

Be Doers of the Word: Does James Affirm the Torah's Validity?

Use with the full teaching and a Bible. Watch or read first, complete the questions, then discuss and apply. For family or homeschool use, an adult may choose a shorter section and accept spoken answers.

The summary is a reading aid. Test the teaching's explanations against the cited passages. Keep the answer key and facilitator notes separate when distributing learner pages.

[Open the teaching](#)

Teaching summary

This teaching examines whether James affirms the ongoing validity of the Torah. It begins with James 1:21-22, where believers are told to receive the “implanted word” and to be doers of that word rather than hearers only. The teaching explains the Greek term *emphutos* by reference to its sense of something inborn or ingrained, then connects James’s language with Jeremiah 31:33, where YHWH promises to put his Torah within his people and write it on their hearts. This proposed connection supports the teaching’s understanding that YHWH’s instruction becomes internalized and shapes a believer’s thinking and decisions. It is an argument from language and context, not an explicit quotation of Jeremiah by James.

The teaching connects James’s statement that the implanted word is able to save souls with Jeremiah’s promise of forgiveness in the New Covenant. Salvation and forgiveness are not earned by Torah observance; they are received by grace through faith in Messiah Yeshua. At the same time, salvation involves transformation: YHWH forgives his people and writes his Torah on their hearts. James 1:25 calls the law “the perfect law, the law of liberty.” The teaching argues that James connects this law with the word believers are to do. It supports that reading with the frequent use of the Greek word *nomos* for the Hebrew Torah and the Law of Moses, together with James’s wider context. The meaning of *nomos* must still be determined in context.

The teaching addresses the objection that James refers only to a “moral law” rather than the whole Torah. It argues that Scripture does not divide the Torah into moral, civil, and ceremonial categories that allow some commandments to be dismissed as invalid. It then offers five reasons for its reading. First, Acts 21 portrays James affirming believers who are zealous for the law and asking Paul to demonstrate publicly that he lives in observance of it, including participation in a temple purification ritual. Second, James 2:2 calls the readers’ gathering an assembly, using the Greek word associated with a synagogue. The teaching understands this as a synagogue setting and connects it with Moses being read every Sabbath in Acts 15:21. It reasons that this setting points toward the whole Torah rather than selected commandments.

Third, James 2:10 says that whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. The teaching explains that James treats the Torah as a unified expression of God’s authority rather than a collection from which people may choose which commandments remain valid. It compares James’s statement with first-century Jewish teaching and with Yeshua’s words in Matthew 5:18-19 about not relaxing even the least of the commandments. At the same time, the

teaching makes clear that James does not expect sinless perfection, since James 3:2 says that all stumble in many ways. Believers still depend on Yeshua's advocacy and God's forgiveness, yet they are called to strive for obedience rather than dismiss commandments as unimportant.

Fourth, James's descriptions of the law resemble Old Testament descriptions of the Torah. James calls it perfect and a law of liberty; Psalm 19:7 calls YHWH's law perfect, and other Psalms connect Torah with blessing and liberty. Fifth, the teaching sees an echo of Jeremiah's New Covenant prophecy in the implanted word. Jeremiah's use of Torah includes Sabbath observance, rather than only what later Christians might call moral commandments. On these grounds, the teaching concludes that being doers of the word includes obeying the whole Torah. This affirms the Torah's authority without requiring every person to perform every command: each command's addressee, role, place, and circumstances still matter.

Summary points

- James teaches believers to receive the implanted word and to become doers of it rather than hearers only.
- The teaching uses the Greek term *emphutos* to describe the implanted word as ingrained within the believer.
- The teaching connects the implanted word with Jeremiah 31:33, where YHWH promises to write the Torah on the hearts of his people.
- Forgiveness is received by grace through faith, while the New Covenant also transforms believers by writing God's Torah on their hearts.
- James 1:25 connects the word with the perfect law, the law of liberty, and the teaching identifies *nomos* with Torah.
- The teaching argues that Scripture itself does not divide the Torah into moral, civil, and ceremonial categories.
- Acts 21 portrays James as affirming believers who were zealous for the law and Paul as living in observance of it.
- The teaching's understanding of the readers' gathering as a synagogue supports its reading of James's references to law as the whole Torah.
- James 2:10 presents the whole law as a unified expression of God's authority rather than something believers may pick apart.
- The parallels with Psalm 19 and Jeremiah's New Covenant prophecy reinforce the conclusion that James calls believers to be doers of the entire Torah.

