

INTRODUCTION TO THE  
NEW TESTAMENT

Week 9: Hebrews and James

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Review & Catch Up  
Questions, Discussion, Sharing Ideas

got Questions.org



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HEBREWS

JESUS > EVERYTHING

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### Questions, Questions, Questions?

▪ Unlike the other Epistles, Hebrews lacks a destination and a signature. For this reason we aren't sure about:

- *Authorship?*
- *Location of Writing?*
- *Destination?*
- *Date of Writing?*

▪ Plus, Hebrews makes us wrestle with difficult/mysterious topics:

- *Who was Melchizedek?*
- *Can we lose our salvation?*




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### Authorship: What We Know

- Origen: "But who wrote the epistle, in truth God knows"
- The first readers likely knew the author
- A Hellenistic Jew, and second-generation believer (Hebrews 2:3)
- Steeped in the LXX (quotes from this translation, not the Hebrew)
- Excellent vocabulary and Greek style

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### Authorship: Suggestions

- **Paul:** Though this is a fading option given the differences in style, vocabulary, rhetoric
- **Barnabas:** "A word of exhortation" (13:22)
- **Apollos:** Suggested by Luther, connections to Alexandria and the Pauline mission
- **Priscilla/Aquilla:** Interchanges between I and we, worked with Paul
- **Silas, Timothy, Epaphras, Philip, Mary the mother of Jesus**

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### Place of Writing and Destination

- Some suggest the book was written from Italy because of Hebrews 13:24, but this is conclusive
- The destination is likely specific given the style of writing, the two most common suggestions are Jerusalem or Rome (also Corinth)
- Both these matters have little bearing on how we interpret and understand the book.




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### Date of Hebrews

- A possible range of AD 60-100, with the best evidence favoring a date prior to AD 70
  - Author is from the second generation of Christians (2:3) this places the book after 60
  - Book is quoted in 1 Clement which is dated to AD 96
  - Written during the lifetime of Timothy
  - The discussion of sacrifices in the temple points to a date before AD 70 (The destruction of the temple)

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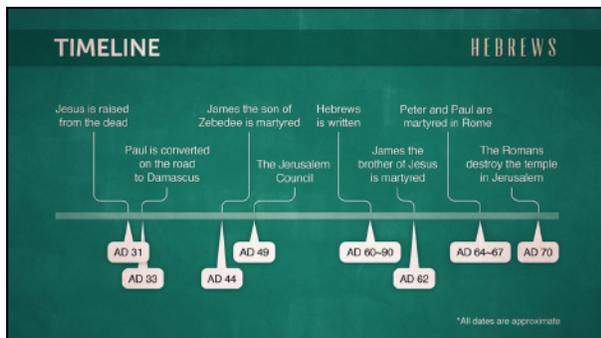
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### Occasion of Writing: What was happening?

- Much of this discussion hinges on where the letter is going...which we can't be certain of...
- One suggestion: "The pressure was on" from both Judaizers and Nero.
- Hebrews is written to remind us what is most important in any and every situation: Jesus!

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### Purpose of Writing: Jesus is greater

- To warn Jewish Christians against apostasy to Judaism
- Witherington sees parallels with Galatians
  - *"Hebrews entire argument...is based on the premise not only that Christ offers something better, but also something that eclipses the old covenant, as good as it was in its day"*
  - *"Could it be that Hebrews provides for us the earliest example of an interpretation of Paul for a later and different audience?"*

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### Hebrews: Basic Outline

- I. Introduction: God's Final Word is His Son (1:1-4)
- II. Jesus Better than Angels, and the Ultimate Man (1:5-2:18)
- III. Jesus Better than Moses (3:1-6)
- IV. Jesus and the Sabbath Rest (3:7-4:13)
- V. Jesus the Great High Priest (4:14-7:28)
- VI. The Superior Ministry of Jesus the Appointed High Priest (8:1-10:18)
- VII. Pastoral Application in Light of Christ's Superiority (10:19-25)
- VIII. Perseverance and Faithful Endurance (10:26-12:29)
- IX. Concluding Exhortations, Prayers, Greetings (13:1-25)

