

# James 2:14-26

Outline of chapter 2:

1. The three themes detailed in 2:1-5:18:
  - a. First theme, Rich and Poor (2:1-26)
    - i. 2:1-13 - Favoritism of Rich condemned
    - ii. 2:14-26 - Workless Faith (for example, partiality, etc.) exposed

## REVIEW 2:1-13:

2:5 – “Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?”

1. James will use four rhetorical questions to prove his readers are wrong (or, immature):
  - a. Question One: “Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?”
  - b. Question Two: “Are not the rich the ones who oppress you?”
  - c. Question Three: “Are not the rich the ones who drag you into court?”
  - d. Question Four: “Are not the rich the ones who blaspheme the name of the honorable name by which you were called?”

<i>World's View:</i>		<b>FOUR QUESTIONS:</b>	<i>Divine View:</i>	
<b>RICH</b>	POOR	“Has not God chosen those who are <b>poor</b> in the world to be <u>rich in faith</u> ?”	RICH	<b>POOR</b> +
+		“Are not the <b>rich</b> the ones who <u>oppress you</u> ?”		
+		“Are not the <b>rich</b> the ones who <u>drag you into court</u> ?”		
+		“Are not the <b>rich</b> the ones who <u>blaspheme</u> the name of Jesus?”		

2:6 – “But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court?”

1. The class distinctions of this time in the Middle East is captured in this verse.
  - a. Wealthy landholders were constantly increasing ownership of property
  - b. Former farmers and former landowners were being driven off their land, out of the middle class and into the cheap work force.
  - c. The middle class and the poor were forced to labor for the wealthy who took advantage of the changing economy and set oppressive wages and unjust labor.
  - d. This is typical fourth generation economic turmoil that becomes social injustice to the middle class (now the poor)
    - i. Amos 4:1 (760-754 BC, Northern Israel) –  
“Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, ‘Bring, that we may drink!’ ”
    - ii. James 5:1-6 (45 AD, Syria north of Israel) – |  
“Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your

flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.”

2:7 – “Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?”

3756 [e]	846 [e]	987 [e]	3588 [e]	2570 [e]	3686 [e]	3588 [e]	1941 [e]	1909 [e]	4771 [e]
ouk	autoi	blasphēmousin	to	kalon	onoma	to	epiklēthen	eph'	hymas
7 οὐκ	αὐτοὶ	βλασφημοῦσιν	τὸ	καλὸν	ὄνομα	τὸ	ἐπικληθὲν	ἐφ'	ὑμᾶς ?
Not	they	are blaspheming	the	good	Name	-	having been called	upon	you
Adv	PPro-NM3P	V-PIA-3P	Art-ANS	Adj-ANS	N-ANS	Art-ANS	V-APP-ANS	Prep	PPro-A2P

1. “the honorable name by which you were called” is literally “the good Name having been called upon you.”
  - a. This is a Semetic phrase that needs to be translated because the literal Greek is difficult
  - b. A “Name called over you” means the one called (“you”) is own by the person whose “name” is called.
    - i. Amos 9:11-12 – “In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,” declares **the Lord** who does this.
    - ii. Acts 15:16-18 – (same verse quoted in NT) – “After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says **the Lord,** who makes these things known from of old.’ ”

2:8 – “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.

1487 [e]	3305 [e]	3551 [e]	5055 [e]	937 [e]	2596 [e]	3588 [e]	1124 [e]	25 [e]	3588 [e]
Ei	mentoi	nomon	teleite	basilikon	kata	tēn	graphēn	Agapēseis	ton
8 Εἰ	μέντοι	νόμον	τελεῖτε	βασιλικὸν	, κατὰ	τὴν	γραφὴν	, Ἀγαπήσεις	τὸν
If	indeed	[the] law	you keep	royal	according to	the	Scripture	You shall love	the
Conj	Conj	N-AMS	V-PIA-2P	Adj-AMS	Prep	Art-AFS	N-AFS	V-FIA-2S	Art-AMS

