

## **Lesson Five — James Chapter Two, Part I: Fulfill the Royal Law**

*Day One — Observations of Chapter Two*

*Day Two — Observations Continued*

*Day Three — Worldly Riches*

*Day Four — The Inheritance*

*Day Five — Co-heirs*

Last week we completed our study of the first chapter of James. This week we will begin an in-depth look at James chapter two. It goes without saying that we cannot forget what we learned in chapter one as we move into chapter two. Chapter and verse breaks are not divinely inspired; man added these breaks. And while most of the time these breaks can be very helpful, there are some places where the breaks are unfortunate because it causes the reader to ignore the intended flow of thought. This is certainly the case as we move forward in the Book of James.

As before, we will go step by step in observing chapter two. Observation toward the goal of gaining correct interpretation takes time, work, and prayer. Take time right now to pray for your week of study, not only your week, but that of your fellow class members and your discussion leader, as well. Please take a moment to pray for me, also. Pray that I would be bold and courageous in giving out the Word of God.

Thank you so much!

### **Day One — Observations from Chapter Two**

We will begin this week by working on your observation sheet of James chapter two in your Appendix. First read through chapters one and two together, as if there were no chapter break. Then we will focus on chapter two. Do this reading now.

What are your impressions of chapter two?

Now you are ready to begin looking at the various sections of chapter two. As we did in chapter one, begin by marking the repeated words (and synonyms) or phrases. If you see any key word from chapter one used in chapter two also, you will want to add to the list you began for that word in chapter one. Also mark any new key words. Remember, the definition of a *key word (or phrase)* is any word (or phrase) that is repeated and, if deleted from the text, would change the meaning of the text.

After you have marked the key words, in the right hand margin, make simple lists of what you see in the text connected with each key word or phrase.

That's it for today. Remember to meditate upon what you have read, asking the Holy Spirit to teach you. If you have any questions at this point, you might want to write them down below.

## Day Two — Observations Continued

Now that you have marked as many of the key words and phrases as you could find, and have made lists of each, you will continue observing the text in chapter two. Today you will be looking for, and marking all the different *forms of expression* in the same way that we did in chapter one. Remember, *forms of expression* are **comparisons, contrasts, cause and effect statements, and summary statements**. Just as you did in chapter one, use your *Forms of Expressions* sheet from the Appendix, and mark the forms of expressions in the same way you have previously. Follow the guide on the sheet.

That's it for the day. You have done a great job. As you do this type of observation, you are laying a foundation through which the Holy Spirit will be able to teach you His insights into this book. Keep up the good work. Now as you go about your day, ask Him to cause you to meditate upon what you have observed.

If you would like you may write any notes, questions or observations you have noticed from your study today:

## Day Three — Worldly Riches

Be sure to pray!

As you begin your study today, take a moment to go back and notice the reason given in 1:12 as to why an individual should persevere under trials. Catch the flow of this verse: **after** he has persevered, **after** he has been approved (at the judgment seat), **then** he will *receive the crown of life*. Remember, the reason he is to *consider his trials with joy* (1:2) is because the trials give him an opportunity to prove himself worthy to

receive the crown. And the important things — the things upon which we are to focus — are the things which come down from heaven, from the Father of lights, i.e., the perfect gift — the word of truth — which has *brought us forth* (our spiritual birth). Now, after having *been brought forth*, the Word which has been implanted into the *one brought forth*, is the very thing which is also able to *save the soul* (v. 21), *but only if the believer is a doer of the word and not a hearer only*. (Whew! This paragraph is a mouthful.)

With these thoughts in mind, reread the chapters one and two.

Now we get into the various sections of chapter two. James tells the brethren that they *are not to hold their faith with an attitude of personal favoritism*. With the thoughts from chapter one in mind, work through this next segment of James:

**James 2**

**1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man, “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,” 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? 7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called? 8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For He who said, “DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,” also said, “DO NOT COMMIT MURDER.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.**

By mentioning the rich and poor in chapter one and here again in chapter two, James directs his readers’ attention to the rich man/poor man comparison. And herein, he warns them about judgment. What is the warning? (See vv. 12 and 13.)

