

aired on KALS November 9, 2004

James 2:14-26 #2

14. “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

15. If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,

16. and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

17. Even so faith if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

18. But someone may well say, ‘You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.’

19. You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

20. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

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

22. You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

23. and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘**AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,**’ and he was called the friend of God.

24. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

25. In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

26. For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”

Last week we looked at this text and noted that it has caused much controversy, especially with regards to the concept of works. Also we noted that many religious leaders of the past have dismissed this passage because it contradicts the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Many preachers and teachers even today proclaim a “faith-alone” or “faith-only” message for salvation. But James 2:24 clearly states, “You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.”

God in His wisdom underscores this point dramatically in verse 19 of this morning’s text. James 2:19 reads, “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”

Note here that the demons believe in God. The demons believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is God in the flesh. The demons often called out to Jesus when He walked the earth as a man; calling Him “the Son of the Most High God,” and asking Him not to torment them before the time.

But notice also, that James points out that the

Demons shutter--even though they believe. The reason why they shutter is because they are fearful, knowing that they are doomed to eternal damnation; even though they believe in the Son of God! II Peter 2:4 points out, “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.”

God’s message, as given through James, is clear. Mere belief in Christ is not enough. Belief in Christ, without obedience to Christ will not save you. Only belief in Christ coupled with obedience to His word will produce the faith that will save an individual. And it follows that a faith that does not cause a person to overcome sin in His life, is really not Biblical at all. There is only one faith Ephesians 4:5 declares, and that is the only one that will save you; or anybody else for that matter.

Now to the casual reader, James 2:19 seems to be out of place, not smoothly fitting into the surrounding verses. Actually it abruptly sticks out like a sore thumb! Or more properly visualized as a lighthouse or beacon rising above the surrounding landscape. The verse uses fallen angels as a primary example of belief that stands alone without obedience, but instead belief that allows rebellion and sin.