

James

Faith is Revealed through Works

Rejoices in Difficulty	Obeys the Word	Avoids Favoritism	Produces Works	Speaks Wisely	Produces Humility	Triumphs
1:1-18	1:19-27	2:1-13	2:14-26	3	4:1-5:6	5:7-20
Salutation Trials Temptations	Listening Anger Obedience Speech Compassion Purity	Discrimination Materialism Egalitarianism	Meeting Needs Validation	Influence Untamable Use Wisdom	Conflict Judging Presumption	Patience Prayer Confrontation
Jerusalem						
AD 44-47						

Key Word: Works

Key Verse: “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (James 1:22).

Summary Statement: Early Jewish believers in the Roman world should *show their faith through works* to replace their *hypocrisy* with good deeds in maturity and holiness.

Application:

What specific works in James do you lack that may cause others to doubt you are a Christian?

Others should see *works* resulting from our belief in Christ (James 2:14-26; cf. 1 John 2:3-6, 9-11, 18-19, 24-25; 3:24; 4:20; etc.).

James

Introduction

I. **Title** The Greek title, “Of James” (*Ἰακώβου Jacobou*), is a shortened form of the early title, “Epistle of James” (*Ἰακώβου Ἐπίστολη Jacobou Epistole*). *Jacobos* (*Ἰάκωβος* BAGD 367b, d) is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Jacob (יַעֲקֹב).

II. Authorship

A. **External Evidence:** The author's identity in James 1:1 has been proposed as any of four men named “James” in the New Testament.

1. Early church tradition ascribes the letter to James the Just (who was not an apostle) even though two other men called “James” were apostles (James the brother of John and James the son of Alphaeus). Origen, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, Augustine, and many other early writers upheld James the Just's authorship (Blue, *BKC*, 2:816).
2. Many scholars object to the traditional view by claiming that the author is pseudonymous (Kümmel, 291) or one of the other men named “James” in the New Testament (i.e., James the son of Alphaeus, James the son of Zebedee, or James the father of Judas “not Iscariot”). Jerome voiced uncertainty over the book and regarded it as published by another in the name of James, but he did cite it as Scripture (Guthrie, 737). Moffatt, Calvin, Luther, and Erasmus attributed it to another “James” due to internal “evidence” (Davids, 2, 6).

B. **Internal Evidence:** The traditional view of 1:1 is that the author is James the Just, the half-brother of Jesus who believed in Christ at his resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7) and soon led the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 21:18; Gal. 1:19). Information derived from the book itself supports this conclusion:

1. The simple introduction shows that the author did not think it necessary to identify himself by other than “James,” showing that he was a man well-known to his readers (1:1).
2. James the Just is called simply “James” in Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18 and elsewhere (cf. 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 2:12).
3. The writer addressed a significant portion of the church (i.e., the twelve tribes) in very weighty tones, indicating his authoritative position in the church (Davids, 6).
4. The letter corresponds to the language used by James the Just from Luke's record (James 2:7 with Acts 15:17; cf. Guthrie, 742).
5. A strong Semitic flavor is evident in its five Old Testament quotes (1:11; 2:8, 11, 23; 4:6), numerous indirect allusions (1:10; 2:21, 23, 25; 3:9; 4:6; 5:2, 11, 17, 18), and traces of Hebrew idioms behind the Greek forms of language (Guthrie, 741).

Some claim that a pseudonymous man authored the epistle because of the superior Greek style, the lack of claim to be Christ's brother, the absence of references to the crucifixion or resurrection, and a supposed literary dependence upon 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, and 1 Peter (Guthrie, 747-753). However, the “pseudonymous theory” must be deemed unacceptable on several grounds:

1. Ascribing the author to a forger denies the explicit statement that one named “James” wrote the epistle and thus cannot be reconciled with the divine inspiration of the book. One who accepts the doctrine of inerrancy must accept that the author was indeed one called “James.”
 2. If someone wrote in James’ name at the end of the first century as critical scholarship claims (e.g., Kümmel, 291), this would be years after his death. Certainly, the church would wonder where the epistle had been for so many years.
 3. All three other men named “James” lacked the authority this epistle demands (Hiebert, 3:38-44):
 - a. James the son of Alphaeus (James the younger) appears only in the lists of the twelve (Matt. 10:3; 27:56; Mark 3:18; 15:40) and thus was not a key figure in the Church.
 - b. James the father of Judas “not Iscariot” (Luke 6:16) also is unknown except for the fact that he was the father of one of the twelve.
 - c. James the son of Zebedee was beheaded under Herod Agrippa I in AD 44 (Acts 12:2), thus not attaining the special leadership position this epistle requires.
 4. The accusation that the epistle lacks reference to the crucifixion or resurrection ignores the fact that the emphasis of the epistle is ethical, not doctrinal.
 5. Since James knew of Paul's and Peter's oral teaching, the supposed literary dependence upon their writings is speculative. No valid reason exists to disprove that James could have penned his epistle before they wrote theirs.
- C. Conclusion: Both the external and the internal evidence show James the Just as author.

III. Circumstances

- A. Date: Traditional options for dating James fall into two early periods: AD 40-49 or AD 50-62 (Davids, 2; Guthrie, 761-764; Hiebert, 52-53).
1. External evidence:
 - a. James the Just presided as leader of the Jerusalem church from AD 40 until his martyrdom in AD 62 (Davids, 2; Guthrie, 761).
 - b. James seems to be quoted by *1 Clement* and *The Shepherd of Hermas*, and possibly was used by Paul and Peter (1 Peter 1:1 with James 1:1, etc.; Guthrie, 751-753, 763).
 2. Internal evidence:
 - a. Absence of reference to the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) and the Jewish-Gentile controversy (AD 49) support a date before AD 49.
 - b. The epistle shows primitive church organization (3:1; 5:14, 15), a Jewish tone (1:11; 2:8, 11, 23; 4:6), poverty within the church (1:27–2:13), no references to Gentiles in the church (1:1; 2:2) and persecution of Jewish Christians (1:2ff.). This supports a date before AD 49.
 - c. James' use of the word “justify” (2:21, 24, 25) had not yet acquired the technical sense of the Pauline usage (Rom. 3:20, 24, 28; Gal. 2:16, 17).

3. Conclusion: Harnack, Julicher, and the Tübingen School date the epistle in the late second century due to its “apparent synthesis of Jewish Christian and Pauline concepts” (Davids, 3). Dibelius supports a date between AD 80-130 due to a supposed usage of the letter by the author of Jude (Dibelius, 45). However, external and internal evidence support a date earlier than AD 62. (See the helpful chart of the dating held by 63 scholars in Davids, 4.) The epistle probably dates before AD 46 or AD 49 (Hiebert, 53). This would make it the earliest epistle in the New Testament. This study follows Hoehner’s date of 44-47.
- B. Origin/Recipients: The Book of James specifies its readers as “the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad” (1:1). The book’s origin is not explicitly stated, but the traditional view is that James the Just wrote a general epistle from Jerusalem to the Jewish Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire. Good support exists for this view:
1. External evidence: James died in Jerusalem in AD 62 (Jos. *Ant.* 20.9.1; cf. Whiston, 4:140).
 2. Internal evidence (Guthrie, 758-761; Davids, 13ff.):
 - a. The “twelve tribes in the dispersion” was a technical (not a metaphorical) term that described Jews who lived outside of Israel (Guthrie, 759).
 - b. The book has a Jewish flavor (1:11, 18; 2:8, 11, 21, 23; 3:6; 4:6). The recipients’ meeting place was a synagogue (2:2).
 - c. The recipients were believers since they are deemed “brethren” (1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19) holding to “the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1).

However, an alternative to the traditional view says the letter addresses “Christians as the true Israel, which lives on earth as sojourners, and has its home in heaven” (Kümmel, 287).

1. Kümmel does not cite external evidence regarding this view of origin or destination except for “parallel passages” (cf. Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:3; 1 Peter 1:1, 17; 2:11; Rev. 7:4; 14:1).
2. Internal evidence (all from Kümmel, 287):
 - a. The reference to “the twelve tribes in the dispersion” is ambiguous, and viewing the recipients only as Jewish Christians imposes too narrow a meaning.
 - b. The epistle lacks any characteristic of missionary writing.
 - c. The letter nowhere indicates that a Christian is speaking to Jews.
 - d. The impersonal attitude and lack of epistolary conclusion show that it was not an actual letter but “an essay in epistolary form, which is directed to a wide circle of readers, not to be sharply defined.”
3. Conclusion: The traditional view also agrees that the letter is addressed to a wide readership, but the technical sense of James 1:1 reveals this readership to be Jews. Internal evidence conclusively argues for Jewish recipients, and Kümmel’s view has no external support (the “parallel passages” are taken out of context and thus do not distinguish Israel and the Church). These reasons indicate that the epistle was written from Jerusalem to Christian Jews outside Israel (Guthrie, 761).

