



“FAITH WORKS” (PART II)

JAMES 2:21-26 BIBLE STUDY

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THE ONLY KIND OF FAITH THAT WORKS, IS FAITH THAT WORKS



- **A)** James 2:15-17
 - Workless “faith” **does not work** for **people** in need (e.g., the needs of the needy aren’t met) (15-16)
 - Summary (refrain): “faith” without works is **dead** (17)
 - **B)** James 2:18-20
 - Workless “faith” **does not work** for justification before **God** (e.g., even demons believe *that* God exists) (18-19)
 - Summary (refrain): “faith” without works does not work (20)
 - **B’)** James 2:21-24
 - Genuine faith **does work** for justification before **God** (e.g., Abraham believes *in* God; shows radical obedience) (21-23)
 - Summary (refrain): a person is justified by faith that works – not “faith” that does not work (24)
- **A’)** James 2:25-26
 - Genuine faith **does work** for **people in need** (e.g., Rahab aids the Israelite spies) (25)
 - Summary (refrain) : “faith” without works is **dead** (26) (Chiasm from Motyer, 108)



CONTEXT

JAMES 2:14-20 AT



- 14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have "faith" but does not have works? Can such "faith" save them?
- 15 If a brother or a sister is poorly dressed and lacking daily food 16 and one of you (all) says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm and well fed," but does not give them what is necessary for their body, what good is it? 17 In the same way also, "faith" by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
- 18 But someone will say, "You [James' opponent] have 'faith', and I [James] have works." Show me your "faith" without works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one, you do well! Even the demons believe that – and shudder! 20 Oh, you want to know – you foolish [empty] person – that "faith" without works doesn't work?





JAMES 2:21 JUSTIFIED



- Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, having offered his son Isaac on the altar? (Jas 2:21, AT)



JAMES 2:21 FATHER ABRAHAM



- 16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to **all Abraham's offspring**—not only to those who are of the **law** but also to those who have the **faith of Abraham**. He is the father of us all. 17 As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is **our father** in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not. (Rom 4:16-17, NIV)
- 7 Understand, then, that those who **have faith** are **children of Abraham**. 8 Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by **faith**, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” So those who rely on **faith** are blessed along with Abraham, the man of **faith**. (Gal 3:7-9, NIV)



JAMES 2:21 ABRAHAM'S TEST



- 1 Some time later God **tested** Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied. 2 Then God said, “Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.” (Gen 22:1-2, NIV)



JAMES 2:21 ABRAHAM'S TEST



1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

“Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield,
your very great reward. ”

2 But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but **a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.**” 5 He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”



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JAMES 2:21 ABRAHAM'S TEST



- Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. (Gen 15:6, NIV)
- Then God said, “Yes, but your wife **Sarah** will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I **will establish my covenant with him** as an **everlasting** covenant for his **descendants** after him. (Gen 17:19, NIV)



JAMES 2:21 ABRAHAM'S TEST



- 3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On **the third day** Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. **We will worship** and then **we will come back to you.**” (Gen 22:1-5, NIV)





JAMES 2:21 ABRAHAM'S TEST



6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together,

7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, “Father?”

“Yes, my son?” Abraham replied.

“The fire and wood are here,” Isaac said, “but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?”

8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” And the two of them went on together. (Gen 22:6-8, NIV)





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JAMES 2:21 ABRAHAM'S TEST



- 9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!”
- “Here I am,” he replied.
- 12 “Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, **your only son**” (Gen 22:9-12, NIV)



JAMES 2:21 ABRAHAM'S TEST



- 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place **The LORD Will Provide**. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.” (Gen 22:13-14, NIV)



JAMES 2:21 ABRAHAM'S TEST



- By **faith** Abraham, when God **tested** him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his **one and only son** [μονογενής | *monogenēs*] (Heb 11:17, NIV)
- For, in this way, God loved the world: that He gave the **one-of-a-kind** [*monogenēs*] Son, so that everyone who is [continually] **faithful** [*pisteuō* (verb form of the noun *pistis*)] to Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (Jn 3:16, AT)
- 18 even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”
19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death. (Heb 11:18-19, NIV)



