

21. This leads James to follow the words, “Even so,” with the phrase “the faith”: the definite article ἡ (*hē*) + πίστις (*pístis*). It is important to note the definite article since its use refers to the whole body of doctrine associated with faith. In this context, it refers to the application of doctrine to circumstances.

πίστις: *faith as fidelity to Christian teaching. This point of view calls for ἔργον (*érgon*)⁶ as well as the kind of πίστις that represents only one side of true piety: James 2:14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 26.*

That which is believed, body of faith / belief / teaching (an article of faith that was firm and unshakable). That which, according to God’s will, is to be believed.⁷

22. From these excerpts, we learn that “the faith” is technical for Bible doctrine in the soul. In our context of James 2, we find the issue is not only doctrine in the soul, but also its application to the circumstances one engages in his Christian walk.
23. The man in verse 16 did not do. He had faith due to the fact he was a believer. He had some doctrine, but due to Operational Death he did not have the filling of the Holy Spirit, he had no recall of doctrine, and, therefore, did not apply it.
24. The end result is exposed by the phrase, ἡ (*hē*) + πίστις (*pístis*): “the faith.” This indicates he had faith, but faith is useless if it does not have an object and the object of faith for a believer is the Word of God.
25. When salvation is in view, the object of one’s faith must be Jesus Christ. Faith in anything else is useless. Faith in one’s morality—useless. Faith in one’s financial contributions to a non-profit—useless. Faith in walking the aisle, feeling sorry for your sins, joining the church, getting baptized, tithing, giving your testimony, and faith in doing good works—useless. Faith in one’s accolades from others because of doing these things—useless.
26. It is interesting that James’s epistle is the first entry in the New Testament canon. His theme so far has to do with taking in the Word of God and applying it to life and circumstances.

⁶ ἔργον: “Of works of faith, meaning springing from faith; with πίστις, of the faith, (James 2:14, 17–26 [cf. especially with vv. 22, 26])” (Spiros Zodhiates, ed. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. [Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993], 651).

⁷ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. & ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 820.



27. At the same time he is arguing about those who hear the working object of their faith which is the Word of God taught by James, but not placing their faith in the Word resident in their souls as the working object for its application to others.
28. The absolute summum bonum of the Christian way of life is not just the hearing of the Word, but the application of the Word. The phrase, *hē pístis*: “the faith,” must have a working object from resident doctrine in the soul.

Summary of the phrase, ἡ (*hē*) + πίστις (*pístis*): “the faith”:

1. This term refers to what is believed and in Scripture it has two major applications: **(1)** the working object of faith is Jesus Christ for salvation and **(2)** the working object for spiritual growth is Bible doctrine.
2. There are two underlying principles that pertain to both of these objects: **(1)** the grace of God as opposed to human works and **(2)** the rejection of human merit or virtue.

Romans 4:16 For this reason it is by means of faith, in order that it might be in accordance with grace; that the promise of salvation might be valid to all humanity; not only to those from the law, but to those Gentiles from Abraham's faith⁸; who is the pattern with reference to all of us.” (EXT)

3. Because the noun *pístis* and the verb form **πιστεύω (*pisteuō*)** are transitive and demand objects, then their function is associated with absolute grace.
4. Therefore, in the act of salvation, the object of one's faith must be directed toward Jesus Christ for it to be efficacious. After salvation, the object of one's faith must be directed toward Scripture for it to be efficacious in the spiritual life of the believer.
5. Therefore, the result of faith when directed toward these two objects is a nonmeritorious function. The one who places his faith in either of them receives no credit for the benefits derived but rather unmerited grace.
6. The spiritual growth of the believer is illustrated by the visual that goes by two titles, **(1)** Grace Apparatus for Perception and **(2)** Operation Z. Its diagram develops the process by which an unbeliever or a believer comprehends information from the infinite Word of God.

⁸ Abraham was saved when he was a Semitic Gentile, living in the third dynasty of Ur around the year of 2100 B.C. (Genesis 11:28, 31). He did not become a Jew until he was 99 years old (Genesis 17).



7. The unbeliever is able to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ by the common grace ministry of the Holy Spirit, Who serves as a human spirit in order to communicate the gospel message so the unbeliever can consider the divine process for obtaining eternal life.
8. The gospel must be communicated in such a way that the only object to which the unbeliever may direct his faith is Jesus Christ. The unbeliever must be allowed to exercise his Law of Freedom to decide whether he believes the gospel's message or not.

(End JAS2-26. See JAS2-27 for continuation of study at p. 261.)