Therefore, the internal and external evidence indicates that James wrote from Jerusalem to Jewish Christians outside of Israel. Perhaps Peter wrote to Jewish

Christians in the West (1 Peter 1:1), whereas James addressed Jewish Christians of the Eastern Empire in Babylon and Mesopotamia (Jones, 319; Blue, *BKC*, 2:816). Others believe these Jewish congregations were in Syria (Hiebert, 50; cf. Acts 11:19).

- C. Occasion: This epistle does not explicitly state its purpose, but the internal evidence reveals much about the recipients to help us discern the occasion. The readers met regularly in the synagogue (2:2), where the rich among them (1:10) exploited (2:1-13) the poor within the congregation (1:9; 5:1-6). This led to complaining (4:11-12; 5:9-10) and quarreling against one another (4:1-3). The recipients also evidenced a worldly (4:4-10) and materialistic outlook (4:13-17) that lacked compassion (2:15-16), so James wrote to show that faith shown through good deeds justifies its validity before men (2:14-26).

These deplorable conditions in the church prompted James to write a general epistle as a plea for vital Christianity. The purpose is not a doctrinal but an ethical (practical) treatise to force believers to examine whether their attitudes and actions demonstrate the reality of their faith in Christ. Its key concepts may be summarized in the appeal to “be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (1:22) as well as the declaration that “faith without works is useless” (2:20b).

IV. Characteristics

- A. The Letter of James is unique when viewed from a literary standpoint:

1. Structure: The book is challenging to outline because it contains several pithy sayings. For this reason, it has been called “The Proverbs of the New Testament.” A typical critical view says, “Even though there may be many good sayings in it, it is unorganized and Jewish, and therefore not an apostolic writing” (Kümmel, 285).
2. Emphases
 - a. *Ethical Emphasis*. Luther called James “a right strawy epistle in comparison with [Paul’s Epistles], for it has no evangelical manner about it.” He was unimpressed with the epistle’s lack of emphasis on doctrinal teaching and said it conflicted with the Pauline epistles by supporting the Papist view of justification by works (Hiebert, 3:34-35; Kümmel, 285). While the epistle contains little formal theology, Luther’s criticism is unjustified in that it does contain several doctrinal statements (1:12-13, 17-18; 2:1, 10-13, 19; 3:9; 4:5; 5:7-9; *TTTB*, 466). Its ethical emphasis and pastoral admonition are evident in that James uses imperative verbs more frequently than in any other NT book (Carson, *Intro. to the NT*, 415). In its short 108 verses, there are more than 50 direct commands!
 - b. *Jewish Emphasis*. A strong Semitic flavor appears in its five Old Testament quotes (1:11; 2:8, 11, 23; 4:6), numerous indirect allusions (e.g., 1:10; 2:21, 23, 25; 3:9; 4:6; 5:2, 11, 17, 18), and traces of Hebrew idioms behind the Greek forms of language (Guthrie, 741).
 - c. *Emphasis on the Sermon on the Mount*. The book contains many similarities with the teaching of Jesus (Guthrie, 743-744), and the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7) in particular (Blue, *BKC*, 2:818). See these notes, 274a.
 - d. *Emphasis on Nature*. James has at least 30 references to nature (Blue, *BKC*, 2:817).
 - e. *Excellent Greek*. DeWette felt that James the Lord’s brother could not pen such superior Greek and thus doubted the letter’s authenticity (Kümmel, 285). However, this neglects that James had been leading the Jerusalem church for 10-20 years and had not been a carpenter for some time. It also assumes the false belief that carpenters were uneducated.

3. **Unity:** James has been accused of lacking “continuity of thought” (Dibelius, 1), but this is unwarranted. Each of the five chapters calls for maturity and holiness of life in trials, service, speech, submission, and sharing, respectively.
- B. James uses words for “save” five times (1:21; 2:14; 4:12; 5:15, 20). None relate to salvation but instead “to save the life” from premature death. See Zane Hodges, *The Epistle of James* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1994), 41.
- C. The interpretation of the “faith without works” section (2:14-26) has been much debated, with many (e.g., Luther) supposing that it conflicts with the Pauline teaching of justification by faith (cf. Rom. 3:28). Some even advocate that Paul wrote a polemic against James or vice-versa (Kümmel, 286). Still, these differences are best understood by two distinct meanings of “justification.” The Pauline concept of justification refers to one's relationship with God, whereas James' earlier meaning of justification relates to one's relationship with man. The contrasts can be charted in this manner:

Romans vs. James on Justification

	<u>Romans</u>	<u>James</u>
Author:	Paul	James
Date:	AD 56	AD 44-48
Justification is a	technical term	non-technical term
Justification is before	God (vertical)	Man (horizontal)
The faith is	at the beginning of salvation	after salvation
The emphasis is on	faith	works

See the helpful article by Robert V. Rakestraw, “James 2:14-26: Does James Contradict the Pauline Soteriology?” *Criswell Theological Review* 1 (Fall 1986): 31-50; cf. review by Mark L. Bailey in *Bib Sac* 144 (April-June 1987): 220-21.

- D. The early church debated the canonicity of James (especially the Western Church) until it was universally recognized following the third Council of Carthage in AD 397 (Hiebert, 3:33).
1. Early external evidence varies on the authority of the Epistle. Origen, the first to mention the letter, clearly recognized James as Scripture, and the work is quoted or alluded to by Clement (ca. 30-100), Hermas (ca. 110-140), and Irenaeus (ca. 140-203). However, the following canons omit the writing: Muratorian, Marcion, Syriac, and African. Eusebius lists it in his disputed books (Antilegomena) but cites the work as genuine and claims that it had “been publicly used with the rest in most of the churches” (Guthrie, 737).

2. Several reasons existed for this hesitancy to accept James as authentic (Hiebert, 3:32):
 - a) The Epistle remained unknown to many early churches, having been written from Jerusalem to Jews of the East Dispersion without as broad an appeal as Paul's epistles (Guthrie, 739).
 - b) Some believers debated whether the author was an apostle.
 - c) It seemed to contradict Paul's teaching.
3. Conclusion: Although historically the epistle was in question, this arose primarily from the uncertainty of its author, not of its authenticity (Hiebert, 3:36). Both internal and external evidence uphold the fourth-century decision to regard James as a genuine apostolic epistle worthy of its place in the New Testament canon.

Argument

Because of its many subjects, the Epistle of James is very difficult to outline. Yet its theme is unambiguous: living faith can be shown only through active works.

These works include a joyful attitude during trials and temptations (1:1-18), obedience to God's Word (1:19-27), impartiality without judging social status (2:1-13), good deeds in general (2:14-26), wise control of one's tongue (ch. 3), humility rather than worldliness (4:1—5:6), and finally, patient and prayerful suffering (5:7-20). Topics in the letter change abruptly but are introduced with the phrase "my brothers" (1:2, 19; 2:1, 14; 3:1; 4:11; 5:7, 19), the words "now listen" (4:13; 5:1), or with a question (4:1; 5:13).

James' main concern is that his readers put away their hypocritical, double-minded dispositions (1:8; 3:10) to grow in maturity and holiness. In effect, he says, "If you say you believe in Christ, then *act* like it!"

Synthesis

Faith revealed through works

1:1-18	Rejoices in difficulty
1:1	Salutation
1:2-12	Trials
1:13-18	Temptations
1:19-27	Obeys God's Word
1:19-25	Listening, anger, obedience
1:26-27	Speech, compassion, purity
2:1-13	Avoids favoritism
2:1-4	Doesn't discriminate
2:5-7	Recognizes transience of wealth
2:8-13	Recognizes all equal
2:14-26	Produces works
2:14-17	Meets needs
2:18-26	Validates itself before men
3	Speaks wisely
3:1-6	Recognizes the influence of the tongue
3:7-8	Recognizes tongue as untamable
3:9-12	Uses tongue for good, not evil
3:13-18	Produces wisdom for proper speech
4:1—5:6	Produces humility
4:1-12	Not conflict/judging
4:13—5:6	Not presumption of the future
5:7-20	Triumphs
5:7-12	in patient suffering
5:13-18	in believing prayer
5:19-20	in loving confrontation

Outline

Summary Statement for the Book

Early Jewish believers in the Roman world should *show their faith through works* to replace their *hypocrisy* with good deeds in maturity and holiness.

- I. Faith rejoices in difficulty with humility and patience rather than blame God (1:1-18).
 - A. The half-brother of Jesus writes Jewish believers with the humility he'll soon explain (1:1).

A Key Issue:**What does genuine faith look like during trials?****When the going gets tough, how can you tell if you have *real* faith?**

How can I persevere with joy during trials? (Here's another outline similar to that below...)

- I. Remember God's *purpose* for trials is to develop Christ's character in you (1:2-4).
- II. Remember to *pray* for wisdom in faith (1:5-8).
- III. Remember your *position* before God (1:9-11).
- IV. Remember God's *promise* of reward (1:12).
- V. Remember to *praise* God for his gifts since temptations come from us—not him (1:13-18).

