffer “*loss*.” They will suffer the loss of their souls (*cf*. [Matthew 16:24-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.24-27&t=NKJV); [25:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.18-19&t=NKJV), [24-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.24-30&t=NKJV); [Luke 19:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.15&t=NKJV), [20-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.20-26&t=NKJV)).

The concept of “*profit*” in the epistle of James turns on the thought of *works* in connection with *faith*: “*faith without works is dead*” ([James 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.17&t=NKJV), [20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.20&t=NKJV), [26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.26&t=NKJV)), and there can be no profit in connection with “a dead” faith. In order for profit to accrue, *there must be a living, active faith.*

“Dead” faith in the epistle of James has nothing to do with either unsaved man or with the salvation that saved man presently possesses. The thought that “dead” faith is *a non-saving faith* possessed by unsaved man is completely erroneous.

There is no such thing as a *non-saving faith* in relation to the unsaved. *Faith either exists or it doesn’t exist*. In the case of unsaved individuals (all unsaved individuals), *faith does not exist*; and in the case of saved individuals (all saved individuals), *faith exists*, and this faith will continue to exist forever.

Faith, even though “*dead*,” is still there. Faith, possessed by all Christians, cannot pass out of existence. Scripture specifically states that “*faith, hope, charity* [love]” continue to abide after other things (*e.g.*, tongues) have passed out of existence ([1 Corinthians 13:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+13.13&t=NKJV)).

Faith can be very active, or it can be weak, anemic, and even dead; but faith is still there, and a weak, anemic, or dead faith can be revived — made to live — and become very active.

The very fact that *faith* in James chapter two is “*dead*” bears evidence concerning another fact: This faith must, at one time, have existed in a “*living*” state. The analogy in [James 2:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.26&t=NKJV) is sufficient to demonstrate this truth:

*For as the body without the spirit* [Greek: *pneuma*, ‘breath’ in this context] *is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

A body that is void of “breath” is *dead*, and faith that is void of “works” is also *dead*. Both were at one time living. The departure of “breath” is connected with *death* in the body, and the departure of “works” is connected with *death* in faith.

In order for life to be restored to either *a dead body* or *a dead faith*, there must be a reversal of the process that produced death — “breath” must be restored to *the body* ([Luke 8:55](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.55&t=NKJV)), and “works” must be restored to *faith* ([James 2:17-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.17-26&t=NKJV)). However, for works to be restored to faith, there must *first* be the impartation of “breath,” as in the resuscitation of the body.

The breath of God — the *Neshamah*, the *Theopneustos*, the living Word of God — must flow into man’s saved human spirit, providing sustenance for the spiritual man. Then, by the action of the indwelling Holy Spirit, as He takes the Word, turning the *Water* to *Wine*, the spiritual man is caused to move about; and works that ensue from this movement of the spiritual man is that which is seen in James chapter two — *works connected with* (*emanating out of*) *a living, active faith.*

Thus, in actuality, life is restored to both a dead body and a dead faith through the same means — “breath.” This is in keeping with the law of first mention concerning life in relation to man in [Genesis 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+2.7&t=NKJV). “The breath of life” *must always* be the factor when *life* in relation to man is involved (*ref*. Chapter 3 in this book, in this site, [The Implanted Word](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php#The%20Implanted%20Word%20(SOS)), [Salvation of the Soul](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php)).

In this respect, a “*dead*” faith is inseparably connected with a non-reception of “*the implanted Word,*” the *Neshamah* (which, if received, would ultimately result in a “living” faith, producing works).

The word “dead” appears in the English version (KJV) in connection with faith in [James 2:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.17&t=NKJV), [20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.20&t=NKJV), [26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.26&t=NKJV); but in a number of the older Greek manuscripts the word for “barren” or “fruitless,” rather than the word for “dead,” appears in verse twenty.