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HEBREWS			
Prophecy (1:1-4)	<b>Jesus Christ: Superior in His Person</b> Superior to Prophets Angels Moses The Sabbath Other priests  CHAPTERS 1-7-4-13	<b>Jesus Christ: Superior as Our Priest</b> Better than: Earthly priesthood Old covenant (Mosaic system) Animal sacrifices Daily offerings  CHAPTERS 4-14-10-18	<b>Jesus Christ: Superior for Life</b> Let us have: Faith to believe God Hope to endure trials Love to encourage others  CHAPTERS 10-19-13-25
	Emphasis	Instruction	Exhortation
	Key Words	"Much better than" 1:4	"Better" 7:19
Warnings	2:1-4	3:7-4:13	5:11-6:20
Theme	The absolute superiority of Jesus Christ		
Key Verse	4:14		
Christ in Hebrews	Jesus is the absolutely superior revelation of God and our eternal High Priest (1:1-14; 3:1)		

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Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the world.

HEBREWS 1:1-2

Faithlife

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SINCE THEREFORE THE CHILDREN SHARE IN FLESH AND BLOOD, HE HIMSELF LIKewise PARTOOK OF THE SAME THINGS,

**THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY THE ONE WHO HAS THE POWER OF DEATH,**

THAT IS, THE DEVIL...

HEBREWS 2:14

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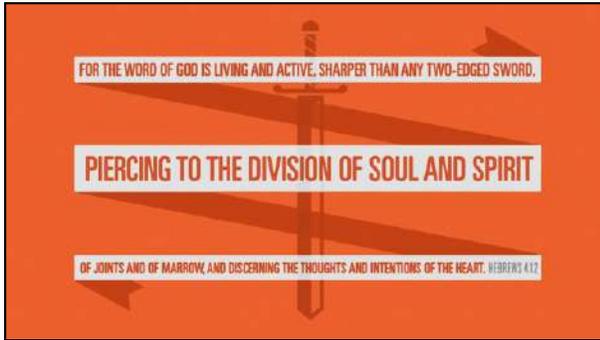
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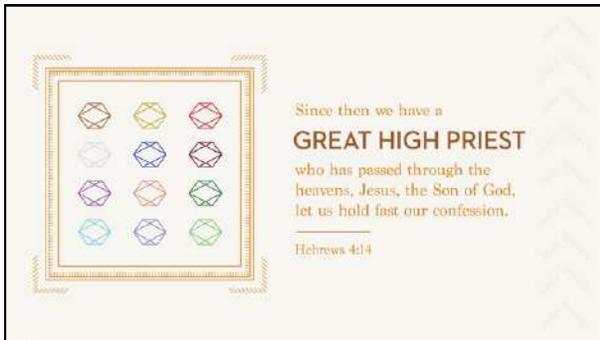
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**Mysterious Melchizedek**

- Genesis 14:18-20, Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 5:6-11, 6:20-7:28
- Name means "King of Righteousness"
- A priest of God Most High who receives a tithe from Abraham
- Presented as a type for Christ

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### Mysterious Melchizedek

- Hebrews point is to show that the priesthood of Jesus is superior to the old order.
- Melchizedek has no ancestors, and resembled the Son of God. He remains a priest forever
- Some scholars see him as Christophany (pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus)




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### A Difficult Passage: Hebrews 6:4-6

#### Possible Interpretations:

- Not about Christians, but about unbelievers who are intellectually persuaded but spiritually uncommitted (Like the second and third groups in the parable of the sowers)
- Written about Christians ("partakers of the Holy Spirit", "enlightened" speak of true believers) with the point being made that this is a hypothetical statement based on a faulty assumption (absurdity)
- In either case, the call is for believers to hold fast to Jesus Christ!




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...he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but

**by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.**

HEBREWS 9:12

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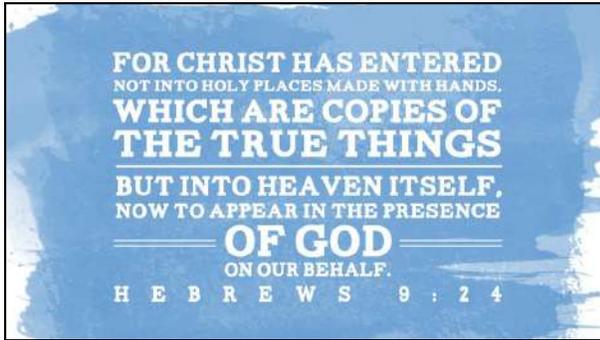
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NOT NEGLECTING  
TO MEET TOGETHER,  
AS IS THE HABIT OF SOME,  
BUT ENCOURAGING ONE  
ANOTHER, AND ALL THE MORE  
AS YOU SEE THE DAY  
DRAWING NEAR.



