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December 2018



Tony and Jane Derrick

Dear Ministry Partner,

The verses of James 2:14–26, next in our ongoing study of the Book of James, may be the most difficult. They have caused a lot of conflict regarding faith—one conflict being how to square the teachings of James with the teachings of Paul. Don't they disagree in their conclusions on the vital doctrine of the faith discussed here: Faith versus Works?

## PAUL vs. JAMES

Before we press on, let's clarify the difference between Paul's teaching on faith and the one before us as James sees it. **Bible critics often complain that the Bible makes contradictory statements and therefore cannot be trusted.** Every serious Bible student must be versed in the truth and not be swayed.

Paul writes, *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law."* — Romans 3:28

James states, *"You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."* — James 2:24

Paul's statement addressed those who were denying salvation by grace through faith alone. Some of his congregation in Rome wanted to continue adding works of the Jewish law (circumcision, etc.) as necessary for salvation. That false concept is the main reason that Paul wrote to the Romans in great detail about the subjects of law, grace, justification, faith, and other points of concern in theology.

James, on the other hand, was addressing the absence of "good works" in those who claimed to be true believers in Messiah. He was not suggesting a different route to salvation, but rather that the evidence of true believing shows in believers' works. Works of love are proof that faith is real and alive.

**Verse 14 asks two questions:** *"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?"*

*(over please)*



James points out in the first part of this verse that someone *saying* he has faith doesn't make it a true statement. Where is the proof, James asks. He warns that people can tell you anything, but that you must put their statements to the test!

In the second part of verse 14, James asks, "*Can that kind of faith save him?*" [my emphasis]. James, as we will discover later, is convinced that there is a real, live faith that saves, and that there is a stone-faced faith that does nothing.

## THE BROTHER OR SISTER IN NEED

The next two verses (2:15–16), provide an illustration. A person — a brother or a sister, a believer in Yeshua — is in desperate need of life's necessities. (The term "naked" might mean stripped down to one's "birthday suit" or lacking the undergarment that was customary in the layered robes of Biblical times.) The daily food is gone and all options are exhausted, except asking for help. The "believer" who wishes them well but doesn't provide for the real need — food and clothing — shows that his faith is not alive.



Illustration of Charity, drawing for book *Street Arabs and Gutter Snipes* (1884) by George C. Needham

How often does a person in need (it doesn't have to be food and clothing) stand before us, and we could help, but we give them a strong pat on the shoulder and tell them that God loves them and will provide? The likely truth is that **God sent them to us because we can help**. But, instead, we miss the blessing! Being sensitive to a need and ready to help shows active, live faith.

John reiterates this lesson:

*But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. — 1 John 3:17–18*

James addresses the certainty of an objection in verses 18 and 19:

*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. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble!*

James anticipates the objection by pointing out that if you have faith, it will show; if it doesn't show, then you don't have it. In verse 19, he states that real faith goes beyond intellectual assent. He could be referencing the Shema at this point: "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!*" (Deuteronomy 6:4). James challenges the objection with Scripture. Believing there is one God is wonderful. But even the demons believe ... and they tremble! James asserts that the dead faith of intellectual agreement doesn't produce action. So, faith without deeds is useless. It has no point!

## TWO ILLUSTRATIONS FROM JAMES

He completes the teaching in verses 21–25 with two opposite illustrations of faith. The first uses Abraham. He was an upright, respected Jewish patriarch. Abraham “justified” (proved) his faith by offering up his son Isaac (Genesis 22). James doesn’t teach that justification depends on works and excludes faith, or that works must be added to faith. He teaches that justification is simply by faith.

The offering of Isaac was proof of the faith that Abraham had professed for many years. It was evidence that his faith was alive. In the phrase *“Was not Abraham our father justified by works?”* (verse 21a), the Greek verb for “justified” means “to vindicate.” Abraham showed complete obedience to God, and therefore was vindicated, declared upright, before God.

Long before Abraham offered Isaac in Genesis 22, he was shown to be righteous in Genesis 15:6. *“And he [Abraham] believed in the Lord and He [the Lord] accounted it to him for righteousness.”* The word translated “believed” is from the Hebrew “aman,” meaning to trust or confirm. God declared Abraham righteous because of Abraham’s faith. Abraham would later demonstrate that faith on Mount Moriah with Isaac. God’s accounting books record Abraham’s faith.

