

16. Verse 5 drives home the point that whoever believes in Jesus Christ has been elected to privilege although they are the poor of the world who are heirs to all the assets, accouterments, and privileges associated the kingdom of God while on earth and in the eternal state.
17. Verse six forces the chazzan to use common sense to realize that the rich man has oppressed him in the courts. That same common sense is to be applied to his personal oppression of the poor man.
18. In verse seven, James forces the chazzan to use logic to realize that by kowtowing to the rich man and oppressing the poor man, he has in doing so blasphemed Jesus Christ.

James 2:7 Do they not blaspheme the fair
name by which you have been called? (NASB)

1. It is rich men who have oppressed the chazzan. He, too, is a believer in Jesus Christ. He, too, possesses all the accouterments possessed by the poor man since he, too, enjoys the privileges associated the kingdom of God while on earth and in the eternal state.
2. Even though he is out of fellowship, even though he is in the advanced stages of reversionism, this man is said to be called by what is referred to as “the fair name.”
3. The word “blaspheme” is the present active indicative of the verb **βλασφημέω** (*blasphēmēō*): “to speak in a disrespectful way that demeans, denigrates, maligns; to slander, revile, or defame.”⁶
4. “The static present tense may be used to represent a condition which is assumed as perpetually existing, or to be ever taken for granted as a fact.”⁷
5. The static tense indicates that reversionists keep on maligning and blaspheming “the fair name.” The word “fair” is the adjective **καλός** (*kalós*) and may be defined by such words as “excellent, honorable, distinguished, blameless.”
6. All of these are worthy to describe the noun “name,” but since it refers to Jesus Christ we’ll use “blameless” to describe the impeccable Messiah. That “blameless name,” by which believers are properly called, is “Christian.”
7. We are personally not blameless, but we are baptized at the moment of salvation into Christ. Our sins were judged on the cross in Him. We have on our agenda a perfect resurrection body and the possession of eternal life.

⁶ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 178.

⁷ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1957), 186.



8. Therefore, it is an honor for us to be called by the name, Christian. If we are ridiculed by being associated with Christ, then it is our honor to receive the blasphemy.
9. The word “called” is the aorist passive participle of the verb **ἐπικαλέω** (*epikaléō*): “a surname.”⁸
10. The aorist present is static indicating a condition that is perpetually existing. You are eternally surnamed “Christian.” The passive voice means that this surname was imputed to every person at the point each places his personal faith in Jesus for Salvation and eternal life. The indicative mood confirms this as an eternal fact.
11. In order to orient to the possession of a surname associated with your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, consider your biological surname—Jones, Smith, or whatever—is now followed by “Christian.” There’s something about that name. It is the most honorable of all names.
12. We are to show respect and courtesy to other members of the royal family of God. Whether they are wealthy, middle class, or poor, they are all the sons of God in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. (NASB)

1 Peter 4:16 If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but glorify God that you bear such a name. (NET)

James 2:7 Do the rich not blaspheme the blameless name of Christian by which you have been forever surnamed? (EXT)

13. This brings us to verse 8. It introduces the subject of the Royal Law and one of the major problem-solving devices, unconditional love. This is a major doctrine of the New Testament and we will give it a thorough treatment.
14. James describes unconditional love as the Royal Law of the Church Age and by application the Royal Law of the universal church.

⁸ “A name shared in common to identify the members of a family, as distinguished from each member’s given name. Also called *family name*, *last name* (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th ed. (2016), s.v. “surname.”)



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. (NASB)

1. This verse introduces a phrase which is a hapax legomenon, but its meaning is replete throughout Scripture. It is the term **βασιλικὸν νόμον** (*basilikón nómon*): “the royal law” which is the translation used in all four major English translations. The word “royal” is the Greek adjective, **βασιλικός** (*basilikós*) which describes the word “law,” the Greek noun **νόμος** (*nómos*).
2. Our verse begins with the conditional particle **εἰ** (*ei*): “If,” plus the indicative mood of the verb **τελέω** (*teléō*): “are fulfilling,” which refers to “the royal law.” This construction introduces the protasis of a first class condition.

