

Mt 6:14-15; 18:35
Lk 6:36f
Rm 6:15-17
1 Jn 4:18
Law. •Talk and behave like people who are going to be judged by the law of freedom, •because there will be judgement without mercy for those who have not been merciful themselves;^c but the merciful need have no fear of judgement.

Faith and good works^f

2:24
Rm 4:1
Ga 5:6
Mt 23:41-43
1 Co 13:3
1 Jn 3:17
Mt 7:21
Take the case, my brothers, of someone who has never done a single good act but claims that he has faith. Will that faith save him? •If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them, 'I wish you well; keep yourself warm and eat plenty', without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? •Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead.^g

This is the way to talk to people of that kind:^h 'You say you have faith and I have good deeds; I will prove to you that I have faith by showing you my good deeds—now you prove to me that you have faith without any good deeds to show. You believe in the one God—that is creditable enough, but the demons have the same belief, and they tremble with fear. •Do realise, you senseless man, that faith without good deeds is useless.ⁱ •You surely know that Abraham our father was justified by his deed, because he *offered his son Isaac on the altar*? •There you see it: faith and deeds were working together; his faith became perfect by what he did.^j This is what scripture really means when it says: *Abraham put his faith in God, and this was counted as making him justified*; and that is why he was called 'the friend of God'.

2:14+
Jos 2:4f
Heb 11:31
You see now that it is by doing something good, and not only by believing, that a man is justified. •There is another example of the same kind: Rahab the prostitute, justified by her deeds because she welcomed the messengers^k and showed them a different way to leave. •A body dies when it is separated from the spirit, and in the same way faith is dead if it is separated from good deeds.

Uncontrolled language

Mt 12:36;
23:8
1 Co 12:28+
3 Only a few of you, my brothers, should be teachers, bearing in mind that those of us^a who teach can expect a stricter judgement.

Pr 10:19;
13:3; 18:21
Sl 14:1
Sl 5:9-15;
28:13-26
After all, every one of us does something wrong, over and over again; the only man who could reach perfection would be someone who never said anything wrong—he would be able to control every part of himself. •Once^b we put a bit into the horse's mouth, to make it do what we want, we have the whole animal under our control. •Or think of ships: no matter how big they are, even if a gale is driving them, the man at the helm can steer them anywhere he likes by controlling a tiny rudder. •So is the tongue only a tiny part of the body, but it can proudly claim that it does great things. Think how small a flame can set fire to a huge forest; •the tongue is a flame like that. Among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a whole wicked world in itself:^c it infects the whole body; catching fire itself from hell, it sets fire to the whole wheel of creation.^d •Wild animals and birds, reptiles and fish can all be tamed by man, and often are; •but nobody can tame the tongue—it is a pest that will not keep still, full of deadly poison. •We use it to bless the Lord and Father,^e but we also use it to curse men who are made in God's image: •the blessing and the curse come out of the same mouth.^f My brothers, this must be wrong—does any water supply give a flow of fresh water and salt water out of the same pipe? •Can a fig tree give you olives, my brothers, or a vine give figs? No more can sea water give you fresh water.

Real wisdom and its opposite

Ep 4:1-2
If there are any wise or learned men among you, let them show it by their good lives, with humility and wisdom in their actions. •But if at heart you have the bitterness of jealousy, or a self-seeking ambition, never make any claims for yourself or cover up the truth with lies —•principles of this kind are not the wisdom that comes down from above: they are only earthly, animal and

- 16 devilish. •Wherever you find jealousy and ambition, you find disharmony, and
 17 wicked things of every kind being done; •whereas the wisdom that comes down
 from above is essentially something pure; it also makes for peace, and is kindly
 and considerate;^c it is full of compassion and shows itself by doing good; nor is
 18 there any trace of partiality or hypocrisy in it. •Peacemakers, when they work for
 peace, sow the seeds which will bear fruit in holiness.

