

Torah in the broad sense included the whole Hebrew Bible, including the prophetic books. In biblical prophecy, God is seen as continuing to be disclosed in the nexus of historical events and as making ethical demands upon the community.¹

5. By the time of the first century A.D., the scribes had taken legalism to the ultimate level of impossible. The Talmud had not yet been put to print and so the Oral Law was the way they hoped to trick the Lord with their questions.
6. Jesus, instead, debated them by responding with the Mosaic Law, the Prophets, and the Writings which they never could manage to outwit.
7. Legalists usually forget the impact that the sin nature has in the commission of sin. Everyone but Jesus had one then and will have until the end of human history.
8. We have noted a few examples of how legalists think that if they do not commit a sin, they are sin free but forget that mental attitude sins and verbal sins produce overt sins.
9. Legalists are prone to impose legalistic criticisms on other people's sin nature functions but fail to realize that their judgmental attitude toward others is also sinful.²
10. Often the legalist points out the failures of others when it is their particular area of strength. Because they are consistent in their area of strength, they often assume they are sinless.
11. What is absolutely overwhelming about the Lord's oratory in His Sermon on the Mount is that no one can keep the Law perfectly since one sin, a mental attitude sin, is equal to breaking all of them.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

1 John 1:8 If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

1 John 1:10 If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and the word is not in us.

¹ Lou Hackett Silberman, "The Judaic Tradition," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010). 22:405 [continued from p. 680].

² For a straightforward denunciation of this behavior pattern, see Matthew 7:1-2.



12. In the Christian way of life, the issue is not how well you think you manage your sin problem but how efficient you are in confessing them to the Father once done.
13. Getting back in fellowship returns you to the duty you have as a believer in Christ and that is to fight the good fight of faith.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

36. This returns us to our study of James 2:11. The NASB translation is fine and needs only minor changes, the final one with the singular noun, **παραβάτης** (*parabátēs*): “violator.”
37. This word was used in verse 9 when the Chazzan showed partiality toward Golden Fingers and bias toward the Poor Beggar.
38. What convicted the Chazzan was his mental attitude. He was in reversionism because of personal problems with Golden Fingers which caused the mental attitude sin of subjectivity.
39. His subjectivity became overt when he showed partiality toward one man and bias toward another thus violating the Royal Law.
40. In verse 11, James gives illustrations of how mental attitude sins are the forerunner to overt sins. The Chazzan developed prejudice toward Golden Fingers, but it went overt when the man arrived at the Synagogue.
41. Because you do show partiality to one person but bias toward another means you have an unjust relationship toward others. The Royal Law enables the believer to be consistent toward all.
42. Otherwise you are a “transgressor” although “violator” is the better word:

In the New Testament the **παραβάτης** is one who transgresses a specific divine commandment. James 2:9 castigates respect of persons. The man who is guilty of this sin is shown to be a transgressor by the Law, which establishes deviation from the valid norm.³ In James 2:11 the man who transgresses one commandment (of the Decalogue) is called **παραβάτης νόμου** [a transgressor (or violator) of the Law].⁴

³ “παραβάτης knows no degrees. The man who is one is so totally” (Johannes Schneider, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967], 5:741n6).

⁴ Ibid., 741.



James 2:11 For He who said, “Do not commit adultery mentally or overtly,” also said, “Do not commit murder mentally or overtly.” Now if you do not commit adultery mentally or overtly, but do commit murder mentally or overtly, you have become a violator of the law. (EXT)

James 2:12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. (NASB)

1. This verse begins with the adverb **οὕτως (hoútōs)**: “so.” This word introduces application. It is a demonstrative adverb that refers to what precedes. What precedes is all that has been discussed before, meaning James 2:1–11, but also principles studied in chapter one as well. Therefore, *hoútōs* refers to what has been just discussed. The best translation to capture this concept is, “In light of these things.”
2. This application refers to communicating what you know, the present active imperative of the verb **λαλέω (laléō)** and is the sixteenth imperative mood of the epistle. The present tense has linear action, so you are to “keep on speaking or communicating.”
3. The active voice places the responsibility of communicating on the subject which is you. The imperative mood is a command to keep on doing so.
4. This “speaking” referenced here is the prohibition against sins of the tongue: gossip, slander, maligning, judging, denouncing, condemning, criticizing, and carping.
5. A believer really has made very little progress in the plan of God if he cannot avoid sins of the tongue. We just studied illustrations of the mental attitudes that start and ultimately conclude with adultery and murder.
6. A person’s reputation can be destroyed, murdered if you will, by the tongues of those who through self-aggrandizement criticize, castigate, and belittle others.
7. With these previous verses in view, the speech of the believer is not to include the mental attitudes and verbal schemes used as illustrations and others of their low character.
8. So, the first application is speech. What follows is action, the present active imperative of the verb **ποιέω (poiéō)**: “so act,” is the seventeenth imperative mood of the Book of James and is best translated, “keep on doing.”
9. So, retrospectively, “keep on speaking and keep on doing.” These are behavior patterns that believers are to acquire and apply if they are to please God and their Savior, Jesus Christ.



10. What James is leading the reader to do is to prepare his soul with doctrine so that he will not remain static or retreat spiritually into the mental attitudes and behavior patterns just described in verses 8–11.
11. The paragraph started with the Royal Law which is James’s title for the second most important commandment in Scripture according to Jesus Christ and which is cited twenty-two times in the New Testament. Here are reminders:

Matthew 19:19 “Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Matthew 22:39 “The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Mark 12:31 “The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Romans 13:8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

v. 9 For this, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor, as yourself.”

v. 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

James 2:8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.