According to the text, why does James warn about this?

Also, notice v. 5. What did God choose the poor of this world to be rich in?

Let’s step outside of the Book of James and consider a few other passages that also have the rich/poor scheme. Consider a parable that Jesus told to his disciples:

**Luke 12**

**16 And He told them a parable, saying,**

**“The land of a certain rich man was very productive. 17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 And he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.’” 20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ 21 So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”**

Who gave the land the blessing to produce such plentiful crops in the first place?

In this parable, where is the focus of the rich man?

Where did God want his focus to be?

Would the focus of being rich towards God even be possible for one who is not a believer?

What is the positive and negative potential for a believer who is wealthy in the things of this world?

The positive potential:

The negative potential:

Sum up the outcome of this rich man’s life.

What was the possible outcome?

Relate what the rich man in Luke chapter sixteen is poor in, and what the poor man in James 2:5 is rich in. Do you see any connection?

Now think about this for a moment. In the long run, which is more important to be rich in? To be poor in?

Do you really believe what you just answered?

Here is another picture of a rich man:

**Matthew 19**

**16 And behold, one came to Him and said, “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain [*lit.*, inherit] eternal <166> life?”**

**17 And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”**

**18 He said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said,  
“YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT  
ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE  
WITNESS; 19 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL  
LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”**

**20 The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?”**

**21 Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”**

**22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property. 23 And Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”**

What problem does this young man have?

In looking at this passage, be sure to relate *obtaining* [inheriting] *eternal life* (v. 16) with *entering into life* (v. 17) with *having treasure in heaven* (v. 21) to *entering into the kingdom of heaven* (v. 23) and *entering the kingdom of God* (v. 24). Jesus relates these five things as being the same in his telling of the story. To get the connection, draw a circle around each one of these phrases and connect them together with a line.

The terms that you circled are synonymous with each other. The building up of one's treasure in heaven **means** that person is acting in such a way in this present age so as to inherit life in the coming age, or entering into the position as co-heir with Christ in the Kingdom age. (Did you catch the meaning of this paragraph?)

In v. 16, you need to note **what** the young man specifically asked Jesus, and **how** Jesus answered. The young man is not asking about receiving the free gift of eternal life, as many think he is with his question. If he were, Jesus' answer would have been totally different. Rather, he is asking about *entering into* (*inheriting*) *life in the coming age* (v. 16), *entering the kingdom of heaven* (vv. 23, 24).

In the same account found in the gospel of Mark, the wording is stated as having to do with the coming age, “...but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; **and in the age to come, eternal <166> life**” (lit. *life for the age* [Mk. 10:30]).

Jesus tells the man that he is to “Keep the commandments.” But the young man knows he still lacks something (v. 20), and Jesus points out the fact that the man’s focus is on his riches. The young man was not willing to do what it takes to enter the kingdom of heaven, because of this focus. He was not willing to change his focus. Therefore, like the man in the parable in Luke chapter twelve, this young man was not rich toward God either.

All of this is related to another thing that Jesus spoke to His disciples. I know we have looked at this before, but it bears repeating.

**Matthew 16:24-17:1**

**24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. 26 For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and WILL THEN RECOMPENSE EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. 28 Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”**

**1 And six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves.**

What is Jesus referring to here?

Catch Jesus’ flow of thought and the emphasis which Jesus puts on this present life. In His estimation of things, what is important in this life (vs. 24-26)?

Jesus refers to the Judgment Seat of Christ inv. 27. Then immediately following this discourse, He refers to the coming Kingdom in His next thought. (This is one of those unfortunate chapter breaks!) So the flow of thought is: presently laying your life down here or not (vv. 24, 26); judgment based upon present life (v. 27); then the appearing of His kingdom (16:28-17:8).