*The first class condition indicates the assumption of truth for the sake of argument. The normal idea, then, is if-and let us assume that this is true for the sake of argument-then. This class uses the particle εἰ with the indicative (in any tense) in the protasis. In the apodosis, any mood and any tense can occur. This is a frequent conditional clause, occurring about 300 times in the New Testament.*⁹

3. The protasis is followed by what one must do to confirm the assumption which is a quoted from Leviticus 19:18b, “... you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
4. In my Baptist Church Sunday school, this was referred to as, “The Golden Rule,” which phrase is not found in Scripture, while others sometime refer to it as, “The Eleventh Commandment,” which also is not found in the Bible. The biblical term is, “The Royal Law,” which is.
5. This is not The Golden Rule or The Eleventh Commandment. The Royal Law is independent and thus a law of its own. The Ten Commandments are spiritual and establishment guidelines designed to provide freedom and privacy for the human race, the exception being the fourth commandment in the Church Age when every day is a Sabbath day.
5. The phrase, “you shall love,” is the future active indicative of the verb **ἀγαπάω** (*agapáō*). The indicative mood with the future tense is an Imperatival Future which is sometimes used for a command, almost always in Old Testament quotations. This is the case in James’s quotation of Leviticus 19:18b.

⁹ Daniel B. Wallace, “Protasis,” in *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 684.



6. The Royal Law is cited or summarized from this Levitical mandate in numerous passages in the New Testament: Matthew 19:19; 22:39–40; Mark 12:31; John 13:34–35; 15:12, 17; Romans 12:10; 13:8–10; Galatians 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 2:17, 1 John 3:11, 14, 23; 4:7, 11; and 2 John 5–6, plus our passage in James 2:8. Ten books; 6 writers.
6. The verb *agapáō* does not apply to everyone nor does it refer to the person next door. The word “neighbor” is the noun **רֵעַ (*rea'*)**:

רֵעַ “Another person.” Most frequently, this term is used to refer to the second party in a personal interaction without indicating any particular relationship. It is extremely broad, covering everyone from a lover; a close friend; an acquaintance; an adversary in court; an enemy in combat. Thus, this word is well-suited for its widely inclusive use in the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:16, 17; Deuteronomy 5:20, 21; cf. Luke 10:29–37).¹⁰

7. In other words, it refers to whosoever you encounter in life. Thus, the onus, obligation, responsibility, and duty that are placed on the believer require him to “love those you encounter in your daily walk.” If you do that, then what follows is the apodosis, “you are doing well.”

An apodosis is grammatically independent, but semantically dependent. That is, it can stand on its own as a full-blown sentence, but it depends for its “factuality” on the fulfillment of the protasis.¹¹

7. The statement of the apodosis begins with the adverb **καλῶς (*kalōs*)**: “honorably.” This is a high compliment and in order to receive it one must consistently abide by the commandment to, “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Καλῶς. Pertains to meeting high standards of excellence or expectation, in the right way, splendidly. Pertains to meeting expectations of personal excellence, commendably, in a manner free from objection. Pertains to being in accord with a standard, rightly, correctly; James 2:8.¹²

8. *Kalōs* describes the present active indicative of the verb **ποιέω (*poiéō*)**: “keep on doing.” This is a futuristic present tense which indicates a behavior pattern that is to begin immediately.

9. Here is the expanded translation after which we will note some principles:

¹⁰ Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, “רֵעַ,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 1063–64.

¹¹ Ibid., “Apodosis.”

¹² Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (2000), 505.



James 2:8 If [protasis of a 1st-class condition] you apply the Royal Law according to the Scripture, “You shall unconditionally love those you encounter,” [apodosis] honorably, you must keep on doing this. (EXT)

(End JAS2-11. See JAS2-12 for continuation of study at p. 111.)



Doctrine of the Royal Law

A. Definition

1. We are able to identify the Royal Law as functional in three dispensations: (1) Israel, (2) the Hypostatic Union, and (3) the Church.
2. The application of this Law is different in the dispensation of Israel than in the succeeding two.
3. The first use of what James refers to as the Royal Law was quoted by Jesus Christ to Moses in:

Leviticus 19:18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.'

4. The basic principle of the Royal Law's mandate of "loving yourself" has to do with the individual's spiritual growth whereas those loved include the entirety of the Jewish people.
5. The major problem-solving device that was given to the Jews was the faith-rest technique with emphasis on the four rationales:

Stage 1: Placing one's personal faith in the veracity of the promises of God. Abraham is a great example:

Romans 4:20 With respect to the promises of God, he [**Abraham**] did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,
v. 21 and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

Stage 2: Confidence in applying doctrinal rationales to the circumstances one encounters:

- a) **The Essence of God Rationale:** Sovereignty, righteousness, justice, love, eternal life, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, immutability, and veracity.

2 Peter 1:4 He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