1:5 +
 Ws 7:22
 1 Co 13:4-7

Mt 5:9
 Ph 1:11
 Heb 12:11

Disunity among Christians

- 1 **4** Where do these wars and battles between yourselves first start? Isn't it precisely
 2 in the desires fighting inside your own selves? •You want something and you
 haven't got it; so you are prepared to kill. You have an ambition that you cannot
 satisfy; so you fight to get your way by force.^a Why you don't have what you
 3 want is because you don't pray for it; •when you do pray and don't get it, it
 is because you have not prayed properly, you have prayed for something to indulge
 your own desires.
 4 You are as unfaithful as adulterous wives;^b don't you realise that making
 the world your friend is making God your enemy? Anyone who chooses the world
 5 for his friend turns himself into God's enemy. •Surely you don't think scripture
 is wrong when it says: the spirit which he sent to live in us wants us for himself
 6 alone?^c •But he has been even more generous to us, as scripture says: *God opposes*
 7 *the proud but he gives generously to the humble*. •Give in to God, then; resist the
 8 devil, and he will run away from you. •The nearer you go to God, the nearer he
 will come to you. Clean your hands, you sinners, and clear your minds, you
 9 waverers: •Look at your wretched condition, and weep for it in misery; be
 10 miserable instead of laughing, gloomy instead of happy.^d •Humble yourselves
 before the Lord and he will lift you up.
 11 Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who slanders a brother, or
 condemns him, is speaking against the Law and condemning the Law. But if you
 condemn the Law, you have stopped keeping it and become a judge over it.
 12 There is only one lawgiver^e and he is the only judge and has the power to acquit
 or to sentence. Who are you to give a verdict on your neighbour?^f

Rm 7:23
 Ga 5:17
 1 P 2:11

Ps 66:18
 Mt 6:5-13, 33
 Rm 8:26

Mt 6:24p
 1 Jn 2:15-17
 Rm 8:26

Gn 2:7

1 P 5:5-9
 Pr 3:34

LXX
 Ep 6:11
 Zc 1:3
 Mt 3:7
 1:8

Mt 23:12

Lv 19:6
 Mt 7:1-5

Dt 32:39 +
 Mt 10:28p
 Lk 12:5
 Rm 14:4

e. 'Judgement' (i.e. 'condemnation') is merciless to anyone who does not show mercy. 'the merciful ... judgement'; lit. 'mercy triumphs over judgement'. Cf. Mt 18:35.

f. The different points of view of James and Paul, Rm 3:20-31; Ga 2:16; 3:2,5,11f; Ph 3:9, are not wholly irreconcilable. Paul is anxious to rule out the view that a human being can earn salvation without having faith in Christ, since such a reliance on self-made sanctity would be contradicted by the radical sinfulness of unredeemed man, Rm 1:18-3:20; Ga 3:22, and would make faith in Christ superfluous, Ga 2:17; cf. Rm 1:16+. But Paul does not deny that the saint who has been made holy by grace must show his faith by actually loving, Ga 5:6; cf. 1 Th 1:3; 2 Th 1:11; Phm 6, and in this way obeying the Law, Rm 8:4, i.e. the Law or commandment of Christ and his Spirit, Ga 6:2; Rm 8:2, which is the commandment to love, Rm 13:8-10; Ga 5:14. It is perfectly true, however, that in order to teach the same truth as Paul, James in a different context and under different circumstances explains the case of Abraham in a completely different way from Paul.

g. Lit. 'it is dead by itself'.

h. The same opponents as in vv. 14 and 16.

i. Var. (Vulg.) 'dead', cf. vv. 17 and 26.

j. Unlike most Jews, James does not consider Abraham's faith (trust in God) as constituting a 'good deed' in itself; however closely he relates the two things, James makes a clear distinction between having faith and doing something as a result of that faith.

k. 'messengers'; var. 'spies', cf. Heb 11:31.

3 a. Var. (Vulg.) 'you'.

b. Lit. 'Now if (var. 'Behold' as, lit. in v. 4) we put bits into horses' mouths'.

c. Lit. 'the tongue... is the *kosmos* of wickedness' i.e. 'it is the world of wickedness', or alternatively 'it is the ornament of wickedness'.

d. Lit. 'inflaming the wheel (var. course) of nature' (i.e. of the world) 'and being inflamed by Gehenna'.

e. 'Lord and Father', var. (Vulg.) 'God and Father'.

f. The antithesis 'bless-curse' is common in the O.T., Gn 12:3; 27:29; Nb 23:11; 24:9; Jos 8:34.

g. Vulg. adds 'in harmony with good'.