4139 [e]	4771 [e]	5613 [e]	4572 [e]	2573 [e]	4160 [e]
plēsion	sou	hōs	seauton	kalōs	poieite
πλησίον	σου	ὡς	σεαυτὸν	, καλῶς	ποιεῖτε .
neighbor	of you	as	yourself	well	you are doing
Adv	PPro-G2S	Adv	PPro-AM2S	Adv	V-PIA-2P

1. “if” is first class condition which assumes it is true
2. The point of the four questions is not to encourage the poor believers reading this letter to start opposing the rich, sticking it “to the man” and making Mr. Goldfinger sit on the floor at synagogue. The point is to stop being partial, especially practicing partiality based on temporal worldly standing.

3. If the readers were doing it right they would treat everyone the same including their rich oppressors and their poor fellow believers. This is brought out when James appeals to the “royal law” and quotes Leviticus 19:18 – “you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”
4. “Royal Law” – *nomon...Basilikon* -
  - a. *Nomon* – “Law” – definition “that which is assigned” “usage”, “law”. It was used to refer to law, custom, the divine laws, a force or influence impelling action, the Mosaic Law, first five books (Torah), the OT Scriptures.
  - b. *Basilikon* – “Royal” – anything connected with the king. In this case the king is the Lord who spoke in the OT and who manifested in the Gospels to proclaim his kingdom.,

### **“The Royal Law According to the Scripture” (Leviticus 19:9-18)**

“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge,  
neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest.

And you shall not strip your vineyard bare,  
neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard.  
You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner:

**I am the Lord your God.**

“You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another.  
You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God:

**I am the Lord.**

“You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him.

The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning.  
You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God:

**I am the Lord.**

“You shall do no injustice in court.

You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great,  
but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.  
You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people,  
and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor:

**I am the Lord.**

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart,  
but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.  
You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people,  
but you shall love your neighbor as yourself:

**I am the Lord.**

5. Notice the “if” clause at the beginning of 2:8 and 2:9 –

- a. “if indeed” – *Ei mentoi* –
- b. “if however” – *Ei de* -

2:9 – **“But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.**

1487 [e]	1161 [e]	4380 [e]		266 [e]	2038 [e]	1651 [e]	5259 [e]	3588 [e]
ei	de	prosōpoiēmpete		hamartian	ergazesthe	elenchomenoi	hypo	tou
9 εἰ	δὲ	προσωπολημπτεῖτε	,	ἁμαρτίαν	ἐργάζεσθε	, ἔλεγχόμενοι	ὑπὸ	τοῦ
If	however	you show partiality		sin	you are committing	being convicted	by	the
Conj	Conj	V-PIA-2P		N-AFS	V-PIMP-2P	V-PPMP-NMP	Prep	Art-GMS

3551 [e]	5613 [e]	3848 [e]
nomou	hōs	parabatai
νόμου	ὡς	παραβάται .
law	as	transgressors
N-GMS	Adv	N-NMP

2:10 – “For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

3748 [e]	1063 [e]	3650 [e]	3588 [e]	3551 [e]	5083 [e]	4417 [e]	1161 [e]	1722 [e]	1520 [e]	1096 [e]
Hostis	gar	holon	ton	nomon	tērēsē	ptaisē	de	en	heni	gegonen
10 Ὅστις	γὰρ	ὅλον	τὸν	νόμον	τηρήσῃ	, πταιίσῃ	δὲ	ἐν	ἐνί	, γέγονεν
Whoever	for	all	the	law	shall keep	shall stumble	but	in	one [point]	he has become
RelPro-NMS	Conj	Adj-AMS	Art-AMS	N-AMS	V-ASA-3S	V-ASA-3S	Conj	Prep	Adj-DNS	V-RIA-3S