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**NOW FAITH IS**

THE ASSURANCE  
OF THINGS HOPED FOR,  
THE CONVICTION OF  
THINGS NOT SEEN.

HEBREWS 11:1

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*Therefore, since we are surrounded  
by so great a cloud of witnesses, let  
us also lay aside every weight, and  
sin which clings so closely, and let us  
**run with endurance**  
the race that is set before us.*

HEBREWS 12:1



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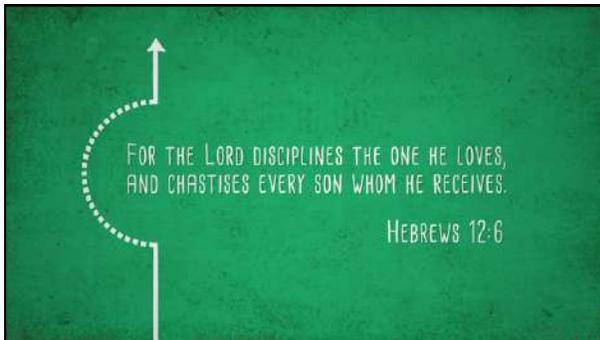
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### Hebrews: Unique Contributions

- Heroes of Faith Hall of Fame (Hebrews 11)
- The Supremacy of Christ: Superior to any covenant, superior to any priesthood, superior in His sacrifice
- Several warning passages to encourage readers to hold fast to their faith (2:1-4, 3:6b-4:13, 5:11-6:8, 10:26-31, 12:18-29)
- Themes of perfection, rest, faith and The New Covenant

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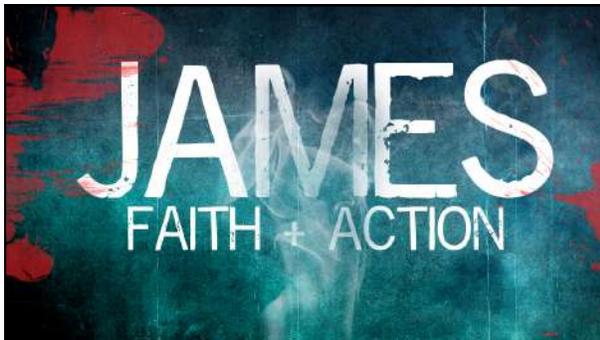
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Out of James 1:22 comes a verse for Christians true... and a theme for the Book of James and it's teaching

**Be ye DOERS of the Word!**

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### Which James?

Four Different Men Named James are mentioned in the NT:

- James the father of Judas (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13)
- James the son of Alphaeus (Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13)
- James the brother of John and son of Zebedee (Luke 9:28, Acts 1:13)
- ★ James the Lord's brother (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3, Galatians 1:19)




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### Evidence for James the brother of Jesus

- The author's self-identification, and the Lord's brother played prominently in early Christian history.
- The author's Jewish background and use of OT
- Similarities between James and Acts (especially the speech by James in Acts 15)
- Similarities with the teaching of Jesus
- Agreements with the other NT accounts of James (especially in Acts)
- The conditions of the community (seem to be before the fall of Jerusalem)
- External evidence: Early church father's point to James

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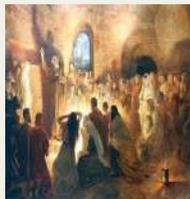
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### Date and Place of Writing

- Written from Jerusalem during the time when James was the leader of the church there (internal evidence favors this view: poor and rich, religious controversy)
- Probably dated in the early or middle 40s, but may be as late as 62 (date James was martyred)




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### Destination: Diaspora!

- No specific church is listed, but the letter is addressed to “The Twelve Tribes scattered”
- Likely a Jewish-Christian audience, who were scattered from Jerusalem (Diaspora)
- James “must minister to the scattered flock by mail”




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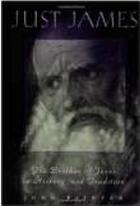
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### Features of James

- Pastoral Admonition: Rebukes and Exhortations
- Loosely structured: Rapidly moves from topic to topic
- Metaphors: Extensive and Effective (billowing sea, withered flower, brushfire)
- Parallels to other teachings
- *Best classified as a homily or series of homilies by a pastor*




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#### Similarities with the Teachings of Jesus in James