4 a. Alternative translation (corr.) 'You crave things you don't have, you are envious and jealous of things you cannot have, you squabble and fight' (lit. 'fight and go to war'). 'War' here is not the internal spiritual struggle of a Christian, cf. Rm 7:23; 1 P 2:11, and it seems to be more than just a heated argument between Christians, it seems to mean coming to real blows.

b. Lit. 'You adulteresses, don't you know that friendship of the world is enmity of God?' The imagery of Israel the unfaithful wife of Yahweh is traditional in the O.T., Ho 1:2+, cf. Mt 12:39; Mk 8:38; 2 Co 11:2.

c. Lit. 'the spirit he has made to dwell in us yearns for our love'; or 'he yearns intensely over the spirit he has made to dwell in us'. This text, now lost, seems to have inspired Rm 8:26-27 as well. It is because God has shared his Spirit with us, that we want what God wants and that God answers our prayers, cf. Mt 18:19-20; Jn 14:13+.

d. Cf. Is 32:11f; Mt 2:4; Jr 4:13f; Zc 11:2f.

e. Var. 'There is only one: the lawgiver...'

f. Lit. 'And who are you the one judging your neighbour?' cf. 2:4. To believe yourself qualified to judge (=punish) a neighbour breaks the golden rule, 2:8, of love. Cf. Rm 2:1.

A warning for the rich and the self-confident

Pr 27:1 Here is the answer for those of you who talk like this: 'Today or tomorrow, 13
Mt 6:34 we are off to this or that town; we are going to spend a year there, trading, and
Lk 12:19-20 make some money'. •You never know what will happen tomorrow: you are no 14
Jb 14:2+ more than a mist that is here for a little while and then disappears. •The most 15
Ac 18:21 you should ever say is: 'If it is the Lord's will, we shall still be alive to do this or
Rm 1:10 that'. •But how proud and sure of yourselves you are now! Pride of this kind is 16
1 Jn 2:16+ always wicked. •Everyone who knows what is the right thing to do and doesn't 17
do it commits a sin.

Lk 6:24 **5** Now an answer for the rich. Start crying, weep for the miseries that are 1
coming to you. •Your wealth is all rotting, your clothes are all eaten up by 2
Si 29:10-12 moths. •All your gold and your silver are corroding away, and the same corrosion 3
Mt 6:19-21 will be your own sentence, and eat into your body. It was a burning fire that you
Pr 16:27 stored up as your treasure for the last days.^a •Labourers mowed your fields, and 4
Pr 11:4,28 you cheated them—listen to the wages that you kept back, calling out; realise 5
Lv 19:13 that the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. •On earth 5
Dt 24:14-15 you have had a life of comfort and luxury; in the time of slaughter^b you went
Ex 22:22 on eating to your heart's content. •It was you who condemned the innocent and 6
Ws 2:10-20 killed them; they offered you no resistance.

A final exhortation

1 Co 15:23+ Now be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how 7
1 P 2:19+ patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn
Dt 11:14 rains^c and the spring rains! •You too have to be patient; do not lose heart, 8
Mt 24:33p because the Lord's coming will be soon. •Do not make complaints against one 9
Rm 2:6+ another, brothers, so as not to be brought to judgement yourselves; the Judge is
2 Co 6:2+ already to be seen waiting at the gates. •For your example, brothers, in sub- 10
Rv 1:3 mitting with patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord;
Mt 5:11-12p remember it is those who had endurance that we say are the blessed ones. You 11
1:2-3,12 have heard of the patience of Job, and understood the Lord's purpose, realising
Jb 42:10-17 that *the Lord is kind and compassionate*.

Ps 103:8 Above all, my brothers, do not swear by heaven or by the earth, or use any 12
Si 5:10; oaths at all. If you mean 'yes', you must say 'yes'; if you mean 'no', say 'no'.
23:9 Otherwise you make yourselves liable to judgement.
Mt 5:34-37

If any one of you is in trouble, he should pray; if anyone is feeling happy, he 13
Ti 1:5+ should sing a psalm. •If one of you is ill, he should send for the elders 14
Mk 6:13 of the church, and they must anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord^d and
Ac 3:16+ pray over him. •The prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise 15
Gn 18:16 him up again; and if he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. •So confess 16
Ps 32 your sins to one another, and pray for one another, and this will cure you;^e the
Pr 28:13+ heartfelt^f prayer of a good man works very powerfully. •Elijah was a human 17
Si 4:26 being like ourselves—he prayed hard for it not to rain, and no rain fell for
1 Jn 1:8-10 three-and-a-half years; •then he prayed again and the sky gave rain and the earth 18
Ex 32:11+ gave crops.
1 K 17:1; Lk 4:25 Rv 11:6