B. Faith tested in trials produces perseverance when received joyfully and humbly (1:2-18).

1. Faith accepts trials with joy because it believes that God allows testing to develop perseverance and maturity (1:2-4).
2. Faith accepts trials with prayer for wisdom from God because he delights in giving wisdom to believers who ask him in faith (1:5-8).
3. Faith accepts trials with humility because God's approval is superior to wealth during difficulty (1:9-11).
4. Faith accepts trials with hope of reward because God blesses perseverance and love for him (1:12).
5. Faith accepts trials without blaming God because God gives only good gifts (1:13-18).
 - a) Faith tested in temptations stems from one's own evil desires (1:13-15).
 - b) Since only good comes from God, don't blame him for trials (1:16-18).

Main Idea of 1:2-18...**We can accept trials with joy only by placing our trust in God—not in the circumstances.**

- Which do you want more: smooth sailing or being like Jesus?
- Which do you want more: physical comforts or spiritual growth?
- Which do you want more: wealth or godliness?
- What specific character trait of Christ is God trying to build in you now through a trial?

II. Faith obeys God's Word in practical ways (1:19-27).

There is a danger in listening to many sermons!

Subject: So, what practical ways can you let God's Word take root in you?

A. Prepare yourself to accept what the Bible says (1:19-21).

1. Be known as a great listener (1:19a).
2. Be more eager to listen than to speak (1:19b).
3. Get rid of anger (1:19c-20).
4. Get rid of anything else that prevents God's Word from taking root in you (1:21).

B. Don't just listen to the Word—obey it (1:22-25)!

1. Don't just listen to the Bible because listening alone is deceptive (1:22a).
2. We must obey Scripture rather than just listen to it (1:22b).
3. The Bible is a mirror that shows us what we need to change (1:23-25).
 - a) What not to do—Don't ignore the sin that Scripture reveals in you (1:23-24).
 - (1) When we don't respond to God's Word, we quickly forget our sin (1:23a).
 - (2) Men tend to glance into a mirror and then forget to make any improvements (1:23b-24).
 - b) What to do—Gaze intently at Scripture and get blessed for acting on it (1:25).

C. Obey the Word in speech, compassion, and purity (1:26-27).

1. If you don't control your speech, you're self-deceived and useless for God (1:26).
2. To please God, you must care for widows, orphans, and other weak persons (1:27a).
3. To please God, you must keep yourself from getting stained by worldly values (1:27b).

DO YOU AGREE?

1. Our church should have only people from our own country on certain committees.
2. Men in church leadership should at least be middle class.
3. Our pastor should be a Westerner (or any other specific nationality).
4. It's OK to reserve better seats at church for certain people.
5. Westerner pastors should earn more than our people with equal experience and roles.

III. Faith avoids favoring the rich (2:1-13).

A. Christians should never favor the rich (2:1).

B. Five reasons exist not to favor the wealthy (2:2-13).

1. Favoring the rich *indicates impure motives* (2:2-4).
2. Favoring the rich *insults the poor* whom God honors (2:5-6a).
3. Favoring the rich *indulges oppressors* more than the oppressed (2:6b-7).
4. Favoring the rich *ignores God's command to love others* as we love ourselves (2:8-11).
5. Favoring the rich *incurs God's judgment* (2:12-13).

Action Plan:

1. What area of prejudice do you see in your life through this study?
2. How can you resolve any problems your prejudice may have caused?
3. How can you avoid this kind of favoritism in the future?

IV. Faith produces works that show otherwise unseen trust in God (2:14-26).**TO GET YOU THINKING...**

1. Do all true Christians die in fellowship with the Lord? In other words, do you think everyone perseveres in his or her faith, or do some fall away? What is the critical issue here?

2. Does James contradict Paul on justification by faith?

3. Martin Luther Thought Little of James

- A. Faith shows itself in deeds such as giving food and clothing to needy believers (2:14-17).
 1. Faith without good deeds cannot preserve the life of anyone (2:14; cf. 1:21).
 2. Practical Argument: Words of blessing without compassion provide no needs (2:15-16).
 3. Likewise, faith without actions is sterile (“dead”) to help anyone (2:17).

- B. Faith shown through good deeds justifies its validity before people (2:18-26).
 1. Rational Argument: Faith shows itself in actions, but only admitting there is one God is even practiced by demons (2:18-19).
 2. Biblical Argument: Two OT examples prove faith is seen in works (2:20-25).
 - a) Abraham showed his faith by offering Isaac on the altar (2:20-24).
 - (1) Abraham’s near sacrifice of Isaac proved his faith genuine (2:20-23).
 - (2) Christians validate their faith by works since faith alone cannot be seen (2:24).
 - b) Rahab showed her faith by protecting Israel’s spies since faith apart from works would not convince others (2:25-26).

Do you agree?

Circle "A" if you Agree, "U" if you are Unsure, or "D" if you Disagree with each statement:

- A U D 1. All speech is good or bad but never simply neutral
- A U D 2. There is no such thing as a "white lie" (a lie told with good motives)
- A U D 3. A person's tongue will always reveal whether that person is a Christian
- A U D 4. A mature believer will eventually learn to control his or her tongue

After you finish, discuss your answers with someone near you, OK?

V. Faith speaks wisely with good instead of evil purposes (James 3).

- A. The tongue is small but tremendously influential (3:1-6).
1. Don't clamor to teach; you will have stricter judgment for your greater influence (3:1).
 2. Speech cannot be controlled entirely like our bodies (3:2).
 3. Both horse and ship are controlled for good by tiny objects—bit and rudder (3:3-4).
 4. Small objects—our tongue and body—can cause havoc and a forest fire (3:5-6).
- B. Everything can be tamed but the tongue (3:7-8).
1. All living creatures can be tamed by man (3:7).
 2. However, no one can tame his speech since it is evil and poisonous to others (3:8).
- C. Faith uses the tongue for good rather than evil purposes (3:9-12).
1. Every tongue praises God and curses men, though it should be consistent (3:9-10).
 2. Springs, trees, and the tongue all have results consistent with their source (3:11-12).
- D. Faith produces wisdom that is necessary for proper speech (3:13-18).
1. God's wisdom is shown in a humility that benefits others (3:13).
 2. Worldly wisdom is shown in pride and envy that hurts others (3:14-16).
 3. God's wisdom is pure and peace-loving to benefit relationships (3:17-18).

Why Do We Fight?

Do you agree?

Circle "A" if you Agree, "U" if you are Unsure, or "D" if you Disagree with each statement:

- A U D 1. The root cause of all sin is pride.
- A U D 2. If two persons are truly humble, they will not argue.
- A U D 3. Judging is an opinion that lacks basic facts, while discerning has most facts.
- A U D 4. One cannot discern properly without humility.

Now that you've finished, please discuss your answers with someone near you, OK?

What's the difference between discerning (which is good) and judging (which is bad)? How can we make sure we discern but not judge others?

Discernment	Judgment
Commanded by God (1 Cor. 11:31)	Prohibited by God (Matt. 7:1; Rom. 4:13; James 4:11-12)
Asks questions to consider all key factors (Prov. 25:2)	Accepts hearsay at face value (Prov. 14:15)
Looks for a comparable problem in one's own experience (Matt. 7:5)	Makes no personal application or self-evaluation (Matt. 7:3)

The chart above is adapted significantly from Bill Gothard, *Basic Seminar Textbook* (n.p.; Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, 1986), 176.

VI. Faith produces humility that avoids worldliness (4:1–5:6).

A. Faith produces humility instead of worldly church conflict from judging others (4:1-12).

1. Avoid evil desires in pride but instead humbly submit to God (4:1-10).

a) Evil desires between believers lead to many bad results (4:1-3).

(1) *Quarrels* between believers stem from evil desires (4:1).

(2) *Envy* (desire for what someone else has) comes from our evil passions (4:2a).

(3) *Murderous thoughts or actions* come from our evil desires (4:2b).

(4) *Coveting* what another possesses is from evil inner desires (4:2c).

(5) *Failure to pray* leads to not receiving what we need (4:2d).

(6) *Materialistic prayers* do not receive answers from God (4:3).

b) God strengthens us to obey him [grace] when we turn our pride into humility (4:4-6).

(1) *Worldliness* makes us God's enemies (4:4).

(2) The Old Testament shows our tendency towards envy (4:5).

(3) God fights against the proud but strengthens the humble (4:6).

c) Submission to God leads to him honoring us (4:7-10).

(1) Submitting to God and resisting Satan cause the devil to stop tempting us (4:7).

(2) Drawing near to God with a pure and repentant heart shows submission (4:8-9).

(3) The result of true humility is being honored by God (4:10).

2. Do not judge other believers as this questions God's judging ability (4:11-12).

a) Never slander other believers (4:11a).

b) Do not judge others because slander is based on pride (4:11b-12).

(1) Slander rejects "love your neighbor as you love yourself" (4:11b; cf. Lev. 19:18).

(2) Do not judge others because God alone is the Giver, Interpreter, and Enforcer of the law of love (4:12).

- B. Faith trusts God rather than presuming on the future like the rich selfishly do (4:13–5:6).
1. Never make prideful plans but humbly submit all plans to God's will (4:13-17).