In these manuscripts, one would read, “. . . *faith without works is barren?*” (Although most scholars prefer the older manuscript rendering, its validity need not be debated. The same truth is taught elsewhere in Scripture [*cf*. [2 Peter 1:5-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Peter+1.5-8&t=NKJV)].) “Barren” faith (v. 20) is equated with “dead” faith (vv. 17, 26), and the inverse of this would be true concerning “living” faith (*i.e*., “fruitful,” not “barren,” would be associated with “living”).

In this respect, *fruit-bearing* is the result of works, and *barrenness* is the result of *no* works, inseparably connected with and emanating out of “a living” faith or “a dead, barren” faith respectively.

Thus, “*dead*” faith in James chapter two can only refer to faith possessed by the redeemed alone. *Fruit-bearing* is in view (allowing for the saved alone to be in view); and works — resulting in *fruitfulness*, emanating from a “living” faith — must be present to realize *a profit* on the initial investment, ultimately resulting in *the salvation of the soul.*

FAITH … WORKS

When James speaks of *works* in connection with faith, exactly what type *works* does he have in mind? What type of *works* must Christians perform in order for them to be seen possessing a “living” rather than a “*dead*” faith?

If one remains within the text of the epistle of James itself, such questions can be easily resolved. James provides two examples drawn from Old Testament history concerning exactly what he has in mind; and, from these two examples, Christians can ascertain *the type of works* that are to be performed today, resulting in *fruit-bearing*.

James’ first example is derived from Genesis chapter twenty-two:

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?* ([Genesis 22:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22.21&t=NKJV))

Then, James’ second example is derived from Joshua chapter two:

*Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?* ([James 2:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.25&t=NKJV))

Abraham was justified by works by one act, and Rahab was justified by works by another, entirely separate, different act. These two examples stand in almost stark contrast to one another, by divine design, for a purpose. The actions of Abraham, the father of the faithful, offering the supreme sacrifice on Mt. Moriah, constitute one example; and the actions of Rahab, a harlot, providing lodging for two Jewish spies in Jericho, constitute the other example.

Insofar as justification by works is concerned, no distinction is drawn between their individual actions. Note the word “*Likewise* [Greek: *homoios*, ‘in like manner’]” (v. 25) that James used to compare Rahab’s justification with Abraham’s justification. *Both were equally justified by works.*

The key to the matter lies in the fact that both Abraham and Rahab acted *by faith.* Both occupy a position among the faithful in Hebrews chapter eleven, where these same two incidents are recorded ([Hebrews 11:17-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.17-19&t=NKJV), [31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.31&t=NKJV)). To act by faith, one must act in accordance with the revelation of God. Acting “by faith” is simply *believing that which God has to say about the matter and governing one’s life accordingly.*

In the case of Abraham, God instructed him to offer his son as a burnt offering upon a particular mountain in the land of Moriah. Abraham believed God, acted accordingly, and, through this act, he was justified *by works*.

In the case of Rahab, God had revealed certain things concerning the nation of Israel. She knew what had previously happened to the Egyptians, the kings of the Amorites, and possibly far more. She also knew that God had given the land in which she dwelled to the children of Israel, and she knew that they were about to take possession of this land. *Knowing* the revelation of God concerning these matters, *she acted accordingly*. She hid the spies, helped them escape from Jericho, and, by so doing, she was justified *by works*.

Both Abraham and Rahab acted in accordance with the revelation of God concerning that which they were to do in two separate matters. Abraham was called upon to do one thing, and he was faithful to his calling. Rahab was called upon to do something entirely different, and she, “*likewise* [‘in like manner’],” was faithful to her calling. By “faithfulness” to that which God had called them to do, *both*, *in an equal respect, were justified by works*.

Thus, the answer is provided concerning *the type of works* that James has in mind. Works in James chapter two, brought over into the lives of Christians today, are simply *those works that God has called individual Christians to do.* God has always called individuals to do different things at different times (*e.g*., Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab, etc.), and those whom He calls are to be *faithful* in the task/tasks whereunto they have been called.