The final words of verse 23 declare how close Abraham was to God: *“and he was called the friend of God.”* James is referencing Isaiah 41:8, *“But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend.”*

James’s second illustration uses Rahab, a foreigner and a prostitute (2:25). Please take time to read Rahab’s full story in the second chapter of Joshua. I offer you a condensed version at this time. Rahab believed that the Israelites were chosen by God and that they would soon be successful in their conquest of Canaan. To gain their favor, she allowed two Israelite spies to enter her house, and she hid them from the king of Jericho. Even though she lied to the king, James considers hers an act of obedient faith. She had faith that the two spies would keep their agreement to spare her and her father’s house. Rahab’s faith came at great personal risk: If the spies had been found in her house, she would have been put to death.

The writer of Hebrews, in chapter 11 — sometimes called the “Faith Chapter” — mentioned Rahab and Abraham: *“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies in peace.”*

As I noted in last month’s lesson, God is sovereign and will do as He wants with whomever He chooses.



*Abraham Offering Up Isaac (1873)  
engraving by Charles Foster*

*(continued p. 4)*

## WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

My sermon preparation classes advised us aspiring preachers to prepare our exegesis of the Bible passage in the original language, gather other commentators' notes, bring the sermon to life with timely illustrations, and then sit back and ask the question: So what?

James adequately answers the "so what" question with his final words in verse 26: "*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*"

Our faith should bring glory to God and greatly benefit mankind.



Standing firm with Israel and ZLM,

*Tony*  
Tony

**P.S.** Opportunities abound for each of us to live our faith. As the year-end holidays approach, look for ways to live your faith as Yeshua shows you the needs of others. Or, decide to show your faith in the Land where it all began — Israel — by joining a Zola Tour in 2019. Your Christian walk will never be the same! ★

## Zola Tours to the Holy Land



Our Travel Manager, Sandra, will gladly answer all tour-related questions for you. She can walk you through everything you need to join us this coming March or September. Please contact her at **214-696-9760**, email her at [travel@levitt.com](mailto:travel@levitt.com), or visit [levitt.com/tours](http://levitt.com/tours).

### Spring Tour 2019 options

Deluxe (Israel only)	Mar 10–19	\$4,888
Grand Petra (Israel & Petra)	Mar 10–22	\$5,999

*Prices include tips, taxes, & fuel surcharge (subject to change).*

### Fall Tour 2019 options

Deluxe (Israel only)	Sep 16–26
Grand Petra (Israel & Petra)	Sep 16–29
Grand Athens (Greece & Israel)	Sep 10–26
Ultra Grand (Greece & Israel & Petra)	Sep 10–29

*Fall Tour prices are pending.*

## A Note from David and Kirsten Hart

*Shalom Haver!* (Peace, Friend!) We call you friend, just as God called Abraham “friend of God.” What a cherished title! That means they trusted each other and had a relationship. The older David and I get (we are grandparents now), the more we realize the rare and special nature of authentic, be-there-no-matter-what friendships. Abraham and God were there for each other in an intense, trusting relationship. The beautiful takeaway from their bond is that God wants that same trust and love connection with each one of us.

When David and I hosted the latest fall Zola Tour, everyone in the group became family and close. Some tours produce deep friendships; this one certainly did. What an experience — laughing, learning, worshiping, and eating our way through the islands of Greece, ancient Ephesus, the Holy Land, and the rose-red rock city of Petra. And you have the opportunity to take that very same trip!

What makes Zola Tours different? (How much time do you have?) Our tour guides in each country have been with Zola Tours for years, and they’re simply the best... honestly. David and I have toured with other companies, and nothing compares with ZT’s drivers, guides, hotels, meals, the itinerary, and the buses themselves. I could go on and on. And feeling safe? The aura of peace in the Holy Land is present and pervasive, unlike in any other country we’ve visited.

### Zola Levitt Presents Programs in December

We hope you’ve been enjoying our recent broadcasts of Zola’s classic lessons combined with fresh insight and perspective from Dr. Jeffrey Seif. A blend of timeless Bible teaching with newer high definition picture quality also will enhance our upcoming series taught by Jeff.