NIV James 4:13 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." ¹⁴Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

- a) Please make the following observations on the text above:
 - (1) Circle all the connecting or contrasting words.
 - (2) Underline each verb.
 - (3) Highlight the references to time in another way (e.g., color them).
- b) What is the difference between the declaration of verse 13 and wise planning? Is James saying we should not make plans? Why or why not?
- c) Wouldn't the uncertainty of life (v. 14) argue for having a plan instead of not planning at all? Explain your reasoning.
- d) What are some signs of submitting our plans to God's will (v. 15)? Can you give an example from your experience?
- e) How does the sin of verse 17 fit the context?
- f) What plans are you currently making in your life?
- g) How should this advice from James change the way you plan?

2. God will judge the prideful rich for oppressing others (5:1-6).

NLT James 5:1 Look here, you rich people, weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. ²Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. ³Your gold and silver have become worthless. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh in hell. This treasure you have accumulated will stand as evidence against you on the day of judgment. ⁴For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. The wages you held back cry out against you. The cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. ⁵You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every whim. Now your hearts are nice and fat, ready for the slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and killed good people who had no power to defend themselves against you.

- Does James say that all wealthy people fit this description? Why or why not?

Four Types of People:

- Spiritually poor and materially poor
- Spiritually rich and materially rich
- Spiritually rich and materially poor
- Spiritually poor and materially rich

James writes this final group in this section.

Questions:

- Which wealthy people are noted here—believers, unbelievers, or both?
- List results of loving money and characteristics of the godless wealthy:

Troubles of Riches

Sins of the Rich

- Would you classify yourself as a wealthy person? Why or why not?

Outline

- a) The wealthy should repent to avoid the results of their sin (5:1).
- b) The future troubles of the rich should cause them to repent (5:2-3b).
 - (1) Their wealth will be lost (5:2a).
 - (2) Their nice clothes will be replaced with rags (5:2b).
 - (3) Their investments will be worthless (5:3a).
 - (4) Their retirement savings will not help them while in pain in hell (5:3b).
- c) God will judge the sins of the rich (5:3c-6).
 - (1) Their cheating their employees will earn God's judgment (5:3c-4).
 - (2) Their money spent only on luxuries will harden their hearts for judgment (5:5).
 - (3) Their oppression of good but powerless people will be used against them (5:6).

To Bring Home:

Are you among the rich or the poor of the world? How do you know this?

What luxuries or conveniences could you share with others? Think of things you tend to waste or not put to greater use.

What should you do with James's hard-hitting words?

VII. Faith triumphs in patience, prayer, and confrontation until Jesus returns (5:7-20).

How Patient Are You?

Check how often the following apply to you:

0	1	2	3	4	5
Never (or only once)	Very Rarely (hardly ever)	Seldom (infrequently)	Sometimes (occasionally)	Usually (often)	Always (or almost always)

- _____ I get frustrated when using a slow computer.
- _____ When God doesn't answer my prayers, I give up praying that request.
- _____ At the grocery store, I still use the express lane when I have more than six items.
- _____ I stand as close as possible to be first in doors on lifts, trains, buses, etc.
- _____ I expect an answer to my emails within 24 hours.
- _____ When calling someone, I hang up the phone after three rings.
- _____ I get angry when a driver cuts me off (when driving, in a taxi, or walking).
- _____ I get annoyed when forced to take self-evaluation tests like this one.

_____ Total

Add up your score...

- 0 You are either Jesus or a liar
- 1-5 You are probably still lying or need to take a self-awareness inventory instead
- 6-10 You have exceptional patience, but Jesus still wins
- 11-15 You must have grown up in the city
- 16-25 Your hard work has paid off, and you are worthy of the title *kiasu* (dialect for "fear of falling behind")
- 26+ Seek help! Our church counselor might be able to help you.

A. Faith triumphs through patient suffering until Christ's return (5:7-12).

1. The farmer is an excellent example of patience until Christ's coming (5:7-9).

a) Be patient in trials until Christ returns like a farmer waits for rain before his harvest (5:7-8).

b) Complaining about believers is impatience that Jesus could judge at any minute (5:9)!

2. The prophets and Job exemplify patience (5:10-11).
 - a) OT prophets are great models of patient suffering (5:10).
 - Isaiah served 65 years during the fall of Israel.
 - Jeremiah served 47 years during the fall of Judah.
 - b) Believers who persevere are blessed (5:11a).
 - c) Job is known for his perseverance (5:11b).
 - Job was not commended for his patience but for his perseverance.
 - Job was not patient—Job 3; 12:1-3; 16:1-3; 21:4; cf. NIVSB text note.
 - d) Job's restoration shows us the Lord's compassion and mercy (5:11c).
3. During trials, don't make rash promises but keep your word (5:12).

How about you?

What area of your life tests your patience the most?

What practical pointer(s) from this passage can you take to be more patient?

SIN & SICKNESS, PAIN & PRAYER

What do you think about prayer for sickness and healing? In front of each of these statements, put "A" if you agree, "U" if you're unsure, and "D" if you disagree.

1. If people are sick, they are not trusting God for healing.
2. A prayer in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him.
3. "Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4,5; Matthew 8:16,17; James 5:14-16)" (*The Assemblies of God Constitution in its Statement of Fundamental Truths*, section 12).

B. Faith triumphs through believing prayer for those with weak faith (5:13-18).

1. A troubled believer should commit his trials to prayer (5:13a).
2. A joyful believer should praise God in song (5:13b).
3. A spiritually weak believer whose elders pray for and anoint with oil will be restored (5:14-15).
 - a) What kind of sickness (*asthenei* ἀσθενεῖ) is meant here (5:14a)?
 - "Weak faith or weak conscience" (cf. Acts 20:35; Rom 6:19; 14:1; 1 Cor 8:9-12; Ron Blue, "James," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, eds. Walvoord & Zuck, 2:834)
 - While this word can refer to weakness of any form, others say the context indicates illness (Peter Davids, *Commentary on James*, NIGTC, 192).
 - b) Is this anointing medicinal (rubbing) or spiritual (5:14b)?
 - c) Does the "prayer of faith" believe God **can** heal or **will** heal (5:15a)?

- d) Will this procedure always result in healing (5:15b)? Why or why not?
- e) How can the prayer of others result in forgiveness (5:15c)?
4. Mutual confession of sin and prayer among believers can heal sickness (5:16a).
- How have you seen this public confession in a local church setting?
 - What resulted from the confession that shows why this is so important?
5. Elijah praying to stop and start rain showed how God answered believing prayer (5:16b-18).

Prayer and You

I used to think this section of James referred to sickness, but now I see that it's more on prayer.

1. Projecting yourself twenty years into the future, when you look back on this time of your life, which area do you think you will wish you had committed more to prayer?
2. Would *your* "prayer of faith" relate more to trusting God for healing physically, spiritually, or emotionally? How so? What would God have you do about this?

A Big Problem: The Individualism of Our Day

1. What examples of self-centeredness do you see in society today?
2. How is *concern for self* rather than *others* evident in the church?

James 5:19-20

¹⁹My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, ²⁰remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

- C. Faith triumphs through the loving confrontation of erring believers (5:19-20).
1. Restore believers who fall into heresy in doctrine or practice (5:19).
 - a) How do these last two verses in the book relate to verses 13-18?
 - b) Could this wanderer *think* he is a Christian, but his faith is not genuine (a possibility suggested by *The NIV Study Bible*)? Why or why not?
 2. Restoring errant saints saves them from premature physical death and additional sins (5:20).
 - a) Have you ever helped turn a Christian from sin or had someone do this to you? Share your story.
 - b) When have you seen a believer dealt with by God so severely that God took him to heaven early (see 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 John 5:16)?

Making this Passage Real:

Whom do I need to help restore?

How will I do it?

Gary Stanley, "Oh, Brother!" *Worldwide Challenge* (April 1982): 32-33 (1 of 2)

Bible Study

Oh, Brother!

by Gary Stanley

How would you like to be the little brother of someone who seemed practically perfect? You follow him through school; he probably made all A's. Whenever you get into an argument with him, you're always wrong. No matter what you do, no matter how hard you try, you always fall short of your brother's mark. Oh, you may be able to run faster or drive a nail straighter, but in the main qualities of life (character, credibility and confidence), you will never better your elder brother. You see, he never swears when he bangs his thumb with a hammer!

To make matters worse, he becomes a popular speaker and begins to imply that he is God incarnate. How embarrassing! Imagine trying to explain your brother to your friends. Finally, your family is disgraced when he is executed like a common criminal.

James had the dubious honor of being the little brother of Jesus.¹ Of course, James also had the privilege of living in the same household as Jesus. They went to the same school, ate at the same table, and Mary watched over them both. Who more than James could view the Christ under such close scrutiny?

Such is the background of the author to the "twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad,"² the writer of the Epistle of James. It has been called everything from a "right strawy epistle"³ to the Proverbs of the New Testament.

The following interview with James is an undated (and unconfirmed) document found recently in a file drawer.

Garimus: I've always wondered, James, did you ever think that there was something special about Jesus when you both were growing up?