*“There are more parallels in this Epistle than any other NT book to the teaching of our Lord in the Gospels”*  
Donald Guthrie

3:2	Joy in the midst of trials	Matt. 5:10-12
1:4	Exhortation to perfection	Matt. 5:48
1:5	Asking for good gifts	Matt. 7:7-11
1:20	Against anger	Matt. 5:22
1:22	Hearers and doers of the Word	Matt. 7:24-27
1:10	The whole law to be kept	Matt. 5:19
1:13	Blessings of mercifulness	Matt. 5:7
1:16	Blessings of peacemakers	Matt. 5:9
4:4	Friendship of the world as enmity against God	Matt. 6:24
4:11-12	Against judging others	Matt. 7:1-5
5:20f.	Math and rust speckling robes	Matt. 6:19
5:10	The prophets as examples	Matt. 5:12
5:12	Against oaths	Matt. 5:33-37

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## Accepting James

- Widely accepted by the ancient church
- Some hesitated and neglected the book...but we should not.
  - *Martin Luther: not excluded, but "an epistle of straw"*
- James makes an important contribution in theology and practice and does not conflict with any other part of Scripture




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## JAMES

<b>Faith</b>	When stretched, it doesn't break.	When pressed, it doesn't fail.	When expressed, it doesn't explode.	When distressed, it doesn't panic.
<b>Deeds</b>	Authentic stability	Authentic love	Authentic control and humility	Authentic patience
	Greeting	Partiality and prejudice	The tongue	Money matters
	Trials	Indifference and mere intellectualism	The heart	Sickness
	Temptation	Obedience and action	The will	Carnality and correction
	Response to Scripture			
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTERS 3-4	CHAPTER 5
<b>Background</b>	The difficulties of life caused the scattered saints to drift spiritually, leading to all forms of problems—unbridled speech, wrong attitudes, doubt, strife, carnality, shallow faith.			
<b>Characteristics</b>	"The Proverbs of the New Testament," James contains many practical, straightforward exhortations. Emphasis is on importance of balancing right belief with right behavior. The book has many Old Testament word pictures and references.			
<b>Theme</b>	Real faith produces authentic deeds.			
<b>Key Verse</b>	2:17			
<b>Christ in James</b>	Jesus is the glorious Lord, who inspires true faith and authentic works (2:1, 14-26).			

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## James: Basic Outline

- I. Greeting/Salutation (1:1)
- II. Enduring Trials(1:2-18)
- III. Applying the Word: Faith Within the Church (1:19-3:18)
- IV. Witnessing to Divine Providence (4:1-5:20)

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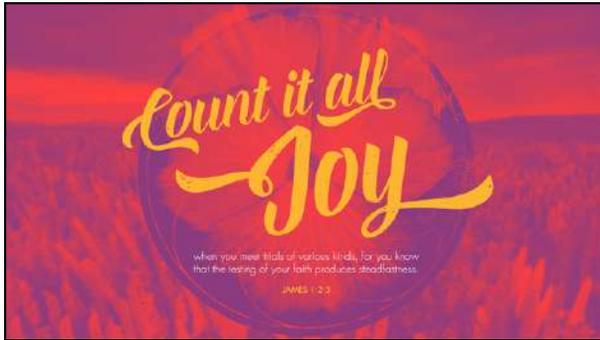
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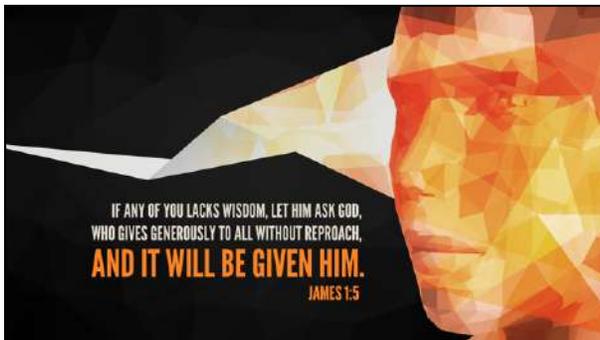
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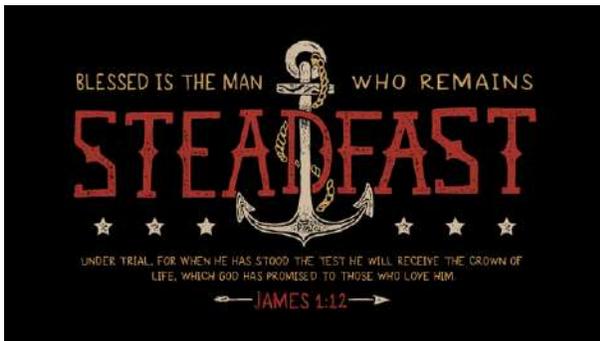
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**Faith and Works? Struggles with James?**

