

THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH IN JAMES

by
Kevin W. McFadden¹

The goal of this brief article is to articulate the nature of saving faith in the theology of James. Andrew Chester argues that “James does not independently choose to introduce faith, and he does not set out any real theology of it either. He has to take it up [because of his polemical context], and he deliberately devalues it.... Faith, even in its positive sense of absolute trust, remains inferior to works for James.”² I disagree. The letter of James both opens and closes with a non-polemical discussion of faith. And the words πίστις (16x) and πιστεύω (3x) play an important role in 1:2–8; 2:1–7; 2:14–26; and 5:13–20. Even the polemical statement “You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone” (2:24)³ does not *reject* justification by faith but rather *qualifies* it.⁴ James does set out a theology of faith, although it must be granted that his most important contribution to the nature of saving faith in New Testament theology is the argument of his polemical section (2:14–26): *Genuine saving faith is accompanied by works.*

God and Saving Faith

Saving faith in God and in Christ is a foundational assumption in the theology of James. James assumes that his readers possess faith in God (“your faith,” 1:3) and specifically faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

¹Dr. McFadden is Professor of New Testament at Cairn University in Langhorne, PA. This article is a significantly revised version of a paper given at the 2022 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Denver, CO. He is grateful to Dr. R. Bruce Compton for inviting him to give this paper, and also for Dr. Compton’s influence on this article through his class Greek Exegesis of James, which Dr. McFadden took during his MDiv studies at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary.

²Andrew Chester and Ralph P. Martin, *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, New Testament Theology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 27.

³All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

⁴Rightly, Compton: “It must be noted here that James does not categorically reject the efficacy of faith with this statement. James is not ruling out justification by faith *per se* in this verse. Rather, he is ruling out justification by faith *alone*” (R. Bruce Compton, “James 2:21–24 and the Justification of Abraham,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 2 [1997]: 42).

(2:1). He also assumes that they have been born anew by the gospel: “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (1:18).⁵ This assumption of regeneration by the word implicitly assumes faith in that word and thus salvation by faith in the gospel of God and Christ.

For James, the immutable, gift-giving God is the origin of all saving faith. God is the one who “gives generously to all without reproach” (1:5).⁶ “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change” (1:17, emphasis added). If every good gift is from above, then regeneration and faith are from above.⁷ Regeneration originates in God’s will: “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth” (1:18). And faith originates in God’s choice: “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?” (2:5). Ironically, God often chooses those who have few material riches to have more abundant spiritual riches of faith.⁸ The rich faith that will bring poor believers into God’s kingdom, and by extension the faith that will save any person, originates in the choice of God.

James also speaks of God as the object of saving faith. First, in 2:1 he assumes that Christ is the object of the faith of his readers: “My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith [τὴν πίστιν] in our Lord Jesus Christ [τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ], the Lord of glory.” The word πίστιν in this verse may refer to the act of faith or to the faith itself, but in either case James uses the genitive to speak of “our Lord Jesus Christ” as the object or content of that faith.⁹ Here James

⁵Most commentators see 1:18 referring to the new-creation birth of the new covenant (Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James*, 2nd ed., Pillar New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021], 105, n. 88).

⁶As Johnson observes, “Most distinctive in James’s understanding of God (as patristic interpreters and Kierkegaard perceived) is that God is the giver of gifts” (Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother of Jesus, Friend of God: Studies in the Letter of James* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 246).

⁷So Laato: “Nothing less than ‘every good gift (δῶσις) and every perfect gift (δῶρημα) comes from above...therefore the believing acceptance of the gospel is thereby included” (Timo Laato, “Justification according to James: A Comparison with Paul,” *Trinity Journal* 18ns [1997]: 48–49).

⁸“Rich in faith” in 2:5 could refer to the future inheritance of the poor that comes by faith, but it seems more likely that James is speaking about the riches of faith that poor believers have now. So Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 396.