JAMES 2:21 JAMES AND PAUL



- 1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? 2 **If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works**, he had something to boast about—but not before God. 3 What does Scripture say? “Abraham **believed** God, and it was **credited to him as righteousness.**” (Rom 4:1-3, NIV)
- 4 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 5 However, to the one who does **not work** but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their **faith is credited as righteousness.** (Rom 4:4-5, NIV)
- 8 For it is by **grace** you have been **saved, through faith**—and this is **not from yourselves**, it is the **gift** of God—9 **not by works**, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus **to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph 2:8-10, NIV)



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JAMES 2:21 JAMES, PAUL AND JESUS



- And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. (Mt 12:32, ESV)
- 33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the **tree is known by its fruit**. 34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the **abundance of the heart the mouth speaks**. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. 36 I tell you, **on the day of judgment** people will give account for every careless word they speak, 37 for by your words you will be **justified**, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Mt 12:33-37, ESV)
- “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who **does** the will of my Father who is in heaven. (Mt 7:21, NIV)



JAMES 2:21 OBEDIENCE OF FAITH



- through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the **obedience of faith** for the sake of his name among all the nations, (Rom 1:5, ESV)
- 9 Or do you not know that **wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God**? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you **were**. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:9-11, NIV; cf. Eph 5:3-6; Gal 5:19-21)



JAMES 2:22 SYNERGY



- You see that his faith was **working together** with his **works**, and **by his works** his faith was brought to **perfection** [τελειόω | *teleioō*] (James 2:22, AT)
- 2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face various trials, 3 knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces perseverance. 4 And let this perseverance bring about [its] perfect work, so that you may be **perfect** [τέλειος | *teleios*] and complete – lacking in nothing. (Jas 1:2-4, AT; cf. 1 Jn 2:4)



JAMES 2:23 FULFILLED FRIEND



- And the Scripture was fulfilled, the one saying, "Abraham **believed** [in] God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" – and he was called a friend of God. (Jas 2:23, AT)
- Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of **Abraham your friend**? (2 Ch 20:7, NIV)



JAMES 2:23 FULFILLED FRIEND



- 8 “But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of **Abraham my friend**, 9 I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. 10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Is 41:8-10, NIV)
- You are **my friends** if you do what I command. (Jn 15:14, NIV)





JAMES 2:24
NO PHONY FAITH



- You see that a person is justified by works and not by “faith” alone (Jas 2:24, AT)





JAMES 2:25 TRUE FAITH WORKS



- And also, in the same way, was not Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she welcomed the spies and sent them out a different way? (Jas 2:25, AT)
- Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it **day** and **night**, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Jos 1:8, NIV)
- These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you **sit at home** and when you **walk along the road**, when you **lie down** and when **you get up**. (Dt 6:6-7, NIV)





JAMES 2:25 TRUE FAITH WORKS



- 1 Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. “Go, look over the land,” he said, “especially Jericho.” So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.
- 2 The king of Jericho was told, “Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.”
- 3 So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.” (Jos 2:1-3, NIV)
- 4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. 5 At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.” 6 (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) 7 So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut. (Jos 2:4-7, NIV)





JAMES 2:25 TRUE FAITH WORKS



- 8 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof 9 and said to them, “I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. 10 We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. (Jos 2:9-11, NIV)
- By **faith** the prostitute Rahab, because she **welcomed** the spies, was not killed with those who were **disobedient**. (Heb 11:31, NIV)





JAMES 2:26
FAITH WITHOUT WORKS
IS DEAD



- Just as the body without the spirit [**or** “**breath**”] is dead, so “faith” without works is dead (Jas 2:26, AT)