- Do Paul and James contradict each other? What saves us? Faith alone, or faith plus works?
- Faith alone saves!
- James is not in disagreement with Paul, simply extrapolating what saving faith looks like.
- James was responding to a misunderstood form of Paul's teaching, clarifying that faith takes the form of action.




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### Principles and Comparisons from James 2:14-26

- James does not deny the necessity of faith
- James addresses the fruit of salvation, not the root of salvation
- James does not use “works” to judge others, but to judge oneself
- For James faith that does NOT save is intellectual, for Paul faith that does save is a heart-response

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### Words mean different things: James 2:14-26

- For James “justified” means vindicated, for Paul it means “declared righteous” these are not the same
- For James “works” means good deeds of the Christian, for Paul “works” refers to keeping the law, these are not the same
- James uses every significant term, in a different way than Paul does.

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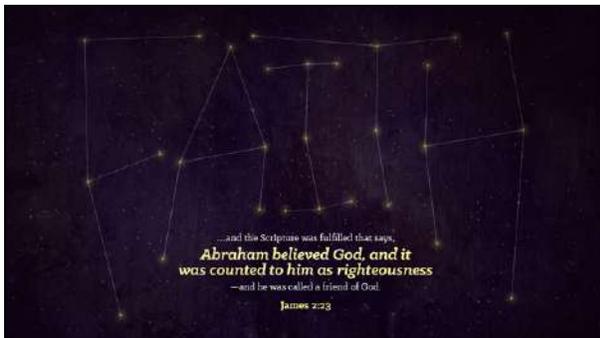
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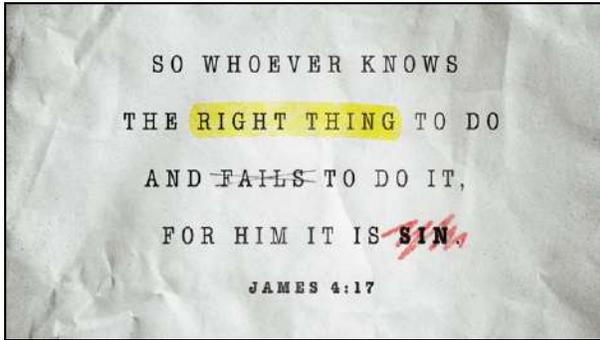
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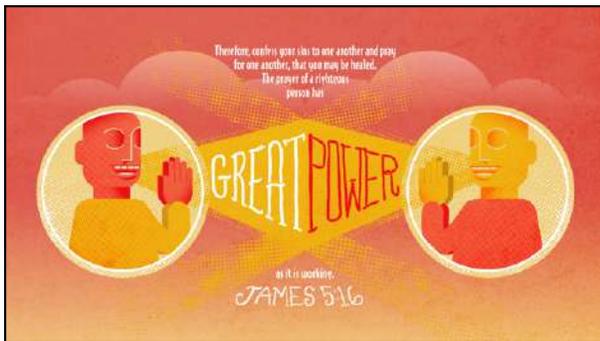
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**James: Unique Contributions**

- Insistent that faith is evidenced by works: “We are saved for works not by works”
- While Paul speaks of the “Declaration of righteousness” James speaks of the “Demonstration of our righteousness”
- James provides practical, easy to understand instruction for Christians. He does not mince words but “tells it as it is!”

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**Assignments, Wrap Up**

- Discussion Board (Due by April 7<sup>th</sup>): Prompt 1: Pick one qualification and describe how it should be displayed of a church leader or pastor today, using other Scriptures to support your work. (Consider yourself in the position, meaning, don't make the description unrealistic!). Prompt 2: Based on the list of qualifications, in your own words, describe a faithful pastor or leader. (You can make reference to the list, but this is meant to paraphrase it, not simply quote the Scripture. In other words, don't just write out the list again).

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### Assignments, Wrap Up

- Read: Carson and Moo Chapters
- Read: Witherington

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