3956 [e]	1777 [e]
pantōn	enochos
πάντων	ἔνοχος .
of all	guilty
Adj-GNP	Adj-NMS

1. The readers are in violation on several levels:
  - a. They want to oppose their rich oppressors.
  - b. They want to show favor to the rich.
  - c. They are willing to side with the rich and join in the oppression of the poor.
2. Their partiality is a sin and the Law convicts them as transgressors.
  - a. This sin of partiality does not seem so bad, in fact, it is normal, the way the world works.
  - b. Failing at one point of the law is total defeat.
    - i. It is not a percentage grade like 98 of 100 equals a 98% passing grade, an “A”.
    - ii. Instead, minus one out of a hundred is 99% and equal to TOTAL FAILURE!
  - c. Practicing partiality but not committing adultery or murder does not mean you are not a transgressor of the law.

2:11 – “For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

3588 [e]	1063 [e]	2036 [e]	3361 [e]	3431 [e]	2036 [e]	2532 [e]	3361 [e]	5407 [e]	1487 [e]	1161 [e]
ho	gar	eipōn	Mē	moicheusēs	eipen	kai	Mē	phoneusēs	ei	de
11 ὁ	γὰρ	εἰπὼν ,	Μὴ	μοιχεύσης ,	εἶπεν	καί ,	Μὴ	φονεύσης .	εἰ	δὲ
The [One]	for	having said	Not	you shall commit adultery	said	also	Not	you shall murder	If	however
Art-NMS	Conj	V-APA-NMS	Adv	V-ASA-2S	V-AIA-3S	Conj	Adv	V-ASA-2S	Conj	Conj

3756 [e]	3431 [e]	5407 [e]	1161 [e]	1096 [e]	3848 [e]	3551 [e]
ou	moicheueis	phoneueis	de	gegonas	parabatēs	nomou
οὐ	μοιχεύεις ,	φονεύεις	δὲ ,	γέγονας	παραβάτης	νόμου .
not	you do commit adultery	do commit murder	however	you have become	a transgressor	of [the] law
Adv	V-PIA-2S	V-PIA-2S	Conj	V-RIA-2S	N-NMS	N-GMS

1. The concept that failure in one area equals failure of the whole is held by many:
  - a. The elderly Priest Eleazar before the Seleucid King Antiochus when Antiochus IV Epiphanes tried to convince Eleazar to eat pork so he could avoid the torture of the Greeks said, *“Do not suppose that it would be a petty sin if we were to eat defiling food; to transgress the law in matters either small or great is of equal seriousness, for in either case the law is equally despised.”*
  - b. The Stoics required similar unity of virtues and vices
  - c. Augustine:

*“Whoever has one virtue has all of them, and whoever does not have a particular one has none.”*
  - d. Paul in Galatians 5:3:

*“I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.”*
  - e. Jesus in Matthew 5:18-19 –

*“For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”*

2:12 – **“So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty.**

3779 [e]	2980 [e]	2532 [e]	3779 [e]	4160 [e]	5613 [e]	1223 [e]	3551 [e]	1657 [e]	3195 [e]	2919 [e]
Houtōs	laleite	kai	houtōs	poieite	hōs	dia	nomou	eleutherias	mellontes	krinesthai
12 Οὕτως	λαλεῖτε	καὶ	οὕτως	ποιεῖτε	ὡς	διὰ	νόμου	ἐλευθερίας	μέλλοντες	κρίνεσθαι .
So	speak	and	so	act	as	by	[the] law	of freedom	being about	to be judged
Adv	V-PMA-2P	Conj	Adv	V-PMA-2P	Adv	Prep	N-GMS	N-GFS	V-PPA-NMP	V-PNM/P

1. They cannot expect to be saved by keeping the law, so accept the grace of the law of liberty and, likewise, show mercy.
2. When they begin to understand the Law of Moses this way compared to Jesus’ fulfillment of the Law and the New Covenant they realize:
  - a. Everyone is failing under the Law of Moses
  - b. Everyone can come for mercy to the fulfilled Law and the New Covenant, the Law that gives freedom or the Law of Liberty