Jesus speaks to His disciples about these things with the view to His coming back to render judgment upon the living — those who are in Christ. This is the ***Judgment Seat of Christ***. Those present at this judgment will only be Christians — those who have *died in Christ* and resurrected, as well as those who are still alive at the catching up of believers in the air. This judgment is a judgment of the works (v. 27) of Christians with a view to the coming age, the Kingdom age. Herein, a Christian will either realize the *salvation of his/her soul* (referred to in Jas. 1:21) or they will realize the loss thereof (vv. 25, 26). *The salvation of the soul is the realization of the purpose of one’s creation and redemption — to rule with Christ in His Kingdom. The loss of one’s soul is to not realize (fulfill) this purpose.*

With these related passages in mind, go back to the beginning of today’s lesson and understand what James is saying in James 2:1-13. What do you think is the main point?

As we close the study for today, ask the Holy Spirit to burn your heart with understanding and discernment in these things. Discerning among these types of passages will have everlasting effects.

## Day Four — The Inheritance

Begin with prayer today as we have some difficult passages to work through.

Now do a quick scan of yesterday's work. Remember the rich man/poor man theme of things as James warns his readers not to judge between the rich and poor by giving preference to the rich. Their motives would be impure in so doing. Recall what he said in James 2:5.

**James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?**

What do you think it means to be *rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom*?

Let's deal with the word *heirs* or *inheritance*. In your mind what do either of these words indicate?

God can only offer the inheritance to someone who is already in the family! One must already be in the family of God in order to be an heir of God. Notice how Paul explains this:

**Romans 8**

**16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God...**

*But there is more that one can gain as an heir of God. One can gain a position as a **co-heir with Christ**, if he/she is willing to meet the conditions attached to becoming a co-heir with the One Who will come as King of His kingdom. As we continue reading in Romans chapter eight, notice what the condition is:*

**... and fellow heirs [lit., co-heir] with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.**

When Christ comes as King of His kingdom, He will come as the "King of kings." Christ will be the King and those who are presently willing to endure suffering with Him, those who will come as kings when Christ comes as King. They will be His co-heirs, and will rule with Him in His Kingdom. Think about that for a moment. What a glorious promise!

James 2:5 reflects what Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount. Read it thoughtfully:

**Matthew 5**

**1 And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 And opening His mouth He began to teach them, saying, 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**

- 5 “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.  
6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.  
7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.  
8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.  
9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.  
10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
11 “Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.  
12 “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Jesus tells His disciples, in the hearing of the crowd, that those who are poor in spirit (v. 3), and those who are persecuted (v. 10) will be blessed because *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. In fact, He says they are to rejoice and be (exceedingly) glad for GREAT is their reward in heaven!

Now remember what James tells his readers — that they (we) are to consider such trials with JOY (1:2), for the same reason, they (we) will be receiving the crown of life (1:12), the salvation of their souls (1:21), and be first fruits (1:18) or heirs of the kingdom (2:5). It all fits together!

But one must walk in a manner worthy of such a blessing. Scripture minces no words when it speaks about being an co-heir. Only those of the family who have walked in a manner worthy of this calling will be given the position of being a co-heir. And Scripture is replete with warnings to the fact. One of those very strong warnings is found in Paul’s letters to the church at Thessalonica. In his first letter, he encourages his readers to walk in a manner worthy:

**1 Thessalonians 2**

**11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, 12 so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.**

Into what two things will God call those who walk worthy (v.12)?

Then in his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul tells what the outcome will be for those who are counted as worthy, and those who will not be counted as worthy. This is a difficult passage to understand because of the harshness of the words. You must diligently seek understanding here, in order to understand this passage, as it is so often misunderstood.