James: Every boy thinks his big brother is special, but not in the way you mean. He was always different I suppose, but remember, I grew up with Him and life with Jesus was normal for me. But while familiarity can enhance many things, worship isn't usually one of them.

Garimus: Well, what did your family think when Jesus began to receive so much publicity?

James: I'm not sure any of us gave it much thought at first. Jesus reacted pretty strongly to John the Baptist's preaching,⁴ but many others were also moved by John's words. There were some wild rumors about some wine at a wedding feast in Cana.⁵ But, the Sabbath Jesus stood and read from the scroll in the synagogue of Nazareth—that was something else. He claimed that the portion of Scripture He had just read about the Messiah was fulfilled in their hearing. It started a riot! Our friends and neighbors were so incensed that they tried to throw Jesus off a cliff for blasphemy.⁶ After that they were glad He moved to Capernaum.⁷ We tried to tone Him down a couple of times, but He wouldn't listen.⁸

Garimus: Did you try to keep track of Him?

James: I didn't have to. Everyone was constantly telling us what Jesus had said or done.⁹ I couldn't escape news of Him.

Garimus: I can see why not. Did you ever go and see Him for yourself?

James: Once. Jesus was speaking to a large crowd from the crest of a hill.¹⁰ Everyone was so quiet that you could hear every word a long way off. I sat under a tree at the edge of the crowd and listened. I can still hear His exact words to this day. Oh, did He make me uncomfortable! My pride wouldn't let me accept what He said, but my heart wouldn't let me forget.¹¹ It got so I avoided all possible contact with Him.

Garimus: When did you change your mind?

James: I never did.¹² Jesus changed my mind after he changed my heart. The trial and crucifixion were a nightmare.¹³ Mother insisted on being there.¹⁴ My brothers¹⁵ and I all refused to take her, but she went anyway. Then, as if His death weren't enough, rumors began that Jesus had risen from the dead.¹⁶ And that's when it happened . . .

Garimus: What happened?

James: Jesus appeared to me. My big brother presented me with conclusive proof of his claims—Himself.¹⁷

Garimus: In light of your acceptance of Jesus as Lord, it seems odd that you make no mention of being His brother in your letter. Why didn't you make more out of the fact?

James: I certainly didn't glory in being His brother during His earthly life. It hardly seems appropriate to claim such a title now. A "bond-servant of God"¹⁸ is what I am, and that is more honor than I can possibly bear.

Garimus: Still, you became the head of the church at Jerusalem.¹⁹

Gary Stanley, "Oh, Brother!" *Worldwide Challenge* (April 1982): 32-33 (2 of 2)

James: True, but my position wasn't based on nepotism. All of us enter into His service the same way, by faith alone.

Garimus: That brings up an interesting question. You are perhaps best known for your quote "faith without works is dead."²⁰ How do you square that with your comment about "faith alone"?

James: I was wondering when we'd get around to that question. It's amusing that my little letter, almost totally devoid of theology, has become such a watershed for theological speculation. Thank God we are saved by proper faith and not our theology!

Do you think it odd that Paul's affirmation of faith²¹ and my insistence of works could be fast friends? Don't forget it was Paul who came to me for advice, not once but three times.²² Paul, Barnabas and I, with several others, resolved much of this issue at the Council of Jerusalem.²³

Garimus: And what was the consensus of that council?

James: That Jewish works and ritual aren't essential for salvation. I think that one of my more favorable critics summed up proper faith quite nicely when he said, "Faith alone saves, but saving faith is never alone."²⁴

Garimus: I think I understand. Were the council's findings what prompted you to write your epistle?

James: No. I actually wrote that letter several years before the meeting. A great persecution had broken out against the church in Jerusalem. Stephen was stoned, Saul was imprisoning everyone, and the rest had been scattered abroad.²⁵ Some practical help was called for. No one had to be convinced of the theological implications of tribulation. They wanted to know how to deal with it and a host of other problems they now had to face without the support of their home church.

Garimus: Is there an underlying theme to your advice for all of these various problems?

James: There certainly is! The best advice in the world is worth nothing if it isn't acted on.²⁶ I could recite Jesus' Sermon on the Mount from memory, but it wasn't until I began to act on what He said (years later) that it made any real difference.²⁷

Garimus: And what's the most obvious difference your active faith has produced?

James: Well, they don't call me Old Camel Knees²⁸ for nothing.

Garimus: Old Camel Knees!

James: It refers to a lifetime of kneeling in prayer. Pastoring a church will drive anyone to his knees in prayer. Prayer is perhaps the only thing that truly combines faith and works. I'm not sure it can be done in any other way. I've never seen a successful petitioner who wasn't ready to take an active part in the answer to each of his prayers.²⁹

Garimus: One last question. Tradition claims that you were martyred in Jerusalem by stoning at the hands of Ananus, the high priest.³⁰ Would you care to comment on this bit of tradition?

James: No, I don't see any reason to change that tradition at this time.

For personal study and reflection:

There's an old saying, "You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool Mom (or your brother)." That James was able to accept his half-brother as the Son of God is a powerful testimony.

James' view of the Christian life is equally unique and demanding. Like James, most of us know far more than we are willing to act on. What nickname (such as James' nickname, Old Camel Knees) would you like to represent your life of faith? What specific suggestions does James give that can make your nickname recognizable to those around you. Which ones can you begin to implement today?

1. Mark 6:3. Actually James was the half-brother of Jesus (James' father was Joseph), and there were three other brothers and at least two sisters; 2. James 1:1; 3. Martin Luther's *General Preface to the New Testament of 1522*; 4. Matthew 3:13-4:11, Luke 4:1-15; 5. John 2:1-11; 6. Luke 4:16-30; 7. Matthew 4:14-8. John 7:3-6, Matthew 12:46-50; 9. Luke 4:37; 10. Matthew 5:1ff; 11. There are more than 20 apparent allusions to the Sermon on the Mount in James; 12. John 7:5; 13. John 18:12ff, Luke 22:54ff, Mark 14:53ff, Matthew 26:57; 14. John 19:26; 15. Their names are Judas, James and Simon (Mark 6:3); 16. Matthew 28:1ff, Mark 16:1ff, Luke 24:1ff, John 20:1ff, 1 Corinthians 15:4-6; 17. 1 Corinthians 15:7; 18. James 1:1; 19. James' leadership is clear from passages like Acts 12:17; 15:13-19; 21:18; 20. James 2:17,26; 21. Romans 3:28; 5:1; Ephesians 2:8; 22. Galatians 1:19, Acts 15:2, 21:18; 23. Acts 15:1-19; Galatians 2:9; 24. John Calvin; 25. Acts 8:1-3; 26. James 1:22; 27. Acts 1:14 indicates that Jesus' entire family believed in Him after His resurrection and was there on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1); 28. Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, 2:23; 29. James 2:15,16; 30. Josephus' *Antiquities*, 20:9.1.

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Applying the Commands in James

Andy Lew, Malcolm Goh, Raymond Ang, Yoo Ji Eun
(Group Presentation in NT Survey, 7 Feb 2003), p. 9

APPLICATION

James gives us some imperatives that exhort us to Christian maturity and holiness of life.

Verse Ref.	Imperatives	Personal Application
1:16	Do not be deceived	When tempted, I must not deceive myself and say that God is tempting me.
1:21	Get rid of moral filth	I must not let the moral filth of anger make me say careless words but let God's word be firmly planted in me.
1:22	Do not merely listen	I must do what the Word says and not merely listen only.
2:1,5	Do not show favoritism	I must treat everyone with equity regardless of wealth, race or authority in my work and ministry.
2:12	Speak and act as those going to be judged	I must speak and act with mercy knowing that God will judge.
2:18	Show me your faith	I must show my faith demonstrated in good deeds. To render assistance to the poor and needy.
3:10	Praise and cursing from the same mouth; this should not be	I must be conscious of the words I speak and thereby control my tongue
4:7	Submit yourselves to God	I must submit to God whenever the world tempts me and the devil will flee
4:8	Draw near to God	I must draw near to God in my daily devotion that He might draw close to me
4:10	Humble yourselves	When I am in any position of authority, I must not be arrogant but humble myself before God.
4:11	Do not slander	I must not slander and speak against anyone but endeavor to preserve the unity of saints.
4:15	Do not boast	Any plans that I make must be committed to God in prayer.
5:7	Be patient	I must be patient when suffering and look forward to the blessed hope of Christ return
5:9	Do not grumble	If I am unhappy over something, I will not grumble and spread discord amongst others.
5:12	Do not swear	I must make sound decisions and responsible choices without the need to swear
5:16	Confess your sins	Whenever I fall into sin, I must admit my sins and seek prayers that I may be restored.