Justification by works in James is wrought by being faithful to one’s individual calling — *works emanating out of faithfulness*. This, of course, presupposes that the person has acted in accordance with [James 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV) — “*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted Word .* . . .” [James 1:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.22&t=NKJV) then instructs Christians to be “*doers of the Word, and not hearers only*,” which is something that cannot be accomplished apart from acting in accordance with the preceding verse.

The parable of the talents in [Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV) provides an example of this same type of faithfulness to one’s calling. In this parable, each servant was entrusted with an amount “*according to his own ability*” — one *five* talents, one *two* talents, and another *one* talent. “Talents” are *a monetary unit of exchange*, *an initial investment to be used by the recipient to gain an increase, a profit*. The servant with *five* talents was expected to use all five; the servant with *two* talents was expected to use both, but he was not called upon to use more than the two; the servant with *one* talent was expected to use that talent, but he was not called upon to use more than the one talent.

The servants possessing *the five* and *two talents* were faithful to their individual callings, and *each received identical commendations upon their Lord’s return*. The servant with *the one talent*, however, was unfaithful to his calling and received punishment rather than commendation. Had he been faithful in his area of responsibility, *he would have received the identical commendation experienced by the other two servants.*

The entire thought turns on the fact that rewards will be passed out or punishment will be meted out commensurate with an individual’s faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the task/tasks God has called that individual to do.

THE GOAL OF FAITH

“Faith” is made mature, brought to full development, reaches its goal through *works* ([James 2:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.22&t=NKJV)). The relationship between faith and works rests on this principle; and if one understands the revelation of God at this point, he will never again experience trouble in the realm of faith and works.

The Greek word translated “*perfect*” in [James 2:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.22&t=NKJV) is *teleioo*, which refers to “the goal,” “consummation,” “full development,” “end” of that which is in view. In this case, “faith” is in view; and *works* constitute the vehicle through which faith is brought to full development, with a goal in view at the termination of this development.

“The goal” of faith is spelled out in no uncertain terms in [1 Peter 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.9&t=NKJV): “*receiving the end* [Greek: *telos*] *of your faith -the salvation of your souls*.” The Greek word *telos*, translated “*end*” in [1 Peter 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.9&t=NKJV), is the root form of the work *teleioo*, translated “*perfect*” in [James 2:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.22&t=NKJV). “Faith” is brought to maturity, full development, through works, for one great purpose — in order that the one possessing this faith might, in the coming day, realize the salvation of his soul and occupy a position as a joint-heir with Christ in His kingdom.

All Christians have been “*created in Christ Jesus for good works*” ([Ephesians 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.10&t=NKJV)), and God has outlined the works that He wants *each of us* to do. As *individuals in Christ* follow the leadership of the Lord in their respective callings, performing these works, their faith is, “day by day,” progressively being brought to full development. This is not something that occurs over a short period of time, but, rather, something that occurs over the entirety of the pilgrim walk.

This is something that occurs in conjunction with *the metamorphosis* and *the filling of the Spirit*. The *Neshamah*, the Word of God flowing into man’s saved human spirit, progressively (through the action of the indwelling Holy Spirit) produces *the metamorphosis* and *the filling of the Spirit*. At the same time, works emanating from this entire process, inseparably associated with faithfulness, progressively bring “faith” *to its full development*, *to its goal* (*ref*. Chapters 2, 3 in this book, in this site, [Salvation of the Soul](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php)). All of these things are working together in the lives of Christians in order to produce Spirit-filled, mature Christians who will realize the purpose for their salvation — *the goal of their calling, the goal of faith, the salvation of their souls.*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:

All “judgment” will be on the basis of *works*, and all “rewards” or “punitive actions” emanating from judgment must, likewise, be on the basis of *works*. The coming judgment of the saints — the *time, place, purpose, and outcome* — is a major subject of Scripture, and this is an area in which all Christians who have been saved for any length of time at all should be quite knowledgeable. One’s failure to properly understand this area of study can invariably be traced directly back *to his failure to understand the correct relationship between faith and works.*

1) BASIS FOR JUDGMENT — WORKS

*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

*Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,*

*each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by* [in] *fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.*

*If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.*

*If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.* ([1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV))

*The time* of this judgment will be at the end of the present dispensation;  *the place* of this judgment will be in the heavens; *the purpose* for this judgment will be to “*test each one’s* [Christian’s] *work, of what sort it is*”; and *the outcome* of this judgment will be that some Christians will be shown to possess works comparable to “*gold, silver, precious stones*” (resulting in their receiving “*a reward*”), while other Christians will be shown to possess works comparable to “*wood, hay, straw*” (resulting in their suffering “*loss*”).