**2 Thessalonians 1**

**...4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. 5 This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know <1492> God and to those who do not obey <5219> the gospel <2098> of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these will pay the penalty <1349> of eternal <166> destruction <3639>, away from the presence <4383> of the Lord and from the glory <1391> of His power <2479>, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have**



Understanding James —  
To the Saving of the Soul

Lesson Five  
James Chapter Two, Part I:  
Fulfill the Royal Law

**believed--for our testimony to you was believed. 11 To this end also we pray for you always that our God may count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; 12 in order that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

By looking up the following definitions, you should be able to more clearly understand what is being dealt with there.

know <1492>

obey <5219> <5723>

gospel <2098>

penalty <1349> <5099>

eternal <166>

destruction <3639>

presence <4383>

glory <1391>

power <2479>

After studying through these definitions, re-read the passage. Notice the time frame (vv. 7b, 10) given to when God will repay with affliction and relief to those deserving affliction and relief respectively. Prayerfully seek the Lord to give you insight into the meaning to this passage. It may be difficult for you.

What do you think this passage means?

It is important to understand that there are several judgments which are to take place in the future. God deals with different groups of people at each of these judgment, until every single person who was ever born will have stood before Him. Since judgment must begin with the people of God, the first judgment to take place will be the Judgment Seat of Christ, or the judgment of the Church. There will not be any person to appear at this judgment who is not a Christian. And all Christians will appear. It is at this

judgment where it will be determined, by the Judge, who will have shown themselves to be worthy to receive an inheritance as first-born and who will have not. And God's judgment will not be partial (Ro. 2:11) and will most certainly be righteous. He will render to each individual what is due that individual, according to what he/she has done in his/her body, whether good or bad (II Cor. 5:10). That is why it is so important that we do not have our focus on the riches of this world.

It is also important that we are not stiff-necked in our response to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. As He convicts us of sin, we must confess (agree with Him) and repent (turn away from) from that sin, then He will cleanse us. Now is the only time that can be done. Once we stand before Him, it is too late to change anything. Then, there will remain no more sacrifice for sin, only a certain expectation of judgment (Heb. 11:26ff).

As we close today, write out what you think it means *to receive* an inheritance in the Kingdom of God, and what you think it *takes* to receive this inheritance.

## Day Five — Co-heirs

In the past few days, we have been seeing that there was a danger in showing partiality in dealing with the rich and poor. We must ask the question, what is the danger of showing partiality? Do we face the same potential? Consider James 2:9-13:

### James 2

**9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.**

If a person does show partiality, what has he, in fact, done?

So, HOW are believers to *speak and act*?

What does the statement in v. 13 mean?

Yesterday, you glimpsed part of the Sermon on the Mount. Relate James 2:13 to Matthew 5:7 in the Sermon on the Mount. Do you see any relationship? If so, what?

What does it mean to *show mercy*? We must hear and understand this in a tangible way and become a doer of the Word. We must put this truth into practice on our lives. Jesus answered a question Peter had in the area of showing mercy and forgiveness. Read this dialogue:

**Matthew 18**

**21** Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

**22** Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. **23** For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. **24** And when he had begun to settle them, there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents. **25** But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. **26** The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.’

**27** “And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. **28** But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ **29** So his fellow slave fell down and began to entreat him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’

**30** “He was unwilling however, but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. **31** So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. **32** Then summoning him, his lord said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. **33** Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?’

**34** “And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.

**35** “So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

Relating this passage to James 2:9-13, what does it mean that mercy triumphs over judgment?

Even during the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus continued with the same idea of the importance of forgiveness. Read what He said:

**Matthew 5**

**21** “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ **22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

**23 “If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.**

What practical application to our lives does this portion of the Word of our Lord give us?

In chapter one, James tells his readers that they should be *doers of the Word* and *not hearers only*. And so should we, if we want to receive our inheritance in the Kingdom of God. In chapter two, James gives us insight as to HOW we should be doers of the Word.

If we want mercy at the Judgment Seat of Christ, so should we be showing mercy to our brethren.

We must have this perspective on things here and now. At any point in time, our very souls may be required of us, just like the rich man in the parable in Luke chapter sixteen. What do you desire your outcome to be?

As you go about your week, be meditating upon these truths, desiring to allow the implanted Word to bring about repentance in your life in these areas, so that you might receive the crown of life and the salvation of your soul.

## **Week’s End Summary:**