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**READ JAMES 2:4.** What was the basis for this “discrimination” or “distinction”?

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What is “evil” in their thoughts and actions?

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**READ JAMES 1:5.** How does God look at people?

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The term “chosen” in verse 5 introduces the only basis on which God deals with people: He is sovereign and He elects not on the basis of what we have done, are doing, or will be doing to attract his favour. Grace is not something anyone can buy or inherit based on good deeds. God cannot be bribed into saving anyone.

God chose Israel to be his people on this basis. Read **DEUTERONOMY 7:7-9**. Why did God choose and redeem a nation for Himself?

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Read **DEUTERONOMY 8:17-18**. On what basis does God save sinners to be his people?

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Read **DEUTERONOMY 9:5-6**. Did the “righteousness” of Israel contribute anything for them to be “chosen”?

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What does God base his election upon?

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**READ JAMES 1:5** carefully again. Does God not make distinction (show favouritism) between the “poor” and the “rich”?

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According to **JAMES 1:5**, who are the “poor in the eyes of the world”? Read also **1CORINTHIANS 1:26-31**.

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Who, then, are those “rich in the Lord”? Look carefully at the last part of verse 5!

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What will both those now poor in earthly possessions and those now rich in earthly possessions get if they love the Lord?

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Based on what we have studied tonight, why is discrimination and favouritism an evil thing in the church of our Lord?

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relationship with God, being “pure” and “clean” (i.e. their sins are atoned for through the blood of Christ). This last group held to the religion which is pleasing to God.

James now continues: his “brothers” in the Lord are those who held faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

**READ JAMES 2:1** again. Answer the following questions:

On what basis addressed James his readers as “brothers”?

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Whom did they believe in?

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What are the titles ascribed to the Saviour in this verse?

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The reference to Christ as the “Lord of glory” could mean that all glory *belongs* to Him. It could also mean that He *is* glorious, or that He *provides* glory. However, in the light of many other verses in the Bible, He is pictured as the Lord who will, as Judge of the World, *appear* in glory. Read the following verses:

**MATTHEW 24:23.** What does it say about Christ? .....

**1PETER 4:12-13.** When will we see the glory of Christ? .....

**ROMANS 8:16-17:** When will we see the splendour of our inheritance? .....

Within the context of James 2 there are references to judgement, almost in the same way as Jesus will judge in glory upon his return.

**READ JAMES 2:4.** Who are the judges? .....

**READ JAMES 2:6.** What is the reference to judgement here? .....

**READ JAMES 2:12-13.** What is the meaning of this verse? .....

So, verse 1 points to Jesus Christ the Judge, *who will appear in glory* (glorious!). In the meantime, in service to Him and fellow brothers and sisters who also believe in Him, life in the Church should be governed by the same principles as what Jesus applied in bringing sinners to Him and saving them by grace.

How did Jesus Christ apply his grace in saving sinners? **READ JAMES 2:1.**

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**READ JAMES 2:2-4.** Of those who “hold to the faith” is now expected the same attitude: no favouritism!

It was more than possible that some in the congregation, those who were the “established” people, who might have run successful businesses are now compared with those who arrived as refugees out of the persecution in Jerusalem with nothing more than the “clothes on their back”.

How was the first group of people treated and why?

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How were the “poor” (or the beggars – the Greek word) treated?



# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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### FAITH AND DEEDS

#### A BIBLE STUDY FROM JAMES

#### LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST IMPLIES SERVING ONE ANOTHER UNCONDITIONALLY

Let's **READ JAMES 2:1-13**.

Our study of the first chapter of James helped us to understand:

- What testing produces – maturity and joy (verses 2-4)
- How to be victorious in times of testing – faithful prayer (verses 5-8)
- Material things are not everything – what counts is our riches in the Lord (9-11)
- The outcome of “hanging in” when trials come – the crown of life (verses 12)
- The source of testing and temptation – it does not come from God (verses 13-15)
- God's faithfulness, his steadfastness and his eternal calling (verses 16-18)
- Christians should not give ear to those who do not take God on his promises; and if they have done so, they must repent and once again trust God and the promises of his Word (19-21)
- To trust God, and believe the promises of the Word, means to not only listen to the Word, but to apply what it says (22-25)
- Profession and deeds must line up – anything else is pretence 26-27
- Today: Love for Jesus Christ implies serving one another unconditionally

#### INTRODUCTION

We must keep the context of the letter of James in mind: through the devastation of persecution some of the former members of the congregation of James lost all they had – friends, property, and even (maybe) a vision of who God is.

What James deals with in the paragraph we will study today, he already introduced in 1:9-11:

*Let the lonely brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. (James 1:9–11, ESV)*

We saw there that James wanted the congregations to know that there is no room for “haves” and “have-nots” in the church. The reason of course is that both the poor and the rich, both those with earthly possessions and those without earthly possessions are rich in Christ, just in the same way as both groups would be really poor outside of God's grace in Christ. Besides, earthly possessions will come to nothing, just like withered grass in the scorching heat of the sun.

#### READ JAMES 2:1

The translation of this verse is somewhat difficult and commentators differ in ways to understand it. Personally I prefer the translation of the ESV here:

*My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. (James 2:1, ESV)*

This verse of course follows on from what James said in the previous verses. There he talked “religious” people. He drew a distinction between what some thought about themselves (verse 26) and others who lived in a true