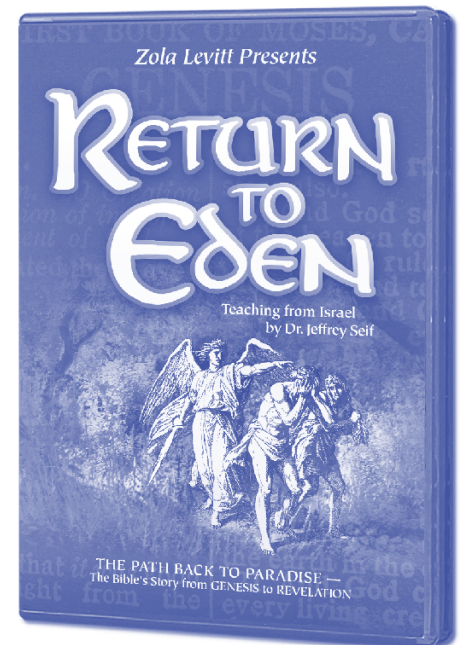
Our December programs finish Jeff’s *Return to Eden* series and then offer two stand-alone episodes that bring a return appearance of Chaim Malespin and sum up everything that we’ve brought you during 2018.

**Return to Eden Bonus Interviews** Extended interviews with people appearing in this series.

**Bonus Interviews — Part 1** Doron Keidar, Cry for Zion; Dr. Seth Postell, academic dean of Israel College of the Bible in Netanya; and Guy Erlich, owner/director of Balm of Gilead Farm.

**Bonus Interviews — Part 2** David Parsons, vice-president of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem; singer Pat Boone; and Yehuda Glick, member of Israel’s Knesset.

**Aliyah Return Center** — Chaim Malespin (he’s taught on several recent series; his wife Deanna has led our Hebrew lessons) informs us about the Aliyah Return Center’s work with new immigrants, including Israeli soldiers.



(continued p. 6)

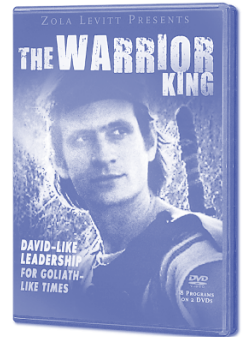
**Year End**—David and Kirsten review the series presented during 2018, including:

- *Watch Therefore and Be Ready*
- *Thy Kingdom Come*
- *Called Together — Jew and Gentile, One in Messiah*
- *Psalms of Ascent*
- *Return to Eden*

Trust us, you will want to see each of our December programs! Please persuade your family and friends to tune in. God is achieving so very much through *Zola Levitt Presents*.

## A Preview of ZLP Programs in January

Now for a sneak peek ahead. In January, we will bring you a refreshed series on David, *The Warrior King: David-like Leadership for Goliath-like Times*. We have returned to the studio to provide a fresh look and new insights on this timeless story, complete with dramatic reenactments and on-location teaching from **Jeffrey Seif**. This riveting series tracks David, a man after God's own heart, from his selection by the prophet Samuel through his family struggles and how he pointed to the ultimate "Son of David," the Messiah Yeshua.



## REACHING EVERYWHERE

We've been busy in the TV studio this year, and it's exciting to see what the Lord has done through *ZLP*. When we were on tour in Eilat, Israel, a sweet woman came up to our dinner table and declared, "I'm *so thrilled* to meet the two of you in person! We watch your program every single week!" She was from *Ghana, Africa*! Friends, the good news of the Gospel is reaching to far-away lands because of supporters like you! We are able to spread God's Word through Messianic television/Internet programs to people everywhere.

**If you appreciate learning about the Jewish roots of Christianity and the in-depth, authentic teaching from the Holy Land on a weekly basis, would you consider gifting this ministry a special end-of-year financial donation?** Your contribution will take the Gospel literally to every continent!



Blessings to you in this special season that proclaims our Lord's birth. No matter when it actually occurred, we celebrate that it actually did occur. Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas from our family to yours! We're truly thankful to call you friend.

*David & Kirsten*

David & Kirsten

*Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim!*—

*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!* — Psalm 122:6 ★



*Did you know that Zola Levitt Ministries is ECFA approved?*

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## Jewish Heritage Calendar 5779 (Sept. 2018 – Sept. 2019)

With the Seven Feasts of Israel in mind, imagine the usefulness of our delightful and inexpensive Jewish Heritage Calendar.

This beautiful calendar began in September and spans 13 months, through September 2019. It provides the dates of all the Biblical feasts and Sabbaths plus the names of the months, the Holy Days, and all the rest through English phonetics like those in our monthly Hebrew Lesson in the *Levitt Letter*. Enjoy Biblical feast graphics, Hebraic regalia pictures, and inspiration.

### Jewish Heritage Calendar 5779 (2018-2019)

- 1 calendar – \$11
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Please allow 2–3 weeks for order processing.

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**1812**

Dear Tony,

(please check appropriate boxes)

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