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A0729 – July 22, 2007 – Jas 2:18-20 – The Hypothetical Opponent

“Faith without Follow-Through is folly”

“Doctrine without Demonstration is deadly”

- I. Review
 - A. Most difficult passage to exegete in NT
 - B. Structure of Greek Rhetorical Letters
 - 1. Prologue
 - 2. Thematic Statement
 - 3. Body
 - 4. Epilogue
 - C. Structure of James (1:1-5:20)
 - 1. Prologue (1:1-20)
 - 2. Thematic Statement (1:19-20)
 - 3. Body (1:21-5:6)
 - 4. Epilogue (5:7-20)
 - D. Body of James (1:21-5:6)
 - 1. Be Quick to Hear (1:21-2:26)
 - 2. Be Slow to Speak (3:1-13)
 - 3. Be Slow to Anger (4:1-5:6)
 - E. Be Quick to Hear (1:21-2:26)
 - 1. Addressed to Regenerate (1:18)
 - 2. Step 1: “put off wickedness” – confession (1:21a)
 - 3. Step 2: “receive the word” – study Bible doctrine (1:21b)
 - 4. Step 3: “able to save your souls/lives”
 - 5. Become Doers and not Hearers Only (1:22)
 - 6. Hearing Doctrine Important but Doing Doctrine is Vital
(1:22-27)
 - 7. Faith Important but Doing Works is Vital (2:14)

- a. “save” (sozo) – deliver
 - 1. Physical Deliverance
 - 2. Spiritual Deliverance
 - a. Aspect 1: From Penalty of Sin -
 - b. Aspect 2: From Power of Sin –
 - c. Aspect 3: From Presence of Sin –

Justification

Sanctification

Glorification

- b. “faith” (pistis)
 - 1. Subjective – persuaded of the truth of a proposition
 - 2. *Objective* – what is believed, one’s creed, doctrine
- c. A Christian’s doctrine cannot save him from temporal death which could result in premature physical death. This kind of salvation requires application of doctrine.
- d. Illustration of Faith without Works (2:15-17)
 - 1. Saying something but not doing something
 - 2. This faith is dead
 - i. What does “dead” mean”
 - ii. If something is dead it was once alive

“A **faith...**that is now dead must have once been alive. Works keep faith thriving (1 Pet. 1:5–9). The absence of works brings death (James 1:14, 15) to faith (2:26).”ⁱ

- 3. “Dead” parallel to “Useless” in verse 20
 - i. “Useless” means “inactive, idle” not “non-existent. “Hort urges “inactive” as the idea here, like money with no interest and land with no crops.”ⁱⁱ
 - ii. A Dead Faith Means an Inactive Faith
 - iii. Just as a Bicycle Without a Rider is Still a Bicycle so Faith Without Works is Still Faith

II. The Hypothetical Objector (2:18-19)

James 2:18-20 Ἄλλ' ἔρει τις, Σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις, κἀγὼ ἔργα ἔχω· δεῖξόν μοι τὴν πίστιν σου ἐκ τῶν ἔργων σου, κἀγὼ δεῖξω σοι ἐκ τῶν ἔργων μου τὴν πίστιν μου. ¹⁹Σὺ πιστεύεις ὅτι ὁ θεὸς εἷς ἐστίν· καλῶς ποιεῖς· καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια πιστεύουσιν, καὶ φρίσσοουσιν. ²⁰Θέλεις δὲ γνῶναι, ὦ ἄνθρωπε κενέ, ὅτι ἡ πίστις χωρὶς τῶν ἔργων νεκρὰ ἐστίν;

James 2:18-20 But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith from your works, and I will show you from my works my faith. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one, you do well, even the demons believe, and shudder.” ²⁰ But are you willing to understand, you foolish man, that faith without works is useless (**Author’s Translation**)

James 2:18-20 But someone may *well* say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” ¹⁹You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? (**NASB95**)

In this passage we want to answer three questions. *First*, is the man an ally or an opponent? *Second*, what are the

- A. Is the Man an Ally or an Opponent?
 1. The Argument Sounds Like an Ally

On the surface, “You have faith and I have works” seems to agree with James assertion in verse 14, that works are required for salvation.

2. Ἄλλ' ἔρει τις, “But someone will say”

“The natural way of taking ἄλλ' ἔρει τις is as the words of an objector,”

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3. The Literary Formula of Diatribe
 - a. A Form of Debate
 - i. Sarcastically Entertain Opponents Position
 - ii. Call Him Foolish
 - b. Ancient Greek Parallels
 - i. Dio Chrysostom 14 [31], 47
 - ii. Pseudo-Clementine Homilies 9, 16.^{iv}
 - iii. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, iv.3.10
 - iv. Josephus, *Wars* 7.363