References to Nature in the Book of James

1:6	"wave of the sea"
1:6	"tossed by the wind"
1:10	"wild flower"
1:11	"sun . . . with scorching heat"
1:11	"the plant . . . blossom falls"
1:17	"the heavenly lights"
1:17	"shifting shadows"
1:18	"firstfruits"
3:3	"bits into the mouths of horses"
3:4	"ships . . . driven by strong winds"
3:5	"a great forest is set on fire by a small spark"
3:6	"a fire"
3:7	"animals, birds, reptiles, and creatures of the sea"
3:8	"deadly poison"
3:11	"fresh water and salt water"
3:12	"can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs?"
3:18	"sow in peace [and] raise a harvest of righteousness"
4:14	"you are a mist"
5:2	"moths have eaten your clothes"
5:3	"gold and silver are corroded"
5:4	"workmen who mowed your fields"
5:4	"the cries of the harvesters"
5:5	"fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter"
5:7	"the farmer waits for the . . . crop"
5:7	"how patient he is for the fall and spring rains"
5:14	"anoint him with oil"
5:17	"prayed . . . that it would not rain"
5:17	"it did not rain on the land"
5:18	"the heavens gave rain"
5:18	"the earth produced its crops"

James' References to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

James	Sermon on the Mount
1:2	Matthew 5:10-12
1:4	5:48
1:5; 5:15	7:7-12
1:9	5:3
1:20	5:22
2:13	5:7; 6:14-15
2:14-16	7:21-23
3:17-18	5:9
4:4	6:24
4:10	5:3-5
4:11	7:1-2
5:2	6:19
5:10	5:12
5:12	5:33-37

Views on Lordship Salvation

Must Christ be Lord to be Savior? Does salvation require a person to submit to Christ as master and be the substitute for sin? Those who teach "Lordship salvation" answer "yes" but claim that they do not teach salvation by works or faith plus works. Others disagree.¹

	Lordship	Mediating	Free Grace
<i>Key Advocate</i>	John MacArthur	Charles Ryrie	Zane Hodges
<i>Accept Christ as...</i>	Savior and Lord	Savior then Lord	Savior alone
<i>Nature of saving faith: What kind of response is required to the truth of the gospel?</i>	Intellectual (understanding of truth), emotional (conviction & affirmation of truth), and volitional (determination of the will to obey truth) ²	Intellectual and volitional ("an act of the will to trust in the truth which one has come to know" about Christ's forgiveness and vicarious death) ³	A conviction that Jesus is the Christ who guarantees eternal life (John 11:25-27; cf. 20:30-31) ⁴
<i>Simplicity of faith</i>	Authentic and insufficient faith are distinguished (e.g., counterfeit, temporary) ⁵	Faith is simple without various "types" as in the Lordship view	Faith is so simple it appropriates eternal life (1 John 5: 9-13) ⁶
<i>Repentance</i>	Turning to God from sin ("change of heart and purpose") to be saved ⁷	A "change of mind" about Christ ⁸	It " <i>may</i> precede salvation [but...] it <i>need not</i> do so" ⁹ ; faith alone saves.
<i>How saving faith and discipleship relate</i>	The two should not be distinguished ¹⁰	Discipleship <i>must</i> begin after salvation	Discipleship <i>may</i> begin after salvation ¹¹ but lacking it affects rewards
<i>Post-salvation works</i>	Demonstrate salvation ¹²	Demonstrate faith	Demonstrate discipleship
<i>Meaning of "Lord"</i>	Sovereign master ¹³	God (deity) ¹⁴	Messianic title
<i>One who "used to be a Christian" but no longer believes</i>	He never was a Christian in the first place ¹⁵	A believer in Jesus Christ may stop believing ¹⁶	A believer in Jesus Christ may stop believing ¹⁷
<i>Counsel to a genuine believer with doubts</i>	"Examine yourself to see whether you are in the faith..." (2 Cor. 13:5a)	Examine the promises of God that you are a believer (1 John 5:13)	Examine the promises of God that you are a believer (1 John 5:13)
<i>Assurance</i>	Conditional ¹⁸	Divinely promised ¹⁹	Unconditional ²⁰
<i>Perseverance</i> ²¹	True believers will persevere in the end ²²	Believers can fail to persevere in the end	Believers can fail to persevere in the end ²³
<i>Carnal Christians</i>	Possible for a time ²⁴	Possible for lifetime ²⁵	Possible for a lifetime
<i>Key objection to the other two views</i>	"You can accept Christ as Savior now but Lord later" produces only <i>professing</i> "Christians" with false assurance ²⁶	Lordship theology adds confusing and unbiblical terms to the simple gospel message	Salvation is absolutely free and as a gift it has no other condition than faith, so lordship theology distorts the simple gospel
<i>Problems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blurs faith for salvation and works as disciple²⁷ • Leaves no option of an immature Christian²⁸ • Lordship has degrees²⁹ • Carnal Christians exist • Assurance is illusive • Experience refutes³⁰ • Denies sin unto death³¹ 	Lordship advocates say true repentance is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a decision to change behavior³² • part of the gospel³³ • often linked with faith³⁴ • noted alone for salvation³⁵ 	Lordship advocates say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It overlooks the danger of false professions • This is "cheap grace" or "easy believism" • It has the same problems with repentance as the Moderate view

Endnotes

¹ This study summarizes Randall C. Gleason, "The Lordship Salvation Debate," in *Principles of Leadership: What We Can Learn from the Life and Ministry of Bill Bright*, eds. Ted Martin and Michael Cozzens (Orlando: New Life, 2001): 377-97. The sources for the chart are John F. MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988); Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great a Salvation: What it Means to Believe in Jesus Christ* (Wheaton: Victor, 1989); Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free! A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989). The sources in the following footnotes are all cited in Gleason's article.

² Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Lord of the Saved: Getting to the Heart of the Lordship Debate* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992), 20.

³ Ryrie, 121.

⁴ Hodges, 37-39. He also notes, "It is an unproductive waste of time to employ the popular categories—intellect, emotion, or will—as a way of analyzing the mechanics of faith... But is [faith] mere intellectual assent? Of course not! . . . What faith is, in biblical language, is receiving the testimony of God. It is the *inward conviction* that what God says to us in the gospel is true. That—and that alone—is saving faith" (Hodges, 31 *italics his*).

⁵ Earl D. Radmacher, in MacArthur, *Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 38-39.

⁶ Hodges, 40.

⁷ MacArthur, *Faith Works*, 88; *idem.*, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 164; cf. Gentry, *Lord of the Saved*, 46-47.

⁸ Ryrie, 99; cf. Thomas L. Constable, "The Gospel Message," *Walvoord: A Tribute*, ed. Donald Campbell (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 207-8; Livingston Blauvelt, Jr., "Does the Bible Teach Lordship Salvation?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 143 (Jan.-Mar. 1986), 41-42; Robert P. Lightner, *Sin, the Savior, and Salvation* (Nashville: Nelson, 1991), 212.

⁹ Hodges, 146 (*italics his*). On this page, he notes that while repentance is not a condition for *salvation*, it is a condition for *fellowship* with God. He also notes that while John's gospel explicitly claims to do evangelism (20:30-31), it never once mentions repentance (Hodges, 147-48).

¹⁰ The Lordship view claims that saving faith should not be contrasted with discipleship, including "repentance, surrender, and the supernatural eagerness to obey" (MacArthur, 30-31). Since believers in Acts were called disciples and the church's commission is to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20), he sees little if any distinction between the two.

¹¹ Non-Lordship advocates often note that faith is a gift, but discipleship is costly (e.g., Hodges, 67-76).

¹² "Faith encompasses obedience" and "obedience is... an integral part of saving faith" (MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 173, 174).

¹³ MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* 206-10; Gentry, *Lord of the Saved*, 59-65.

¹⁴ Texts relating to salvation often employ the meaning of deity when the word "Lord" is used (e.g., Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Ryrie, 70, 73; *ibid.*, *Balancing the Christian Life* [Chicago: Moody, 1969], 173-76). While this certainly includes the concept of a sovereign ruler, the difficulty with the Lordship view is that people accept his lordship to varying degrees, so how much submission is enough for salvation?

¹⁵ MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 17.

¹⁶ Ryrie, 141.

¹⁷ Hodges, 107-11.

¹⁸ All three positions above teach "once saved, always saved" (i.e., eternal security). While noting that assurance is available based upon scriptural promises, MacArthur also claims that it is conditioned upon the pursuit of holiness and the fruit of the Spirit (*Faith Works*, 202-12).

¹⁹ Some see assurance as primarily based on the promises of God's Word but secondarily on the evidence of a transformed life (Ryrie, 143-44; cf. Lightner, 244-47).

²⁰ Hodges, 93-99; *idem.*, *The Gospel Under Siege* (Dallas: Redecion Viva, 1981), 10. This is not to say that believers should not grow in their assurance by seeing their spiritual growth (Heb. 6:11; 2 Pet. 1:5-11). However, assurance and security must be distinguished. Eternal security is the absolute certainty of a person's salvation from God's perspective. Assurance is the believer's awareness of his eternal security.

²¹ Perseverance means that "those who have true faith can lose that faith neither totally nor finally," as defined by Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989): 234. Agreeing with this definition is John F. MacArthur, "Perseverance of the Saints," *Master's Journal* 4 (Spring 1993): 8.

²² MacArthur teaches perseverance by saying that true saving faith endures since "believe" in the present tense shows continuous action and the abiding quality of faith as a gift given by God (*The Gospel According to Jesus*, 172-73).