Mt 18:15 My brothers, if one of you strays away from the truth, and another brings 19
Ga 6:1 him back to it, •he may be sure^g that anyone who can bring back a sinner from 20
Pr 10:12 the wrong way that he has taken will be saving a soul from death and *covering*
1 P 4:8 up a great number of sins.

5 a. Eschatologically the misfortunes of the rich will be apparent only at the Judgement, 5:7-9. We however are already living in the last days, cf. 2 Co 6: 2+.

b. Not a reference to Judgement day, but to the extreme violence to which, once, the innocent had been subjected, v. 6, while the rich were living at ease, v. 5.

c. 'rains', var. 'fruits'.

d. Om. 'of the Lord'. The tradition that these prayers and this anointing with oil in the name of the

Lord, and for the purpose of helping the sick and forgiving their sins, are the origin of the Church's 'sacrament of the sick' (or Holy Unction), was endorsed by the Council of Trent.

e. This mutual confession and prayer for each other, instead of being only recommendations to the sick, v. 15, are here urged on all Christians. Nothing special however may be deduced about sacramental confession.

f. Var. (Vulg.) 'assiduous'.

g. Var. 'you can be sure'.

1 PETER

THE FIRST LETTER OF PETER

Address. Greetings

- 1 Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, sends greetings to all those living among
1 foreigners^a in the Dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and
2 Bithynia, who have been chosen, •by the provident purpose of God the Father,
to be made holy by the Spirit, obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his
blood.^b Grace and peace be with you more and more.

Jn 7:35
2 Co 5:6
Jm 1:1+
Rm 8:29
Ep 1:4
2 Th 2:13
Ex 24:8
Mt 26:28+

Introduction. The salvation of Christians

- 3 Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy
has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that
4 we have a sure hope •and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt
or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens.
5 Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which has
6 been prepared is revealed at the end of time.^c •This is a cause of great joy for you,
even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of
7 trials; •so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and
proved like gold—only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even
though it bears testing by fire—and then you will have praise and glory and
8 honour. •You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him,
you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because
9 you believe; •and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that
is, the salvation of your souls.

1:23
Jn 3:5
1 Jn 2:29; 3:9
Mt 6:19-20p
Rm 1:4+
Col 1:5,12;
3:3-4
Ep 1:19f
1 Jn 3:2
Jm 16:20
Jm 1:2-3
Heb 12:11
Mt 13:2-3
1 Co 3:13
Rm 2:7
1 Jn 4:20
Heb 10:39

The hope of the prophets

- 10 It was this salvation that the prophets were looking and searching so hard for;
11 their prophecies were about the grace which was to come to you. •The Spirit of
Christ which was in them^d foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glories that
would come after them, and they tried to find out at what time and in
12 what circumstances all this was to be expected. •It was revealed to them that the
news they brought of all the things which have now been announced to you, by
those who preached to you the Good News through the Holy Spirit sent from
heaven, was for you and not for themselves. Even the angels long to catch a
glimpse of these things.

Ac 11:27+
Heb 11:39
2 P 1:20
Is 52:13-
53:12
Lk 18:31+
Ac 1:7+;
2:23+
Mt 13:16-17p
Rm 16:25+
Ep 3:10+

1 a. They are in an alien environment that does not make the practice of religion easy. This is also true of Christians in general. The Christian's city is heaven, Ph 3:20; Col 3:1-4; Heb 13:14; he is an exile on earth, 2 Co 5:6; 1 P 1:17; he is a foreigner here, Ps 39:12; 119:19; Heb 11:13; 1 P 1:1; 2:11, on an exodus to the

heavenly promised land, Heb 3:1-4:11.

b. Trinitarian formula, cf. 2 Co 13:13+.

c. Lit. 'at the last time', cf. 1:20.

d. By saying the prophets are inspired by the pre-existing Christ, cf. 1 Co 10:4,9, the author makes clear the unity of the O.T. and the N.T.