⁹A few interpreters have argued that in 2:1 Jesus Christ should be taken as subject of faith or faithfulness—e.g., Bruce A. Lowe, “James 2:1 in the Πίστις Χριστοῦ Debate: Irrelevant or Indispensable?” in *The Faith of Jesus Christ: Exegetical, Biblical, and Theological Studies*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Preston M. Sprinkle (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 239–57. But it is difficult to see how James’s readers could

alludes to the foundational Christian confession of faith that “Jesus is Lord” (cf. Rom 10:9). The title “Lord” in this confession affirms the divinity of Christ.¹⁰ And James reinforces his divine identity by ascribing divine “glory” to Christ.¹¹ Thus, according to James, saving faith believes and confesses that Jesus Christ is the divine Lord of glory.

Second, in 2:19 James alludes to the Shema (Deut 6:4), the foundational Jewish prayer and Christian confession that God is one: “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” James says this to criticize his interlocutor’s professed “faith.” Even the demons assent to the truth that God is one. At the same time, James commends the belief that “God is one” by saying, “You do well.” Surely there is some level of sarcasm in his commendation, but as Allison comments, it is only “half-ironical” since this fundamental belief is true.¹²

Thus, the one God of Israel is the object of saving faith for James. He is the one true God who saves (cf. Deut 4:32–35; Isa 43:1–13). And since James affirms the divine glory of Christ, he likely means to include the Lord Jesus within the belief that God is one.¹³ Indeed, it is difficult to know the referent of “Lord” throughout the letter of James. Sometimes it clearly refers to the Father: “our Lord and Father” (3:9). Other times it clearly refers to Christ: “the coming [τῆς παρουσίας] of the Lord” (5:7; cf. 5:8). In conclusion, part of the foundational assumption in the theology of James is that salvation comes only through the one true God and the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Isa 45:20–25). This God is the object of saving faith, and he is the origin of regeneration and faith.

Prayer and Saving Faith

While James clearly assumes that his readers have experienced regeneration or salvation in the past (1:18), his focus throughout the

“hold” (ἔχω) Jesus’s faith or faithfulness, whereas faith is clearly something is something people can “have” (ἔχω) according to 2:14 and 18 (so Moo, *James*, 131).

¹⁰Hurtado observes that “in Jewish circles of the first century *kyrios* and its Semitic-language equivalents for ‘lord’ were used to refer to the God of the Bible; and in their determinative/emphatic forms (‘the Lord’) these terms functioned as substitutes for the divine name” (Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 109).

¹¹Baucham persuasively suggests that the “admittedly difficult phrase ‘our Lord Jesus Christ of glory’... is best understood as a combination of ‘Jesus Christ’ and ‘the Lord of glory,’ a Christological title found elsewhere only in 1 Corinthians 2:8 and most probably derived from Christological exegesis of Psalm 24,” observing that Jas 4:8 alludes to Ps 24:3–4 (Richard Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* [New York: Routledge, 1999], 139).

¹²Allison, *James*, 475.

¹³*Pace* interpreters who would see James avoiding a Christian confession in 2:19 because he is writing to a Jewish audience (e.g., Allison, *James*, 456–57, who sees James writing to both Christian Jews and non-Christian Jews).

letter is on their final salvation at the coming of the Lord. In 1:21, he calls regenerate readers to “put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” In 4:12, he warns readers that “there is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy” at the final judgment. In 5:15, he says that “the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.” And in 5:20, he says that “whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”¹⁴ Each of these statements directs readers to their final salvation at the coming of the Lord, with the exception of 5:15, which perhaps refers to the Lord both healing from sickness and bringing final salvation.¹⁵

Corresponding to James’s focus on final salvation is his call to whole-hearted prayer to God now. In the present time we (like Abraham) encounter various trials that test our faith; these trials produce steadfastness and bring us to the perfection of final salvation (1:2–4; cf. Rom 5:3–5). Further, the trials of suffering and sickness should also lead us to prayer (5:13–14). James bookends his letter with a discussion of prayer and faith (1:2–8; 5:13–18). Outside of the polemical discussion of faith and works, this theme is perhaps his most distinctive contribution to the nature of saving faith, and it is encapsulated by his phrase “prayer of faith” (5:15).¹⁶

