

- I propose the view that Paul's focus is on the "deeds of the law," while James' focus is on "deeds of love and kindness." Paul also emphasizes a believing person's entrance into justification by faith, while James emphasizes what a valid faith looks like (William Varner).

**JAMES**



**VERSUS**



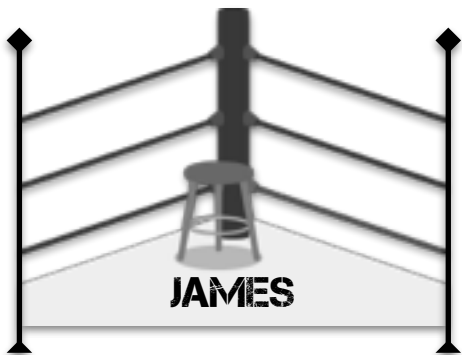
**PAUL**

- James would have been shocked if anyone suggested that he was arguing for salvation by works. He simply saw faith and works as inseparable (Kent Hughes).

- The difference between expressing faith in a confession—reciting the Apostles' Creed—and actively confessing our faith in word and deed is that faith expressed in a confession can result in mere intellectual assent without deeds to confirm it. This is what James has in mind when he asks, "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds?"
- James is specific. He says, "if a man claims to have faith." He does not write, "if a man has faith." James intimates that the faith of this particular person is not a genuine trust in Jesus Christ. In fact, that man's claim to faith is hollow. If he only nods his head in assent to the words of a doctrinal statement, his faith is intellectual, barren, and worthless.
- Faith in God through Jesus Christ is a certainty that flows from our hearts, emanates from our minds, and translates into deeds. Vibrant faith of word and deed, spoken and performed out of love for God and our neighbor, saves us (Simon Kistemaker).

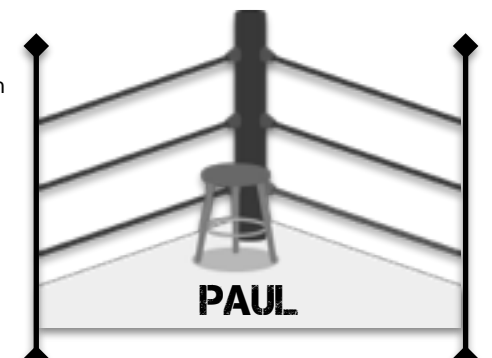
**NO!**

- Without undue elaborations, I think it is clear that Paul is opposing those who desire to make "works of the law" as an essential component in what makes a person right with God, in addition to the role of faith in that process. James seems to be opposing advocates of a faith-only position that does not require works as a part of that process. To adapt a comparison that I heard long ago: James and Paul are not opponents facing each other with swords drawn. They are standing with their backs to each other, each drawing swords as they face a different opponent (William Varner).
- Readers may notice that no mention has been made in this discussion about the controversy over James' and Paul's differing emphases on justification. That absence has been deliberate. I wanted to make an effort to demonstrate that the argument of James makes perfect sense by itself without any reference to Paul. Too often James has been read only as a foil to Pauline theology. I argue that while James is not anti-Pauline, he should be viewed as ante-Pauline. This is not only because I see him writing prior to Galatians and Romans, but also because I believe that James and Paul are using the same words in different senses. Furthermore, it may be helpful to see the differences between the two by looking at the views of their opponents, as best we are able to reconstruct those opponents (William Varner).
- This was James' concern millennia ago, because it was just as likely then as today for church attenders to slide along with a bogus faith that made no real difference in the way they lived. James wants to make crystal-clear what makes faith real faith, and in doing so he sheds eternal wisdom on the relationship of faith and action. James' teaching, taken to heart, will steel the church against a "lite" faith (Kent Hughes).



**JAMES**

- Resolution of the tension can come only when we recognize that James and Paul use "justify" to refer to different things. Paul refers to the initial declaration of a sinner's innocence before God; James to the ultimate verdict of innocence pronounced over a person at the last judgment. If a sinner can get into relationship with God only by faith (Paul), the ultimate validation of that relationship takes into account the works that true faith must inevitably produce (James). As Calvin puts it, "... as Paul contends that we are justified apart from the help of works, so James does not allow those who lack good works to be reckoned righteous" (Douglas Moo).



**PAUL**