²³ Perseverance is rejected, but eternal security is accepted.

²⁴ "The concept of the 'carnal Christian' as a separate category of believers is not only misleading but harmful" (Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 21). This "theory" is "one of the most perverse teachings of our generation" (Ernest C. Reisinger, *Lord and Christ: The Implications of Lordship for Faith and Life* [Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992], 79).

²⁵ This believer is not the same as a non-Christian since he is included in the "we all... are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). Nevertheless, Paul says the carnal Christian does exist (1 Cor. 2:14-3:3). Still, since he is a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:7), he will bear *some* fruit (Ryrie, 32-32).

²⁶ MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 17.

²⁷ Gleason, 380.

²⁸ MacArthur raises the standard for "saving faith" too high: "It clings to no cherished sins, no treasured possessions, no secret indulgences. It is an unconditional surrender, a willingness to do anything the Lord demands... It is a total abandonment of self-will, like the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies so that it can bear much fruit (cf. John 12:24). It is an exchange of all that we are for all that Christ is. And it denotes obedience, full surrender to the lordship of Christ. Nothing less can qualify as saving faith" (MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* 140). He summarizes, "Faith obeys. Unbelief rebels... There is no middle ground" (*ibid.*, 178). One wonders if *anyone* has the faith MacArthur describes. Besides, Scripture has many examples of Christians who have immature faith. The believer's faith must grow and mature (James 1:2-4). Moses was a man of great faith, but he was disciplined for his rebellion (Num. 14:9; Deut. 9:23-24). Christ even called the disciples men "of little faith" (Matt. 8:26). Since believers often rebel, God disciplines (Heb. 12:4-13) and uses trials (1 Pet. 1:6-7) to mature their faith.

²⁹ As Christ is not the Lord of anyone in the complete sense, it is almost arbitrary to say whether someone has sufficiently accepted Him as Lord.

³⁰ Both Scripture and the experiences of believers show many persons who were genuinely saved and yet failed to follow Christ throughout life. These will suffer loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ and "be saved... as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15). A classic example is Lot, who compromised his faith in God (Gen. 19) but still was deemed righteous in God's sight in 2 Peter 2:7-8 (see Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life*, 173).

³¹ The sin unto death (1 John 5:16, KJV) is a sin in the life of a believer so severe that God disciplines him by taking him to heaven by loss of physical life. Such was the case with the Exodus generation (Deut. 2:14), a sexually immoral man who would potentially die so that his "spirit may be saved" (1 Cor. 5:5), and believers abusing the Lord's Table (1 Cor. 11:30). MacArthur does not address this issue but insists that the sign of a true disciple is "when he does sin he *inevitably returns* to the Lord to receive forgiveness and cleansing" (*The Gospel According to Jesus*, 104, emphasis mine). If MacArthur is correct, then why does God take the lives of some believers hopelessly caught in sin?

³² Acts 26:20; 2 Cor. 12:21; Rev. 2:21-22.

³³ Christ commanded his disciples to preach repentance (Luke 24:47). Peter and Paul preached repentance throughout their ministries (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20).

³⁴ Mark 1:15; Acts 11:17-18; 19:4; 20:21; Heb. 6:1.

³⁵ As only faith is sometimes noted as necessary for salvation (John 3:16; 6:28-29; Acts 13:39; 16:31; Rom. 10:9), so repentance alone is required in other verses (Acts 2:38-47; 3:19; 11:17-18). This shows that the two are opposite sides of the same coin. Such a view is supported in the Dallas Theological Seminary doctrinal statement.

Perseverance

Will all who are saved continue to persevere in their faith? In other words, could someone genuinely profess faith in Christ but die in a spiritually pathetic state? People have dealt with this issue for ages, especially in our day when many claim the name of Christ but show little fruit. Note below NT verses people use to advocate perseverance and a free grace position.

Perseverance	Free Grace
<p>Matthew 7:15-22 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. ²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'"</p>	<p>This text does not relate to people in general but to how to recognize false prophets.</p> <p>A false prophet's lifestyle reveals his true, unsaved condition. Such a person is not willing to suffer for the sake of righteousness. Rather, his only "suffering" is the difficulty entailed to convince his followers to open their wallets. Such people can be spotted not because they give open profession to Jesus or even due to their ability to perform miracles. We must discern their godless character by their unwillingness to do God's will.</p> <p>It goes beyond this text to say that these are believers who persevere in their faith. To establish such a claim, one must first prove such heretics are believers.</p>
<p>John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."</p>	<p>In this text Christ exhorts believers to be true disciples. He does not say that if they disobey that they will no longer be Christians (or never were). Rather, they will not truly be free.</p>
<p>John 15:6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.</p>	<p>"Remain" denotes obedience. This text simply indicates that Jesus disciplines disobedient believers. It goes too far to claim that the fire here denotes hell.</p>
<p>Rom. 8:12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.</p>	<p>Paul knew that believers could choose wrongly, so he exhorted the Roman Christians to live according to their new nature.</p>
<p>Rom. 11:22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.</p>	<p>"Kindness and sternness" (v. 22) are aspects of the divine nature, the latter experienced by Israel in her present condition, the former being the portion of Gentile believers. But the positions can be reversed, and if this occurs, it will not be due to any fickleness in God, but to the nature of the human response. Once Israel's unbelief is put away, God is prepared to graft her branches in again (v. 23)" (<i>NIV Bible Commentary</i>).</p>

Perseverance	Free Grace
<p>1 Cor. 15:2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.</p>	<p>Belief “in vain” does not denote false faith or not “truly” believing. It means the <i>object</i> of their faith would be unreliable if Christ was not resurrected (v. 14; cf. Joseph Dillow, <i>Final Destiny</i>, 364-65).</p>
<p>2 Cor. 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?</p>	<p>We cannot assume that being “in the faith” means being regenerate, as elsewhere it means living according to what we believe (2 Cor. 1:24; cf. 1 Cor. 16:13; Dillow, 448-49). The verse means some Christians fail to live according to their profession.</p>
<p>Phil. 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.</p>	<p>This can be handled in at least two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It teaches eternal security, not perseverance. 2. The “good work” refers to God’s work of bringing people into his family through the Philippians. God assured that their participation in the gospel would continue to bear fruit until Christ’s return.
<p>This verse places the responsibility of the believer’s security upon God rather than any human being.</p>	<p>What it does <i>not</i> say is that each individual church member would remain faithful until Christ returns. Obviously, each one of them died prior to the return of Christ.</p>
<p>Col. 1:15 If you hold fast...</p>	<p>A believer may not be presented before Christ relatively blameless (Dillow, 536).</p>
<p>Titus 1:16 [False teachers] claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him.</p>	<p>These persons have never been believers since they reject the truth (1:14).</p>
<p>Heb. 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.</p>	<p>Only faithful believers are part of Christ’s priestly “house”, so they rule with him (cf. 2 Tim. 2:12). It is not true for every Christian (Dillow, 384).</p>
<p>Heb. 3:14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.</p>	<p>There exists a distinction between “knowing Christ” (salvation) and “sharing in Christ” (being rewarded in Him).</p>
<p>Hebrews 10:35-39 ³⁵So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. ³⁶You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. ³⁷For in just a very little while, “He who is coming will come and will not delay. ³⁸But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.” ³⁹But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.</p>	<p>The fact that the author notes their need to persevere indicates the possibility that they may not do so. In fact, the entire letter appeals for the readers not to shrink back to Judaism, which he viewed as a distinct possibility. That such backsliders would not please God does not indicate that they were never believers in the first place. It indicates that such persons would be “destroyed” (killed) in the Jerusalem fires of AD 70 that consumed the unbelieving Jews with whom the readers were tempted to follow.</p>
	<p>“Apostasy here is not theoretical; it is a real possibility. This is the apostasy of... the regenerate child of God who has received the imputed righteousness of Christ” (Dillow, 527).</p>

Perseverance

James 2:20-26 You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone. ²⁵In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

2 Pet. 1:10-11 Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. ¹¹For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

Free Grace

Does James distinguish false faith from true faith that saves from damnation? No. How does James use "faith" and "salvation"? James contrasts a regenerate person who claims he has a *walk of faith* with one who actually does have this lifestyle (Dillow, 392). Faith in James refers not to the *initial* act of faith that saves from hell. It denotes the ongoing *walk of faith* that can save one from the pathway to "death," or the downward progression "unto death resulting in a negative assessment of one's life at the Judgment Seat of Christ" (ibid.). The NT often refers to faith as a walk instead of as an initial event (Rom. 14:23; Gal. 3:11; 5:25; Col. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:7), especially in James (1:2-4, 6; 2:1, 5; 5:15).

Further, James uses "salvation" in a temporal—not eternal—sense. In fact, the NT refers to salvation as entering heaven only 43% of the time and not even once in the OT (Dillow, 394). "Normally salvation refers to deliverance from a temporal difficulty, death, disease, or a meaningless life" (Dillow, 395). James uses "save" five times, never referring to salvation from eternal damnation. It denotes salvation from consequences of sin (1:21), loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2:14), sin's penalties (4:12), disease (5:15), and physical death (5:20; cf. Dillow, 394-404).