Faith is expressed in prayer to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. In 1:5–6 it is expressed in prayer to God for wisdom in the midst of various trials: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith.” And in 5:14–16 it is expressed in prayer to the Lord for healing, forgiveness, and salvation: “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Davids intriguingly suggests that 5:19–20 refers to the purpose of the whole letter—to save our souls from death (Peter H. Davids, *Living in Light of the Coming King: A Theology of James, Peter, and Jude*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014], 49).

¹⁵ Allison, *James*, 765–66.

¹⁶ Allison comments that the phrase “prayer of faith” in 5:15 “seems to be unparalleled” in ancient literature (*James*, 764). Some interpret the “prayer of faith” as a reference to the special gift of faith or confidence that God will heal even when it has not been revealed in his word (see Allison, *James*, 764–65, n. 144; Moo’s interpretation seems to fit here, *James*, 311–12). But it is much more likely that James means us to interpret this phrase in light his earlier teaching about asking “in faith” in 1:6 (so Allison, *James*, 764).

¹⁷ Bauckham argues that the name of the Lord in 5:14–15 is clearly the exalted Lord Jesus and that this passage “surely reflects the same kind of Christology as Acts 3–4, where Peter heals the lame man in the name of Jesus, and treats this as evidence

The opposite of asking in faith for James is “doubting” (1:6) or being “double-minded” (1:8; 4:8). Perhaps the background of James’s theology of prayer and faith is the teaching of Jesus.¹⁸ Like James, Jesus taught his disciples to ask in faith: “Have faith in God.... Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:22–24). And like James, both Jesus and Paul contrast faith (πίστις) with doubting (δισπνῶ) (e.g., Matt 21:21; Rom 4:20).¹⁹ James’s distinct contribution is his vivid imagery and terminology. He describes the one who doubts when he prays as “like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind” (Jas 1:6). And he coins the term “double-minded” (δίψυχος) for this person.²⁰ The doubter is unstable and divided in prayer. In contrast, the believer is stable and whole-hearted in prayer. He or she is like Elijah, who “prayed *fervently* that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth” (5:17, emphasis added).²¹ Saving faith in James, then, is expressed in whole-hearted prayer to the God of our salvation in the midst of various trials.

Works and Saving Faith

James’s most important contribution to the nature of saving faith in New Testament theology is his discussion of works and saving faith. Throughout the letter James calls his believing readers to action and insists that works of love are necessary for their final salvation.²² But his clearest articulation of the relationship of faith and works is found in the polemical section of 2:14–26, where he argues that *genuine saving faith is accompanied by works*.

The polemic section of James is attacking an antinomian view of faith that says one can have saving faith without works. Some today view the apostle Paul and his teaching about justification by faith

that Jesus, risen from the dead, is living and powerful.... In the phrase ‘the Lord will raise him up’ (5:15) there may even be implicit reference to the healing activity of the earthly Jesus (cf. Mark 1:31; 5:41)” (*James*, 139).

¹⁸Matthew 7:7–8 contains three of the same verbs found in James 1:5–8 (αἰτέω, δίδωμι, and λαμβάνω): “Ask, and it will be given to you.... For everyone who asks receives” (Matt 7:7–8). Similar is James 4:2–3: “You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly.”

¹⁹Some have questioned whether δισπνῶ means “doubt” in 1:6 since this meaning is unattested before the NT, but Allison compellingly shows that the meaning “doubt” fits the context of James and the later interpretive tradition (*James*, 179–81).

²⁰For an argument that James coined the term δίψυχος, see Stanley E. Porter, “Is *dipsuchos* (James 1,8; 4,8) a ‘Christian’ Word?” *Biblica* 71 (1990): 469–98.