- v. 4 Maccabees 2:24
- vi. Epistle of Barnabas 9:6
- c. Biblical Parallels
 - i. 1 Cor 15:35-36 (exact parallel)
 - ii. Rom 9:19-20
 - iii. Rom 11:19-20
- 4. Diatribe Never Introduces an Ally
- 5. James' calls him a "foolish man" in verse 20.
- 6. The Man is an Opponent
- B. What are the Words of the Opponent? Where does the Punctuation Go?
 - 1. View 1: 2:18a
 - a. NET Bible, ESV, NKJV, NIV, The Message
 - b. Objector: Some have faith; others have works; everyone doesn't have both.¹
 - c. James: Faith cannot exist or be seen without works (2:18bff).
 - d. Doesn't Fit Diatribe Formula
 - 2. View 2: 2:18
 - a. NASB95
 - b. Note the words "But someone may *well* say"
 - 1. This word is not in any Greek Text
 - 2. This word implies James grants what follows
 - 3. This word totally misleads
 - c. Makes the Man an Ally
 - d. Ally: A saving faith necessarily produces works
 - e. James: Intellectual faith/mental/cognitive assent to the facts of the gospel is not saving faith (2:19ff)
 - f. Diatribe Formula Never Introduces an Ally^v
 - g. Doesn't Fit Diatribe Formula
 - 3. View 3: 2:18-19
 - a. YLT? (1898)
 - b. The Diatribe Formula Argues Strongly for this View
 - c. James' reply begins in verse 20
- C. What is the Argument of the Opponent?

"Whatever the opponent is arguing in 2:18-19 it opposes what James is arguing in 2:14-17."

¹Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006; 2006).

1. Manuscript Variants in 2:18
 - a. Alexandrian Text Type Reads “without” (*choris*)

Alexandrian Text Type as Reflected in NASB95

“You have faith and I have works;
show me your faith *without* the works,
and
I will show you my faith *by* my works.”

- b. Byzantine Text Type^{vi} and Textus Receptus^{vii} Read
“from” (*ek*)

Majority Text and Textus Receptus Reflected in My Translation

“You have faith, and I have works.
Show me your faith *from* your works,
and
I will show you *from* my works my faith.

2. Which Reading Reflects the Original?
 - a. This is a Question of Textual Criticism (Lower)
 - b. Alexandrian Text Type – “without” (*choris*)
 - c. Byzantine Text Type and Textus Receptus - “from”
(*ek*)
 - i. Majority of Manuscripts (89%)
 - ii. Follows 2nd -3rd century AD Readings^{viii}
 - iii. Majority of Manuscripts from Caesarean Text
 - d. Which Reading is Right?
 - i. Inconclusive from Manuscript Evidence
 - ii. Must be Decided from Context
 1. He’s an Opponent
 2. “Show me” is a Sarcastic Challenge

Type^{ix}

“James, show me from your faith your works and I will show you from my works my faith. Neither can be done. It’s a demand that can’t be fulfilled either way. This kind of sarcasm is seen in Theophilus, in a work called Ad Atilicus (“To Atilicus”) in 1.2 “But even if you should say “show me your God”

I too might say to you "show me your man and I also will show you my God". His point is, neither can be done. Neither demand is fulfillable. Epictetus, "Who in the world are you, the bull of the herd, the queen of the beehive, show me the symbols of your leadership". His point is it's not possible to show this.

3. *ek* is right but not in any Modern English Translation

3. Opponents Argument (2:18-19)
 - a. Faith and Works are Not Connected

The opponents argument is that there is no connection between faith and works. "James, you can no more start with your faith and show me your works than I can start with my works and show you my faith because there is no connection between faith and works." That is the argument of the objector. He's being purely sarcastic. He's saying, "James, you've got this idea that faith and works are connected and if I have a certain belief that should demonstrate itself clearly in certain works. But, really, you can no more show me what you believe from your works than I can show you from my works what I believe. There's no connection between faith and works.

- b. Opponents Proof: One Belief→Two Different Responses
 1. James: There is One God←→Does good works
 2. Demons: There is One God←→Shudder
 - c. Faith and Works are Not Connected
 - d. An Evasion of Responsibility to do Good Works
 4. James' Response (2:20-23)
 - a. You Foolish Man
 - b. Faith and Works are Connected
 1. Abraham (2:21-24)
 2. Rahab (2:25)

ⁱ Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen and H. Wayne House, *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1999), Jas 2:17.

ⁱⁱ Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol.V c1932, Vol.VI c1933 by Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. (Jas 2:20). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dallas Theological Seminary. (1963; 2002). *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 120* (120:342). Dallas Theological Seminary.

^{iv} Dallas Theological Seminary. (1963; 2002). *Bibliotheca Sacra Volume 120*. Dallas Theological Seminary.

v “...no one has yet been able to find a case where this common stylistic introduction did not introduce an opposing or disagreeing voice.” *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: Epistle of James*, 124.

vi As followed in Hodges and Farstad, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*.

vii As seen in *Stephen’s Textus Receptus (1550)* and *Elzevir’s Textus Receptus (1624)*.

viii Zane Hodges, *Light on James Two from Textual Criticism*, (Bibliotheca Sacra 120:480 (Oct 63)), p 345.

ix Zane Hodges, *Light on James Two from Textual Criticism*, (Bibliotheca Sacra 120:480 (Oct 63)), p 346.

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