

**The Meaning of Faith without Works (Part 3):**

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Water of Life

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**Introduction**

**1:1: The Readers of James (Part 1):**

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greetings.

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

**1:18: The Readers of James (Part 2):**

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 1:19-20: The Outline of the Book:**

<sup>19</sup> So then, my beloved brethren, let every man

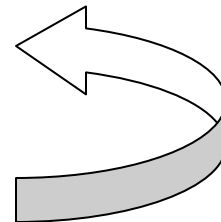
[1] be swift to hear (heed), (1:21-2:26) -----

[2] slow to speak, (3:1-18)

[3] slow to wrath: (4:1-5:6)

<sup>20</sup> For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

**In which outline section is the faith-without-works passage (2:14-26)?**



**The Issue in James 2:14: One who has faith, but does not have works. Faith will not save him.**







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

The underlined question (in Greek) is written as a leading question. Let me illustrate:

1. You are Coloradans, aren't you? (Leads to an expected "Yes!" answer?)
2. You aren't Russians, are you? (Leads to an expected "No!" answer?)

James 2:14b (as a leading question) would be: *Faith cannot save him, can it?*

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

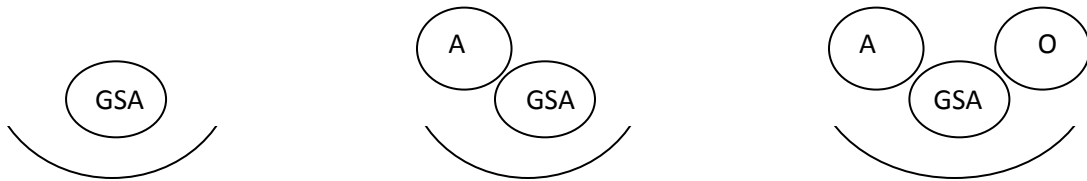
Subtraction Model		Addition Model	
<i>Faith</i>		<i>Faith</i>	
— <i>Works</i>	— 	+ ( <i>0 × Works</i> )	+ 
_____	_____	_____	_____
			

1. Most people understand “faith without works” from a subtraction model standpoint  
They say a bicycle w/o a frame goes nowhere (like faith w/o works)
2. “Faith without works” should be understood from an addition model standpoint  
A bicycle w/o a rider goes nowhere (like faith w/o works)

If a verse says “faith saves,” ask “Faith in **what** \_\_\_\_\_ **saves** \_\_\_\_\_ **whom** \_\_\_\_\_ from **what** \_\_\_\_\_?”  
In James 2, Believing **God’s word** + application of God’s word delivers **believers** from **sin** in their lives.”

**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)



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	<b>Swift to Hear</b> 	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).

Their basis for adding the word is the absence of a Greek article in 2:14a (highlighted) and the presence of a Greek article ("the") in 2:14b (highlighted).

[ ] means that the English word is supplied. Word order in Greek can differ significantly from normal English. Subscripted numbers show the order that my translation follows. Each set of lines follows the same format: Line 1 = Greek, Line 2 = interlinear, Line 3 = flowing English.

1. *Ti* \_\_\_\_\_ *to* *ophelos,* *adelphoi* *mou,* *ean* [ ] *pistin*
2. What [is] the profit, <sub>2</sub>brothers <sub>1</sub>my, if [ ] <sub>5</sub>faith
3. What [is] the profit, my brothers, if

1. *legē tis* *echein,* [ ] *erga* *de* *mē* *echē?* (2:14a)
2. <sub>2</sub>says <sub>1</sub>someone <sub>3</sub>to <sub>4</sub>have, [ ] <sub>6</sub>works <sub>1</sub>but <sub>4</sub>not <sub>2</sub>he <sub>3</sub>does <sub>5</sub>have?
3. someone says to have [e.g., "he has"] faith, but he does not have works?

1. *Mē* *dunatai* *hē* *pistis* *sōsai* *auton?* (2:14b)
2. <sub>8</sub>not <sub>7</sub>is <sub>9</sub>able <sub>5</sub>The <sub>6</sub>faith *to save* *Him, is it?*
3. The faith is not able to save him, *is it?*

### Why (since the word the is in the Greek) should it be left untranslated in 2:14b?

Subjects of Greek sentences normally have an article ("the") even with words that English uses no article ("the"). E.g., the NT often says like: "the Jesus said," "the love is;" English omits "the."

Normally, English translations follow that procedure. However, theologians often justify making a point of the article ("the") in 2:14b, because they find it surprising that James did not put an article ("the") in front of "faith" in 2:14a. That is a fair question.

Unfortunately, those who assume a subtraction model of "faith without works" **merely assume** that James did not use an article ("the") with faith in 2:14a, because he wanted to highlight his use of "the faith" in 2:14b to brand it: **SUCH A SUBSTANDARD FAITH (that lacks works)**.

I would dare say that those theologians would have benefitted from looking up each and every one of the 710 uses of *echō* ("to have") in the NT. Direct objects of *echō* rarely have an article. The few times that it does are easily explainable. In other words, my contention is that we do not expect articular direct objects for *echō*.

Direct objects for the verb *have* (Greek = *echō*). The direct objects are underlined.

"I have patience," "He has children," "He has faith," "He does not have works."

In Greek, none of these would include the article ("the"). Please note that the last two are part of James 2:14a. Note also my star (above).

Why don't theologians notice the lack of an article with works (starred above)? It is my impression that most of them do not know that the article hardly ever appears with direct objects of *echō*.