²¹Note that the ESV’s “prayed fervently” in 5:17 represents the emphatic semiticism προσευχή προσηύξατο.

²²E.g., It is those who love God who receive the crown of life and the kingdom of God (1:12; 2:5); and it is those who love their neighbor as themselves who will pass muster at God’s judgment (2:8–13).

(alone) as the target.²³ Others argue that James's polemic against antinomianism can be understood against a Jewish background without any reference to Paul.²⁴ What makes this position unlikely are the many words and phrases that James uses in his polemical section that are otherwise unique to Paul—e.g., “by works” (ἐξ ἔργων; Jas 2:21, 24, 25; Rom 3:20; 4:2; 9:11, 32; 11:6; etc.) and “without/apart from works” (χωρὶς ἔργων; Jas 2:18, 20, 26; Rom 3:28; 4:6).²⁵ Is James, then, writing against Paul's view of saving faith? Perhaps he has simply misunderstood Paul, as some suggest.²⁶ In my view, James himself has not misunderstood Paul, but rather is writing against a common misunderstanding of Paul's preaching. The account of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 and Paul's own witness in 1 Corinthians 15:1–11 testify that Paul and James agreed about saving faith. And Paul himself had to address antinomian misunderstandings of his preaching throughout his letters.²⁷ So it seems most likely that James is attacking an antinomian misunderstanding of Paul's preaching. Similar misunderstandings of the doctrine of justification are common in the history of Protestant theology and practice, which is so dependent on Paul.²⁸ That is to say, James's argument here has a direct word to speak to Protestantism.

The first thing to notice about James's argument is that he distinguishes a genuinely saving faith from a professed but spurious faith. James does not argue that there actually *are* two kinds of faith. It is not an absolute distinction in his theology. Rather, he makes the distinction rhetorically to challenge whether the faith of his interlocutor is genuine. This person *says* he has faith” (2:14), but does he really?²⁹ He

²³E.g., Stuhlmacher argues that the “foolish person” addressed in 2:20 “can only be a representative of Paul's doctrinal position or Paul himself” (Peter Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Daniel P. Bailey [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018], 496).

²⁴E.g., Bauckham, *James*, 127–31.

²⁵See further evidence in Allison, *James*, 445–46, where he concludes, “One would be hard pressed to find a similar concatenation of rare expressions in two texts that are not directly related” (*James*, 446). Bauckham's explanation of the similarities between James and Paul is that both are dependent on the same traditional Jewish discussion of Abraham (*James*, 130).

²⁶Stuhlmacher, *Biblical Theology*, 500; Allison, *James*, 452–55.

²⁷Rom 3:8; 6:1–2; 6:15; 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23; Gal 5:13. For some of these references I am indebted to Allison, *James*, 452, n. 118.

²⁸The term “antinomian” (one who opposes the law of God) was coined by Luther in response to his colleague Johann Agricola, who argued that the Decalogue has no place in Christianity. See Paul A. Rainbow, *The Way of Salvation: The Role of Christian Obedience in Justification* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 36–38.

²⁹Note Cranfield's observation: “The clue to the understanding of the section is the fact (very often ignored) that in v. 14...the author has not said, ‘if a man have faith,’ but ‘if a man say he hath faith.’ This fact should be allowed to control our interpretation of the whole paragraph. The second ‘faith’ in the verse is to be taken as

is a like a person who “says” to the poor brother or sister “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body” (2:16). Are these words genuine? Another way to ask this is, are these words of any benefit or good (τὸ ὄφελος, 2:14, 26)? Or, “Can that faith save him?” (2:14). Clearly, James does not think that his interlocutor has a saving faith. In this sense, his faith is not genuine.