The context notes, "For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins" (1:8-9). The "falling" refers not to loss of salvation but to a stumbling in one's growth as a Christian.

The key issue here is, "Who are 'they'?" Are these believers who had not persevered? The context contrasts the "they" in verse 19 with the "you" in verse 20, meaning antichrists ("they") had arisen from the apostolic circle itself. Other passages in the epistle show the same we/you contrasts (1:1-3; 4:4-6). John is speaking of heretics whose defection showed that they were never saved in the first place (Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege*, 58-59).

Perseverance

The Reformed view typically says that these men had never believed in the first place.

Free Grace**Apostasy of Hymenaeus and Alexander**

1 Timothy 1:18-20 ¹⁸Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, ¹⁹holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. ²⁰Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

These men: (1) had believed ("faith"), (2) had given evidence of their faith in a good conscience, and (3) needed to be taught not to blaspheme, "taught" being a word used of divine discipline of the regenerate (1 Cor. 11:32; Tit. 2:12-13; Heb. 12:5-6; Dillow, 525).

Apostasy in Galatians

Galatians 6:12 ¹²Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross. .

"Submission to circumcision indicated cessation of faith in Christ (Gal. 2:17-21). In fact, it meant that a believer viewed Christ's death as vain, had severed himself from Christ (Gal. 5:2), had fallen from grace (Gal. 5:43), and was liable to judgment (Gal. 5:10). To be severed from Christ and to fall from grace logically required a former standing in grace and connection with Christ from which to fall and be severed! Those who are regenerate may possibly deny the faith and forfeit their share in the coming kingdom. There is no need to assume that they lose salvation, as the Arminian maintains" (Dillow, 527).

Apostasy in Hebrews

Hebrews 10:38-39 ³⁸But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." ³⁹But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

Perseverance**Free Grace**

2 Peter 1:5-11 ⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹ For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Verses 8-9 note that some who are forgiven are ineffective, unfruitful, nearsighted, and blind. They should return to Christ so they won't fall away and so they will be richly rewarded upon entrance into eternal life (vv. 10-11).

Apostasy in the Last Days

^{NIV} 1 Timothy 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

The verb for "fall away" (*apostesontai* ἀποστήσονται, from ἀφίσταμαι) is used only here in the NT in the intransitive sense as "leave, go away; desert, commit apostasy; keep away; trans. incite to revolt" and appears in Acts 5.37 (Friberg NT). One cannot abandon a faith that he never had accepted.

Denial of the Faith

^{NIV} 1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for relatives, and especially for his immediate family, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever

This text says that some Christians act worse than unbelievers. This is a lifestyle of apostasy that is equally as serious as spoken blasphemy.

Perseverance	Free Grace
	<p><u>Apostasy of Widows</u></p> <p>1 Timothy 5:14-15 ¹⁴ So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. ¹⁵ Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.</p> <p><u>Apostasy for Materialism</u></p> <p>1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.</p> <p><u>Apostasy Due to Gnostic Deception</u></p> <p>1 Timothy 6:20-21 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, ²¹which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith</p> <p>Timothy himself is being warned here, which makes it clear that the possibility of apostasy relates to genuine believers.</p> <p><u>Apostasy of Demas and Others</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demas (2 Tim. 4:10) • Phygelus & Hermogenes (2 Tim. 1:15) • Many others (2 Tim. 4:16) <p>In the NT, “fall away” does not “refer to falling away from eternal salvation. It refers, rather, to a falling away from the path of growth, or forfeiture of eternal reward” (Dillow, 535, n. 1743).</p>

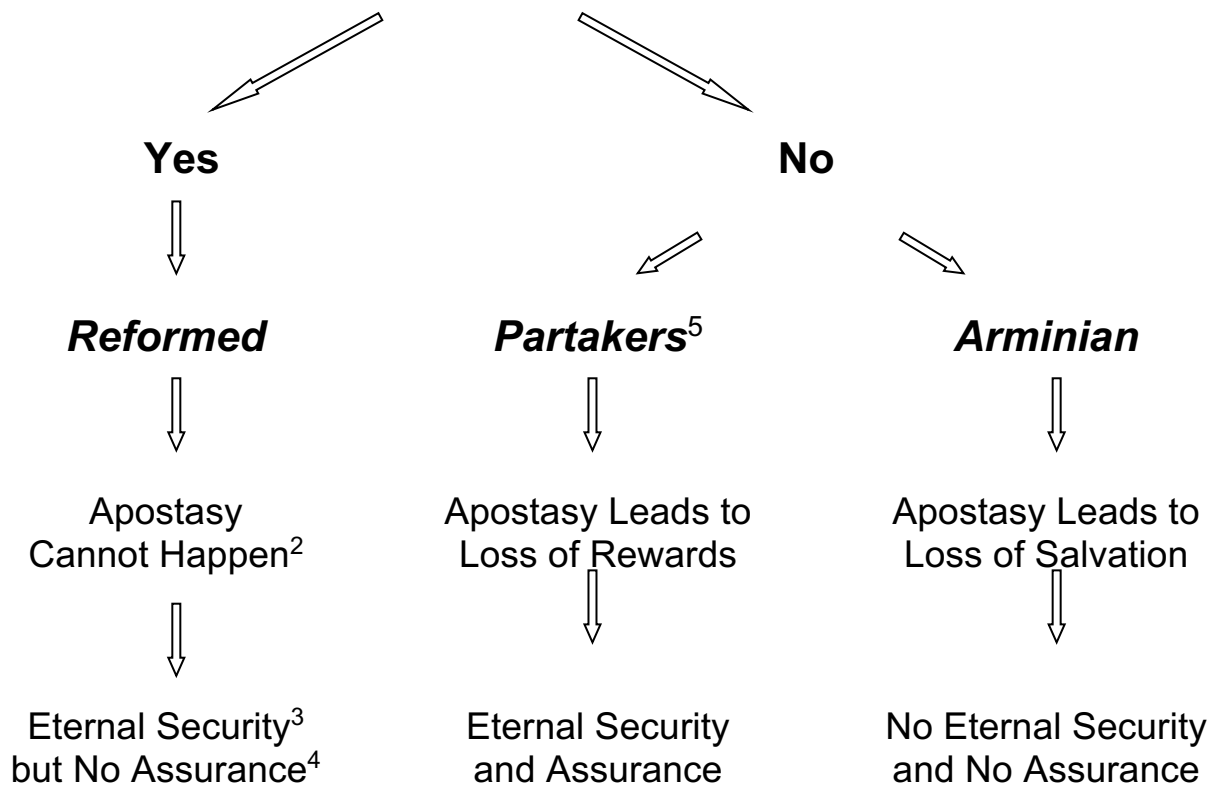
Supporting Perseverance (i.e., Advocates Conditional Security)

Davis, John Jefferson. “The Perseverance of The Saints: A History of the Doctrine,” *JETS* (June 1991): 213-38.

Opposing Perseverance (i.e., Advocates Eternal Security)

Dillow, Joseph C. *Final Destiny: The Future Reign of the Servant Kings*. 2nd ed. Monument, CO: Paniym Group, 2012. 1093 pp. pb.

Will each genuine Christian persevere in faithfulness at death?¹



¹ The Reformed view allows for *temporary* lapses into a carnal (worldly) state, but it assumes that these will always be rectified by the time of death so that no true believer can die in rebellion with God.

² Apostasy refers to a true Christian denying the faith in word or deed. This cannot happen in the Reformed view because perseverance is upheld. The Reformed view sees what *appears* to be a denial of one's personal faith means that the person was *never* a Christian in the first place (only a "professing Christian" but in reality an unbeliever).

³ Eternal security means "once saved, always saved" so that salvation can never be lost, either through the fault of the believer or of God. Security is *God's* work of preserving each person by his own grace and choice. This doctrine keeps a consistent meaning to "eternal life," for to lose "eternal life" is nonsense if it never was eternal. One cannot possess *temporary* "eternal life" that can be lost!

⁴ Assurance of salvation means the believer can know with 100% confidence that he will go to heaven at death because the work of Christ on his behalf has forgiven any sin that could be committed. Since the Reformed view teaches that all believers will persevere and no one ever knows until death whether he will continue believing until death, this results in a continual state of lack of assurance of salvation, even though a true believer's eternal security is guaranteed. Dillow calls the scholar advocating the Reformed view "the Experimental Predestinarian" due to that scholar's insistence upon perseverance in good works. This term is used because, even though one might be predestined (elect, chosen) for salvation, no one can tell if a person has persevered until that person's "experiment" of life is completed at death (Joseph Dillow, *Final Destiny*, 12-17).

⁵ Dillow calls his view "partakers" or "partner" based on Hebrews 3:14, "For we have become partakers [lit. partners, Gr. *metochoi*] of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." "The Partner perseveres in good works to the end of life" (Dillow, 18). Paul uses the synonym in 1 Corinthians 9:23, "I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker [Gr. *synkoinonos*] of it." The Partaker receives his inheritance in the future millennial kingdom as Christ's partner, reigning with Him.