

## JUSTIFICATION, JAMES & PAUL

- A. In Romans 4, [Paul](#) said Abraham was justified by faith; in James 2, [James](#) said Abraham was justified by works – is there a contradiction?

---

Rom 4:2-3 – For *if Abraham was justified by works*, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? “*Abraham believed God, & it was accounted to him for righteousness.*”

Jas 2:21-22 – *Was not Abraham our father justified by works* when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, & by works faith was made perfect?

---

- B. One noun translated “justification” is dikaiosism – Vine: “denotes the act of pronouncing righteous, justification, acquittal” [from guilt, bj.]
- C. To add to what may seem to be “the confusion”, there are several factors involved in justification.

---

Rom 4:24-25 – It [righteousness, the result of being justified] shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up *Jesus our Lord* from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, & *was raised [for, kjv] because of [dia: the channel of an act] our justification.*

Gal 3:23-25 – But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 *Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Titus 3:7 – that having been *justified by His grace* we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Jas 2:24 – You see then that a *man is justified by works*, & not by faith only. Rom 5:1 – Therefore, *having been justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

---

[Since God is not the Author of confusion (1 Cor 14:33), our aim will be to reconcile James with Paul.]

### I. JUSTIFICATION IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD

- A. Baptist Manual –

---

“*Justification*, the pardon of sin, & the promise of eternal life...are *solely through faith*,” (Art. 5, pg. 48).

“Salvation is a free gift from God...we exercise faith in order to be saved, but *even our faith is also a gift of God*” (Cox, Amillennialism, pg. 33).

---

- B. Methodist Discipline –

---

“We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ, by faith, & not for our own works or deservings.  
***Wherefore, that we are justified by faith, only, is a most wholesome doctrine, & very full of comfort***” (Art. 9)

---

[In harmonizing Paul & James we will also come to understand the truth regarding justification, & how grace, faith & works are involved in being pronounced or deemed to be righteous by God.]

## II. PAUL: JUSTIFICATION OF A JEW

A. The book of Romans is a treatise (essay) on the subject of justification by faith in Christ as opposed to justification by deeds of “law”.

1. The Jew was taught that justification & thus salvation came to them through “their” law – the Law of Moses.
  - a. Thus they believed they could merit salvation by keeping the Law, which was not possible because they sinned (cf. Rom 10:5; Gal 3:10).

- b. So Paul argued that if Abraham “was justified by works, [then] he has something to boast about” (2).
- c. Paul was saying, “If you Jews are justified by works of the Law, then you have something to boast about, because that means you kept the Law perfectly, - but you don’t” (Rom 3:23).

2. So the way Paul made His point that Abraham was justified by faith apart from any deeds of “the law” was to show that God’s promise to Abraham was given & he accepted it by faith before God instituted the covenant of circumcision (4:5-12).
  - a. Well, circumcision later became part of the Law of Moses & it was so important a law to the Jews & Jewish Christians that they demanded Gentile Christians be circumcised, so Paul drove home the point again (4:13-22).

[If one could acquire salvation simply by law keeping, God would owe such a one justification, but justification is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (11:4-6).]

### III. JAMES: JUSTIFICATION OF A CHRISTIAN

A. James should not be construed as teaching a works based salvation; he freely acknowledged the grace of God toward man, particularly His children.

1. James did not have an aversion to the subject; why should he, he was inspired of God

---

**Jas 1:17** – *Every good gift & every perfect gift is from above, & comes down from the Father of lights*, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

**Jas 4:6** – But *He gives more grace*. Therefore He says: “**God** resists the proud, but *gives grace to the humble*.”

---

B. James was addressing Jewish Christians that were going through many trials who thought they might please God simply by what they believed.

---

**Jas 2:14** – What doeth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, & have not works? *can faith save him?*

---

1. James answered his own question by a series of illustrations (2:15-23), then he concluded...

---

**Jas 2:24, 26** – *You see then that a man is justified by works, & not by faith only*...For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

---

[James is not considering earning salvation (which the Jews attempted to do – Paul’s subject), but how faith must be active in order to continue receiving God’s grace & forgiveness.]

### CLOSING

A. Paul was not contradicting James.

1. Paul was writing about justification to Jews who thought they could be saved by keeping their law.
2. James was writing about justification to Christians who thought they could be saved without keeping the law of Christ.

B. Many religious people regard *justification* as a one-time gift from God based solely upon a person's belief in Christ.

1. But Abraham was *justified* by faith many times in his life (Gen 12:1-4; Heb 11:8; Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3, 18-22; Gen 22; Jas 2:21-23; Heb 11:17-19).
2. The unwavering faith of Abraham caused him, with a few exceptions in his life, to have an active obedient faith in God – that is why “*it was accounted to him for righteousness*” (Rom 4:22).

**GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION:**

**Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ; read it in your Bible:** Acts 2; 3; 13; Rom 10:17

**Believe Jesus to be Lord and Christ, the Son of God and Savior:** Acts 2:36; John 3:16; 8:24; 20:30-31; Acts 4:12; Titus 1:4

**Repent of your sins:** Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 1 John 3:4

**Confess your faith in Jesus Christ:** Matt 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom 10:9-10

**Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins:** Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet 3:21

**Be obedient to the Lord, He will be your Judge:** Titus 2:11-12; Heb 5:9; 2 John 9; Rev 2:10; John 12:48