[1] *Ean*      *tais*      *glōssais*      *tōn*      *anthrōpōn*      *lalō*      *kai*      *tōn*      —  
 if                      3with 4the                      5tongues                      —                      6of 7men                      1I 2speak                      and                      —

*aggelōn,*      *agapēn*      *de*      *mē*      *echō,*      *gegona*      *chalkos*  
 of angels,      5love                      1but      3not      2I 4have.                      I have become                      [as] brass

*ēchōn*      *ē*      *kumbalon*      *alalazon.*      [2] *Kai ean*      *echō*      *prophēteian*  
 sounding or      2cymbal                      1clashing.                      And if                      I have                      prophecy

*kai*      *eidō*      *ta*      *mustēria*      *panta*      *kai*      *pasan*      *tēn*      *gnōsin,*      *kai*  
 and      I know                      —                      2mysteries                      1all      and      all                      —                      knowledge,                      and

*ean*      *echō*      *pasan*      *tēn*      *pistin*      *hōste*      *orē*      *methistanein,*  
 if                      I have                      all                      —                      faith                      so as                      3mountains                      1to 2remove,

— *agapēn*      *de*      *mē*      *echō,*      *outhen*      *eimi.*      [3] *Kai ean*  
 — 8love                      4but                      6not                      5do 7have,                      11nothing                      9I 10am.                      And      if

*psōmisō*      *panta*      *ta*      *huparchonta*      *mou,*      *kai*      *ean*      *paradō*      *to sōma*      *mou*  
 I dole out                      all                      —                      2possessions                      1my,      and      if                      I hand over                      — 1body      2my

*hina*      *kauthēsōmai,*      *agapēn*      *de*      *mē*      *echō,*      *ouden*      *ōpheloumai.*  
 that      I may be burned,                      5love                      4but                      1not                      3do 2have,                      9nothing                      6I 7am 8profited.

[4] *Hē* *agapē*      *makrothumei,*      *chrēsteuetai,*      *hē*      *agapē*      *ou*      *zēloi,*      *hē*      *agapē*  
 — love                      is patient,                      is kind,                      — love                      2not                      1does 3envy                      — love

*ou*      *perpereuetai,*      *ou*      *phusioutai,*      [5]      *ouk*      *aschēmonei,*  
 2not                      1does 3boast,                      2not                      1is puffed up,                      2not                      1does behave disgracefully,

*ou*      *zētei*      *ta*      *heautēs,*      *ou*      *paroxunetai,*  
 2not                      1seeks                      —                      its own [benefit],                      2not                      1is provoked to anger

*ou*      *logizetai*      *to*      *kakon;*      [6] *ou*      *chairei*      *epi*      *tē adikia,*  
 2not                      1does reckon                      —                      evil;                      2not 1                      rejoices over                      — unrighteousness,

*sunchairei*      *de*      *tē*      *alētheia,*      [7] *panta*      *stegei,*      *panta*      *pisteuei,*  
 2rejoices 3with 1but      the                      truth,                      2all 3things                      1bears,                      5all 6things                      4believes

*panta*      *elpizei,*      *panta*      *hupomenei.*      [8a] *Hē* *agapē*      *oudepote*      *ekpiptei.*  
 2all 3things                      1hopes, 5all 6things                      endures.                      — love                      never                      fails.

1. Arrows point to places where the direct object of *echō* lacks the article ("the") in Greek.
2. The triangle shows the one place where the direct object of *echō* has the article ("the"). However, the reason it has the article is that *pas* + the article means "all," but *pas* without the article usually means "every." Paul wanted to say "all faith," not "every faith." Thus, verse 2b is not really an exception.
3. Ovals show subjects of verbs. Each and every time in this passage that a verb has a noun for its subject, the subject has an article.

### The Diatribe (the use of an imaginary objector)

The New Testament contains examples of diatribe (where an imaginary objector is inserted). James 2:18-19 is an example:

<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> You [James] believe that  
there is one God. You [James] do well. Even the demons believe-- and tremble!"  
(Corrected translation of James 2:18-19)

Diatribe is a time-saver, since it addresses (in one letter) an objection that the readers would be likely to raise, requiring the author to send a second letter. Instead, he deals with it in the first letter through a diatribe.

Somehow, the author must signal when the objection ends and when he resumes. I like to illustrate this by thinking of a microphone. At the start of the diatribe, the author (so to speak) hands the microphone to the objector. At the end of the objection, the author takes the microphone back. The writer will often signal the start of his response by calling the objector a fool.

<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> You [James] believe that  
there is one God. You [James] do well. Even the demons believe-- and tremble!"  
<sup>20</sup> 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**

<sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"

<sup>20</sup> 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**

<sup>35</sup> But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"

<sup>36</sup> Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.

Translations create problems in James 2:18-19:

All translations follow an incorrect Greek text when they place the word *without* into verse 18. Instead, it should be *by*.

All translations do one of the following:

Many translations reject the idea that James is introducing an objector. Those translations get the length of the quotation right (to the end of verse 19), but say things like:

Someone may *well* say...

Other translations recognize that verse 18a introduces an objector, but cut off the quote long before James calls the man a fool (taking back the microphone). NKJ says:

<sup>18</sup> But someone 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. <sup>19</sup> You [James] believe that there is one God. You [James] do well. Even the demons believe-- and tremble!  
<sup>20</sup> But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

**A PLURAL ADDRESSEES (the congregation)**

<sup>14</sup> What *does it* profit, my **brethren**, if someone [*tis*] says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> 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? <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

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

<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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)**

<sup>20</sup> But do you [*tis*] want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>22</sup> Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? <sup>23</sup> 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)**

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