This is why James speaks of a faith without works as “dead” (2:17, 26). No one would say that a corpse is a viable human being! Therefore, James’s distinction between two kinds of faith is not an absolute distinction but rather a rhetorical distinction made to separate between what is false and what is true, what is “useless” (2:17) and what is effective, what is dead and what is living. He does not distinguish between two genuine kinds of faith as Roman Catholic theology does when it says one can have genuine, Christian faith (an unformed faith) but that it only saves when it is formed and animated by love (a formed faith).³⁰ Rather, he distinguishes between a “faith” that is spurious and a genuinely saving faith.³¹

What makes faith genuinely saving? James highlights one thing: It is accompanied by works. This argument is driven by his polemics, for in 2:14 he confronts someone who says he has faith but does not have works, and in 2:18a, his interlocutor seems to posit that one person could have faith and another could have works, such as Christians have different spiritual gifts.³² In response, James challenges the interlocutor to prove the genuineness of his faith: “Show me your faith apart from your work, and I will show you my faith by my works” (2:18b). The challenge seems to imply that such a demonstration cannot be done because faith is an internal reality. One can only demonstrate the internal reality of faith with works, which are external.³³

in inverted commas. By ‘that faith’ (ἡ πίστις) the writer means that thing which the man in question wrongly calls ‘faith’; he does not imply that he himself regards it as faith” (C. E. B. Cranfield, “The Message of James,” in *The Bible and Christian Life. A Collection of Essays* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985], 165; quotation taken from Laato, “Justification according to James,” 71–72, n. 140).

³⁰For a summary of the Roman Catholic view, see Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 4: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008): 109–10.

³¹Calvin, in his refutation of the scholastic distinction between an unformed faith and a formed faith, uses Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–24) to show that so-called “unformed faith” is actually not faith at all (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960], 1:554).

³²Following McKnight, who observes that the interlocutor’s view is that “faith and works are two different things” and that James responds by showing the “*interconnection between faith and works*” (Scot McKnight, “James 2:18a: The Unidentifiable Interlocutor,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 52 [1990]: 362–63).

³³“Whether or not someone who claims to have faith really believes can be seen in only one thing: works (2:18)” (Adolf Schlatter, *The Theology of the Apostles: The Development of New Testament Theology*, trans. Andreas J. Köstenberger [Grand

More importantly, James's challenge questions the genuineness of a faith without works, a point reinforced in 2:19. Would someone say the demons have genuine saving faith? Of course not. The demons believe that God is one, but they also shudder at his coming judgment because they know they do not obey this God. Their "faith" is not saving faith because it is not accompanied by works.

In 2:20–26, James proves to his interlocutor that a genuinely saving faith is accompanied by works with the examples of Abraham and Rahab. His focus is on Abraham's offering of Isaac in Genesis 22, which is not surprising, since this great test of Abraham's faith stood out to many Jewish interpreters. We can, however, notice a difference between James and some Jewish interpreters. It was common to interpret Abraham's faith (Gen 15:6) *as* his faithfulness in testing. For example, the book of *Jubilees* recounts Abraham's six trials leading up to the seventh and final test of the sacrifice of Isaac, concluding that "in everything in which he [the LORD] tested him, he [Abraham] was found faithful" (*Jubilees* 17:18).³⁴ Some have argued that James simply follows this interpretive tradition and interprets Abraham's faith in Genesis 15:6 in terms of his faithfulness in testing in Genesis 22.³⁵ While James does clearly draw the traditional connection between these two passages, it is important to observe that he also consistently distinguishes between Abraham's faith and his works rather than interpreting Abraham's faith *as* his faithfulness in testing.³⁶ In James's interpretation, Abraham's "faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works" (2:22). His faith worked together with his works in collaboration, and his works brought his faith to completion or perfection (τελειόω). For James, then, *faith and works are both distinguishable and inseparable* in salvation. He does not define saving faith as works, but neither does he allow for saving faith to exist without works.³⁷

Rapids: Baker, 1998], 89). James's view calls into question the recent tendency among New Testament scholars to argue that faith (*pistis*) should be considered something external (see Matthew W. Bates, "The External-Relational Shift in Faith (*Pistis*) in New Testament Research: Romans 1 as Gospel-Allegiance Test Case," *Currents in Biblical Research* 18 [2020]: 176–202).