Fill in the blank

Use the teaching and the cited Bible passages. Equivalent wording is welcome when it expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. James says believers are to be _____ of the word, not hearers only.
2. The Greek term translated "implanted" in James 1:21 is _____.
3. Jeremiah 31:33 says YHWH will write his Torah on the _____ of his people.
4. James 1:25 calls the law the perfect law, the law of _____.
5. The Greek word nomos is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term _____.
6. James 2:10 says that whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of _____.

Challenging

1. According to the teaching, the Septuagint translates the Hebrew word Torah with the Greek word nomos almost _____ times.
2. In Acts 21:20, James says that many thousands of Jewish believers were _____ for the law.
3. The Greek term behind "assembly" in James 2:2 means an assembly or _____.
4. According to Acts 15:21, Moses is read every _____ in the synagogues.
5. In Matthew 5:19, Yeshua warns against relaxing even one of the _____ commandments.
6. The Babylonian Talmud quotation cited in the teaching attributes the statement about one matter and the entire Torah to Rabbi _____.

Group discussion

Discuss with respect, support answers from the passages, and allow time to think. Use the lines for brief notes or a notebook for longer responses.

1. How does the connection between James's "implanted word" and Jeremiah 31:33 shape the teaching's understanding of New Covenant obedience?

2. Why is James 1:25 important to the teaching's argument that being a "doer of the word" means being a doer of the Torah?

3. The teaching gives five reasons for understanding James's use of "law" as the entire Torah. Which of those reasons most directly addresses the claim that James means only a moral law, and why?

4. How do Acts 21 and the synagogue setting of James's readers contribute to the teaching's picture of what James meant by the word law?

5. What does James 2:10 communicate about the unity of God's authority, and why does the teaching say this challenges the idea of choosing which commandments matter?

6. How does the teaching balance the call to obey God's Torah with James 3:2 and the promises of advocacy and forgiveness when believers sin?

Answer key

For the leader or parent. Answers follow the teaching; references help you check the wording and context. Accept equivalent wording where appropriate.

Basic

1. doers

James 1:21–22

2. emphutos

James 1:21

3. hearts

Jeremiah 31:33

4. liberty

James 1:25

5. Torah

James 1:25

6. all of it

James 2:10–11

Challenging

1. 200

Teaching discussion of nomos following James 1:25

2. zealous

Acts 21:20

3. synagogue

James 2:2

4. Sabbath

Acts 15:21

5. least

Matthew 5:19

6. Meir

Babylonian Talmud, Bekhorot 30a

Facilitator notes

These are suggested directions for discussion, not a required script or a test of identical wording. Invite participants to explain the passage and consider a faithful practical response.

1. The teaching connects the implanted word with YHWH's promise to write Torah on the heart. Receiving that word changes conduct. Forgiveness comes by grace through faith in Yeshua; obedience is the fruit of inward renewal, not its purchase price.

James 1:21–22; Jeremiah 31:33–34

2. James links receiving and doing the word with persevering as a doer of the perfect law of liberty. The teaching combines that connection, the Torah usage of nomos, and wider biblical parallels to argue that doing the word includes Torah obedience.

James 1:21–25

3. Reasoned answers may differ. Acts 21 includes temple purification, while Jeremiah's Torah includes Sabbath observance; both directly challenge a moral-only reading. The whole-law language, synagogue setting, and Psalm parallels add support. Ask participants to explain their chosen evidence.

Acts 21:20–26; James 2:2,10–11; Psalm 19:7; Jeremiah 17:19–27; 31:33

4. Acts 21 connects James's understanding of law with Moses and Paul's temple purification. The teaching reads James 2:2 as a synagogue setting and relates it to Moses being read every Sabbath. Together these support its whole-Torah interpretation.

Acts 21:20–26; James 2:2; Acts 15:21

5. The same lawgiver commands both matters, so keeping one command does not authorize rejecting another. The teaching treats Torah as a unified authority. This does not mean every offense has identical consequences or every command applies to every person in the same way.

James 2:10–11; Matthew 5:18–19

6. James acknowledges that everyone stumbles. The source pairs obedience with Yeshua's advocacy and YHWH's forgiveness when sins are confessed. Believers should repent and grow rather than dismiss commands or conclude that one failure puts them beyond grace.

James 3:2; 1 John 2:1; 1 John 1:9

Put it into practice

Choose one response to the passages you studied. What will you do, and when will you revisit it? Share only what you are comfortable sharing.