The Christians’ judgment will occur before the judgment seat of Christ in the heavens following the removal of the Church from the earth; and this judgment will occur before the Tribulation begins on earth.

(There will be an interval of time, of apparent short duration, between the removal of the Church and the beginning of Daniel’s Seventieth Week [[Revelation 1:11-6:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.11-6.1&t=NKJV)]. The ratifying of the covenant between the man of sin and Israel marks the beginning of this period, not the removal of the Church. And in the chronology of events seen in Revelation chapters one through five, events surrounding the judgment seat of Christ [among certain revealed events that both precede and follow those of the judgment seat] will occur preceding the Tribulation, which is seen beginning in Revelation chapter six.

Refer to the author’s book, in this site, [The Time of the End](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-in-revelation.php#The%20Time%20of%20the%20End), Chapters 6-10 for a discussion of the chronology of these events between the removal of the Church and the beginning of the Tribulation.)

Christians will be judged on the basis of their works in view of whether these works did or did not bring one’s “*faith*” to its *goal* — *the salvation of his soul*. Works comparable to “*gold, silver, precious stones*” will be shown to have brought faith to its proper goal; works comparable to “*wood, hay, straw*,” however, will be shown to have failed to bring faith to its proper goal. Those Christians shown to be in possession of works that brought faith to its proper goal will receive a “*reward*” ([1 Corinthians 3:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.14&t=NKJV)), but those Christians shown to be in possession of works that failed to bring faith to its proper goal will suffer “*loss*” ([1 Corinthians 3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.15&t=NKJV)).

The word “*loss*” in [1 Corinthians 3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.15&t=NKJV) is from the same Greek word translated “*lose*” in [Matthew 16:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.26&t=NKJV); [Mark 8:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+8.36&t=NKJV), “*be cast away*” in [Luke 9:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+9.25&t=NKJV), and “*I have suffered the loss*” in [Philippians 3:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.8&t=NKJV). The thought behind the use of this word in these passages is to “forfeit” something already in one’s possession.

In Matthew, Mark, and Luke this loss is seen as the forfeiture of one’s *soul*. And this is exactly what is in view in [1 Corinthians 3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.15&t=NKJV). This is the only thing that could be in view, for the one who suffers loss will have no rewards to forfeit. He will be left with his life (soul) alone; his works will all be burned. And, in the light of related Scripture, an individual suffering loss at the judgment seat of Christ will experience *the loss of his soul*.

2) BASIS FOR RECOMPENSE — WORKS

*For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward* [recompense] *each according to his works.* ([Matthew 16:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.27&t=NKJV))

This is the same thought set forth in [1 Corinthians 3:14-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.14-15&t=NKJV) concerning Christians before the judgment seat of Christ. All events at the judgment seat will be based on works, with “rewards” or “losses” emanating from the trial of one’s works: “*the fire will test each one’s work* . . . .”

In Hebrews chapter eleven the reception of future rewards, promises are clearly taught to be on the basis of *faith*, with no mention of works. The relationship, of course, is that works emanate from one’s faithfulness to his calling; and works bring one’s faith to the goal of his calling. In this respect, understanding the proper relationship between faith and works, rewards can be said to emanate from *works* in one place and *faith* in another.

There is no conflict at all.

We have been saved to produce “*good works*” resulting in fruit-bearing, with a purpose and goal in view. Happy are those Christians who understand this purpose and goal, governing their lives accordingly, looking out ahead to the day when “. . . *He who is coming will come and will not tarry*” ([Hebrews 10:37b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.37b&t=NKJV)).