

The Meaning of Faith without Works (Part 6):

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Introduction

Water of Life

Nov 14, 2013

The original readers were Jewish (cf. "twelve tribes" in 1:1) and were "brought forth by the word of truth" (e.g., believers). Based on 1:18, brethren refers to them as having God a their father.

Two Possible Meanings for "faith without works" (2:20, 26)

- Subtraction model: bicycle without a frame
- Addition model: bicycle without a rider

Apples and Oranges Illustration of the Addition Model versus the Subtraction Model:

1. Faith alone in Jesus Christ alone gives everlasting life (Granny Smith Apple).
2. Faith alone in Christian-way-of-life-truths does not deliver us from deadliness of sin (Apple).
3. Applied faith in Christian-way-of-life-truths delivers us from deadliness of sin (Apple + Orange)

Outline of the book:

Let every man be **swift to hear,** **slow to speak, slow to wrath.**

Prologue	Theme	Body (1:21-5:6)			Slow to speak	Slow to Wrath	Epilogue
1:1-18	1:19-20	Swift to Hear 			3:1-18	4:1-5:6	5:7-20

I.	Prologue	(1:1-18)		
II.	Thematic Statement	(1:19-20)		
III.	Swift to Hear	(1:21-2:26)		
	a. Hear and Do		(1:21-27)	[Add application]
	b. No Improper Partiality		(2:1-13)	[Add application]
	c. Faith and Works		(2:14-26)	[Add application]
IV.	Slow to Speak	(3:1-18)		
V.	Slow to Wrath	(4:1-5:6)		
VI.	Epilogue	(5:7-20)		

Dealing with the so-called anaphoric article in 2:14b

Many translations **WRONGLY** add a word in front of faith in 2:14b (underlined below)

that faith (ASV, ESV, NAB, NAS, NJB, NLT YLT); such a faith (BBE).

If, on the other hand, one applies normal NT translation procedures; James is not calling attention to any subtraction-model type ideas in 2:14b. Faith (by itself) cannot deliver us from sin. Rather, applied faith is what delivers us>

The Diatribe (the use of an imaginary objector)

- ¹⁸ But someone [*tis*] will say,
"You [James] have faith, and I [*tis*] have works. [James,] show me your [James] faith by
your works, and I [*tis*] will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You [James] believe that
there is one God. You [James] do well. Even the demons believe-- and tremble!"
²⁰ But do you [*tis*] want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?
(Corrected translation of James 2:18-19)

Some other passages that use diatribe:

Rom 9:19-20

- ¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"
²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him
who formed *it*, "Why have you made me like this?"

1 Corinthians 15:35-36

- ³⁵ But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they
come?"
³⁶ Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

Published translations THEMSELVES create problems in James 2:18-19:

All translations follow an incorrect Greek text when they place the word *without* into verse 18.

All translations do one of the following:

- (1) end objector's speech too soon [closing quote should be at end of v 19], or
(2) treat objector as an ally. [someone may *well* say...]

A PLURAL ADDRESSEES (the congregation)

¹⁴ What *does it* profit, my **brethren**, if someone [*tis*] says he has faith but does not have works?
Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you
says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which
are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works,
is dead.

B SINGULAR ADDRESSEE *TIS* to JAMES (Handing mic' to Mr. *Tis*)

- ¹⁸ But someone [*tis*] will say,
"You [James] have faith, and I [*tis*] have works." Show me your [James] faith by
your works, and I [*tis*] will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You [James] believe
that there is one God. You [James] do well. Even the demons believe-- and
tremble!

B' SINGULAR ADDRESSEE JAMES to *TIS* (Taking mic' back from Mr. *Tis*)

- ²⁰ But do you [*tis*] 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.

A' PLURAL ADDRESSEES (the congregation)

- ²⁴ You [plural] see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Unapplied faith is stagnant (dead) (2:20)

Dead does not mean non-existent

It is akin to saying in December, "The trees will be *dead* for the rest of the winter, then they will come alive and form green leaves and buds."

Abraham was justified by works when he offered Isaac (2:21)

The question expects a *Yes* answer, "Yes, he was justified by works when..."

(The question uses *ouk*, unlike James 2:14b, which used *mē*)

This speaks of a justification **BEFORE MEN**.

This does not deny that he was justified **BEFORE GOD** by faith alone (Gen 15:6)

No one (not even Abraham) is justified before God on the basis of works (Romans 4:2)

Application of truth Abraham had believed matured him (2:22)

Both Gen 15:6 (Abe believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness) and 2 Chron 20:7 (where people called Abe the friend of God) receive fulfillment in Abe offering Isaac (2:23)

There are two justifications: one by faith alone (before God) and one by works (before people) (2:24)

Corrected translation: You see that man is justified by works and not ~~only~~ by faith only



The Greek makes it clear that monon (only) is used as an adverb here, but translators treat it as if it were an adjective:

They incorrectly say that man is not justified by faith only.
That yields one justification with two criteria

They should say that man is not only justified by faith, but also by works
Two justifications: each of which has one criterion
The justification before God is by faith alone
The justification before people is by works

Rahab also was justified before people by works when she protected the Israeli spies (2:25)

A body lacking a human spirit is a dead corpse: similarly unapplied faith is dead (2:26)

As stated in comments on verse 20, dead does not mean non-existent

Note the comparison:

body without spirit
faith without works

In other words, the body is compared to faith and the spirit is compared to works.
When you hear people attempt to explain this passage, they often liken spirit to faith
and works to body. (This is FYI)

Under the addition model, adding application gives life to our faith, just as James says about Abraham in 2:22.

CONCLUSION