Galatians 5:14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

12. These passages above quote the full text of Leviticus 19:18. The others on our list do not do this but rather shorten the statement to read, “love one another,” in John 3:34; 15:12; 17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; and 1 John 3:11.

13. John 13:35 and 1 Thessalonians 3:12 read, “love for one another.” First Peter 2:17 uses “love the brotherhood.” First John 3:14, 23; 4:7, 11; and 2 John 5 have the clause, “love the brethren.”
14. Paul uses the longest clause, “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love” in Romans 12:10.

Principle: Unconditional love recognizes the Righteousness of God in other believers and gives respect to that person for that righteousness no matter how good or bad he is. It is the state of being free of all mental attitude sins.

15. Following verse 8, James gives illustrations of how the Royal Law was broken by members of the Jerusalem church. In doing so, the apostle demonstrates that the whole law is broken when a believer simply thinks about committing an overt sin.
16. The two examples given are adultery and murder. Although one may not commit adultery but does commit murder then he is guilty of all the mandates and vice versa. We noted our Lord clarifying this situation by saying to even think about committing murder and adultery means such a person is guilty of both. See Matthew 5:21–22, 27.
17. Believers must adjust their thought processes in order to maintain spirituality under the ministries of the Holy Spirit. True, a person may never commit certain overt sins, but it is dead certain that he does think them.
18. For example, revenge motivation is a mental attitude of retribution held by a person who assumes he has been wronged, insulted, abused, or mistreated. All sorts of revenge motivations may be conjured in his soul, but he is restrained from committing an overt act.
19. What James offers as an alternative has to do with speech and behavior, “keep on speaking and keep on doing.” Those who do so are identified as “those who are.” What we have here, first of all, is the present active participle of μέλλω (*méllō*): “To be about to do something; to be impending,” followed by the present passive infinitive, in this case, of κρίνω (*krínō*): “to judge after considering the particulars of a case.”⁵
20. This judgment refers to a definite time when believers will be evaluated and is followed by the present infinitive of κρίνω which indicates it is God’s intent to evaluate every believer.

⁵ Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), s.vv. : “μέλλω, κρίνω.”

21. This evaluation follows immediately after the Rapture of the church. The verb *méllō*—about to do something—indicates the immanency of the exit resurrection of Church Age believers.
22. The sin nature is left behind since the resurrection body is free of its corrupting influence. What is left to be examined are human good and evil. These works must be judged while divine good must be rewarded.
23. This process is conducted in the third heaven before the Evaluation Tribunal where Jesus Christ will sit as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Heaven.
24. The present tense of *krínō* (“to judge”) is historical which vividly portrays an event as though the reader were in the midst of the scene as it unfolds. Here it transposes us into the future to describe an event as if it were presently occurring:

The reason for the use of the historical present is normally to portray an event *vividly*, as though the reader were in the midst of the scene as it unfolds.⁶

The *aspectual*⁷ value of the historical present is normally, if not always, reduced to zero. The historical present has suppressed its aspect, but not its time. But the time element is rhetorical rather than real.

The writer uses the present tense in a highly vivid manner, as though the event occurred simultaneously with the time of writing.⁸

25. The historical present of *krínō* refers to the time when all believers appear before the Lord’s *bēma*, or “tribunal,” post Rapture. The passive voice refers to each believer’s works being judged while the infinitive refers to the evaluation itself.
26. The Evaluation Tribunal will occur in heaven between the Rapture of the Church and the Second Advent of Jesus Christ.
27. The manner by which we will be evaluated is mentioned next by the phrase the “law of liberty.” The word “law” is the familiar noun **νόμος (*nómos*)**: “by means of the law,” followed by the noun **ἐλευθερία (*eleuthería*)**: “freedom.”

⁶ “The most recent works on verbal aspect in the New Testament are in agreement that *vividness* or *dramatic narration* is the *raison d’être* [justification for existence] of this usage” (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 526).

⁷ “The nature of the action of a verb as to its beginning, duration, completion, or repetition and without reference to its position in time” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (2003), s.v. “aspect”).

⁸ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 527, 527n38.



James 2:12 In light of these things, keep on speaking [Imperative mood #16] or communicating and keep on applying [Imperative mood #17] just as those who are about to receive judgment by the law of freedom.
(EXT)

28. The English Bibles that use the word *liberty* to translate *eleuthería* are the KJV and NASB. The NIV and NET Bibles correctly translate it, *freedom*, which is best. Here's why:

The Differences between Liberty and Freedom

1. When searching for the English word that contains the full essence of the Hebrew or Greek word under consideration, synonyms must be evaluated to discover which has the most precise definition.
2. Although liberty and freedom seem to be synonymous, they are not exactly. The Greek word under scrutiny is the noun, *eleuthería*. To understand why the better translation of this word is "freedom" rather than "liberty," we must define each.
3. We will begin with the word "liberty" from whose definitions will emerge the reason it is not the best translation. In our research we will consult *The Oxford English Dictionary*:

Liberty. Permission. Exemption or release from captivity, bondage, or slavery. **Natural liberty:** the state in which everyone is free to act as he thinks fit, subject only to the laws of nature. The condition of being able to act in any desired way without hindrance or restraint; faculty or power to do as one likes. Unrestrained action, conduct, or expression; freedom of behavior or speech, beyond what is granted or recognized as proper.