³⁴Cf. Sir 44:19–20 and especially 1 Macc 2:52, which explicitly merges the wording of Gen 15:6 with Abraham's faithfulness in testing: "Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness?" (NRSV).

³⁵E.g., Bauckham says that James "simply continues the Jewish tradition of interpretation of Abraham's faith, which resolved the exegetical issue of Abraham's faith and works by understanding Abraham's faith as his continuing faithfulness to God taking effect in works of obedience" (*James*, 134).

³⁶In this, his interpretation of Abraham is closer to the Jewish philosopher Philo and to the apostle Paul. See Kevin W. McFadden, *Faith in the Son of God: The Place of Christ-Oriented Faith within Pauline Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 61–64.

³⁷So Schlatter: "When James says that only works lift faith out of death, it is clear that he does not identify works with faith; rather, works are joined to faith as something different and new.... Works are therefore not directly included already in

James's argument, I believe, offers Protestant theologians and pastors a better way to respond to antinomianism than current responses that tend to overreact and blur the line between faith and works. John MacArthur, for example, in his classic argument against the antinomianism of Free Grace theology, sometimes writes as if obedience is included within the nature of saving faith. To his credit, in the revised edition of his book he changes some of these statements in response to criticism.³⁸ Still, in the revised edition he says, "Faith and faithfulness were not substantially different concepts to the first-century Christian."³⁹ Similarly, Matthew Bates, who in many ways is also responding to Free Grace theology, argues that πίστις should be understood as faithfulness or allegiance in the New Testament.⁴⁰ John Piper, engaging in the same debate, argues that saving faith includes love for God, which is the key reason why it severs the root of sin in our lives.⁴¹ And Klyne Snodgrass says that the root of our problem in American Christianity is "the erroneous, anemic, and weak-kneed understandings people have of the word 'faith.'"⁴² Faith to him should be understood as including the idea of "loyalty" or "faithfulness."⁴³ And he pointedly claims that "the faith-works dichotomy is one of the biggest distortions in Christian history."⁴⁴ Is this not claiming that the evangelical teaching of the Reformation (not to mention Paul) is a distortion? I suggest that James offers us a better way to respond to antinomian misunderstandings of the gospel: Faith and works are distinguishable but inseparable, and genuine saving faith is accompanied by works.

Conclusion

The goal of this article has been to articulate the nature of saving faith in the theology of James. Saving faith in God and Christ is a

faith but rather are joined to it as a second thing" (Adolf Schlatter, *Faith in the New Testament: A Study in Biblical Theology*, trans. Joseph Longarino [Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022], 314).

³⁸For example, he has changed "faith encompasses obedience" to "faith is inseparable from obedience." The first quotation is from John F. MacArthur, *The Gospel according to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 173; the second quotation is from John MacArthur, *The Gospel according to Jesus*, rev. and exp. anniversary ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 189.

³⁹MacArthur, *Gospel*, rev. ed., 191.

⁴⁰Matthew W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017).

⁴¹John Piper, *What Is Saving Faith? Reflections on Receiving Christ as a Treasure* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022), 32, 278.

⁴²Klyne R. Snodgrass, *You Need a Better Gospel: Reclaiming the Good News of Participation with Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022), 11. One thing you can appreciate about Snodgrass is that he does not mince words.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 13, 68–70.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 170.

foundational assumption in James, and God is central as both the origin and object of the faith of his readers. Distinctive to James is his emphasis on the whole-hearted prayer of faith, a theme that bookends the letter. And James's most important contribution to the nature of saving faith in New Testament theology is the argument that *genuine saving faith is accompanied by works*. I suggested that James's argument is a better way for Protestants to respond to antinomian misunderstandings of the gospel. Rather than arguing that faith includes works and compromising the Pauline and Reformation doctrine of *sola fide*, we should simply insist that all true believers must also have works.