2:13 – “For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

3588 [e]	1063 [e]	2920 [e]	448 [e]	3588 [e]	3361 [e]	4160 [e]	1656 [e]	2620 [e]	1656 [e]
hē	gar	krisis	aneleos	tō	mē	poiēsanti	eleos	katakauchatai	eleos
13 ἡ	γὰρ	κρίσις	ἀνέλεος	τῷ	μὴ	ποιήσαντι	ἔλεος	κατακαυχᾶται	ἔλεος
-	For	judgment	without mercy [will be]	to the [one]	not	having shown	mercy	Triumphs over	mercy
Art-NFS	Conj	N-NFS	Adj-NFS	Art-DMS	Adv	V-APA-DMS	N-ANS	V-PIMP-3S	N-NNS

2920 [e]

kriseōs

κρίσεως .

judgment

N-GFS



1. The believer (a person in the New Covenant under the Law of Liberty) should show mercy instead of judging the oppressor and opposing the rich.
2. Showing mercy to the oppressor will help
 

---

  - a. The believer live righteously an in this age
  - b. The oppressor understands and realize the greater New Covenant
  - c. The community observe an example of Jesus and Stephen

---

James 2:14 – “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?”

1. The verses above (2:1-13) ended up speaking of showing your faith by your deeds of mercy to the oppressors, those who deserved your judgment
  - a. This is based on the fact that we all deserve judgment, but have received mercy through the Law of Liberty.
  - b. We received mercy and entered the New Covenant
  - c. We now show our faith by showing mercy and not calling for judgment and returning oppression for oppression
2. This next section reaffirms the concept that deeds must follow faith, but makes the application to the poor.
  - a. Instead of speaking out in favor of the poor, do something!
  - b. Don't just blame the rich or wish the best for the poor, give them clothes and food.

2:15 – “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food,

2:16 – “and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?”

2036 [e]	1161 [e]	5100 [e]	846 [e]	1537 [e]	4771 [e]	5217 [e]	1722 [e]	1515 [e]	2328 [e]	2532 [e]	5526 [e]	3361 [e]
eipē	de	tis	autois	ex	hymōn	Hypagete	en	eirēnē	thermainesthe	kai	chortazesthe	mē
16 εἶπη	δέ	τις	αὐτοῖς	ἐξ	ὑμῶν	, Ὑπάγετε	ἐν	εἰρήνῃ	; θερμαίνεσθε	καὶ	χορτάζεσθε	, μὴ
says	then	anyone	to them	out from	you	Go	in	peace	be warmed	and	be filled	not
V-ASA-3S	Conj	IPro-NMS	Pro-DM3P	Prep	Pro-G2P	V-PMA-2P	Prep	N-DFS	V-PMM/P-2P	Conj	V-PMM/P-2P	Adv

1325 [e]	1161 [e]	846 [e]	3588 [e]	2006 [e]	3588 [e]	4983 [e]	5101 [e]	3588 [e]	3786 [e]
dōte	de	autois	ta	epitēdeia	tou	sōmatos	ti	to	ophelos
δοῦτε	δὲ	αὐτοῖς	τὰ	ἐπιτήδεια	τοῦ	σώματος	, τί	τὸ	ὄφελος ?
gives	however	to them	the	needful things	for the	body	what [is]	the	profit
V-ASA-2P	Conj	Pro-DM3P	Art-ANP	Adj-ANP	Art-GNS	N-GNS	IPro-NNS	Art-NNS	N-NNS

2:17 – “So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

2:18 – “But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

2:19 – “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

2:20 – “Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?”

2:21 – “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?”

2:22 – “You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;

2:23 – “and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.

2:24 – “You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

2:25 – “And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?”

2:26 – “For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”