

**JUSTIFICATION  
BY FAITH  
&  
JUSTIFICATION  
BY WORKS**

## Romans 3:24-26

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 whom God purposed as a propitiation [satisfaction] by His blood, through faith, as a demonstration of His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

## Romans 3:26

26 *as a demonstration* at the present time of His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The greatest question is not, “How can a loving God cast His creatures into the lake of fire?”

The greatest question is, “How can a righteous God save anyone and still be righteous?”

## Romans 3:26

to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**to demonstrate** – for a demonstration, proof  
**at the present time** – in contrast to the past when God withheld the judgment on sins.

**His righteousness** -- this is the character of God, His holiness.

## Romans 3:26

to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**that He might be just** -- δίκαιος [dikaios]– righteous. God can never be rightly accused of wrong doing in anything – even when he declares the sinner to be righteous.

## Romans 3:26

to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**and the justifier** -- δικαιόω [dikaioo] pres act pt – the one justifying or declaring righteous.

**of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

## Romans 3:27-29

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we **conclude** that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

**Conclude:** λογίζομαι [logizomai] to reach a conclusion after careful consideration of facts, to reckon, consider, account, impute.

## Characteristics of justification (a legal declaration)

- it is apart from the Law (v. 21),
- through faith in Christ (v. 22a),
- for all people (vv. 22b–23),
- by grace (v. 24),
- at great cost to God (vv. 24b–25),
- and in perfect justice (v. 26).



## Romans 3:29-31

29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also,

30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

## **Justified by faith**

**Rom. 1:17; 3:26, 28, 30; 4:5; 5:1**

**Gal. 2:16; 3:8, 11, 24**

**Heb. 10:38**

**Jas. 2:24**

Faith means to trust, rely on, have confidence in, believe, accept something to be true.

Faith relies first on understanding a proposition, then volition to accept that proposition as reality.

Faith is always directed toward an object which can be expressed in a proposition. A proposition is the expression of a thought which can be verified or falsified. Therefore, faith is not a function of emotion but of reason.

You believe with your mind only. There is no such thing as believing with your heart if that is connected with emotions or commitment or some vague idea of sincerity.

Faith therefore excludes emotion, irrationalism, and mysticism. It is not a “leap into the darkness” but trust or confidence in a person or an object.

Faith that results in salvation must be placed in the One who can give salvation. Faith in the wrong object cannot save.

Faith is not a work we perform, but it is the channel by which we appropriate what God has done for us through His Son Jesus.

## Romans 4:1-2

**What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.**

How was Abraham justified? By works or by faith?

## Romans 4:1-2

**What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.**

Paul considers the possibility that Abraham might be justified by works.

## Romans 4:1-2

**For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.**

**IF** is a first class condition in the Greek text, which indicates that the speaker assumes something to be true.

1. For the sake of argument, let us assume that this is true
2. He is stating something that he knows to be true. E.g., “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread.”



## Romans 4:1-2

**For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.**

If Abraham was justified by works – and he was.

Or, if Abraham was justified by works – and let us assume that he was.

Conclusion: Then he has something to boast about.

If this was the case, then Paul's main thesis in Rom 3:28 would be false; and boasting would not be excluded after all, contrary to Rom 3:27: *Where is boasting then? It is excluded.*

But let us assume that Abraham was justified by works, then he has something to boast about

But not before God

Was Abraham justified by works?

**YES!**

**James 2:21: Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?**

**YES!**

This verse at first seems to contradict other verses that say God declared Abraham righteous when Abraham believed God's promise (Gen. 15:1–6; Rom. 4:3–5).

The solution to the problem lies in the meaning of “justified.” This word always means “to declare someone righteous,” not to make someone righteous (cf. Exod. 23:7; Deut. 25:1; 1 Kings 8:32).

The failure to define justification biblically is what has led some Reformed interpreters to conclude that everyone who is truly justified will inevitably behave righteously.

Abraham was declared righteous more than once.

The first statement of his justification is with regard to his salvation (Gen. 15:6). This is when God declared Abraham righteous.

About 20 years later, James says, Abraham was justified again (Genesis 22).

Scripture consistently teaches that believers whom God declares righteous never lose their righteous standing before God (Rom. 5:1; 8:1; et al). They do not need to be saved again.

Abraham's second justification, which is related to offering Isaac his son, refers to a second declaration of his righteousness.

**James 2:22-23 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.**

Abraham's faith was "perfected" by his works in the sense that his works made his faith stronger. This is another way of expressing the same idea stated in James 1:2-4.

Maturity comes as we persevere in the will of God when we encounter trials.

In the process, faith itself can be 'perfected.' The Greek word suggests development and maturation. Faith is thus nourished and strengthened by works.

**Jas 2:23 And the Scripture [Gen 15:6] was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.**

Genesis 15:6 is a statement about Abraham's salvation



**Also, he was called the friend of God.**

Isaiah 41:8: "But you, Israel, *are* My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of **Abraham My friend.**

2 Chronicles 20:7: "Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of **Abraham Your friend** forever?"

Being designated as the friend of God is related to Abraham's faith after salvation

Jesus said, **'You are my friends if you do whatever I command you'** (John 15:14).

When a man is justified by faith, he has an eternal acceptance before God (Rom. 4:6). But only God can see this spiritual transaction.

When, however, a man is justified by works he achieves an intimacy with God that is seen by men.

James 2:24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith **only**.

This is not saying that works are necessary for justification, as many with a false gospel are teaching today, as if you must have faith plus works.

It is necessary to understand the word “only” in this verse. It is an adverb that does not modify “faith” but the verb “justified.”

A man is justified by works and not only justified by faith.

A man is declared righteous by works, and not only by faith.

James is saying that a *by-faith* justification is not the only kind of justification there is. There is also a *by-works* justification. The former type is before God; the latter type is before men.

We have in this verse two categories of justification: one by works and one by faith.

Justification by faith is the only one that results in eternal life.

**Jas 2:25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?**

Apparently Rahab trusted in God before the spies ever arrived at her door (cf. Josh. 2:9–13).

Does James then contradict Paul's doctrine of grace, or John's gospel of faith being the single condition for eternal life?

Not at all. They are talking about two different things.

Could Abraham boast of his works?

Yes, but not before God.

**Rom 4:2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.**

There is a sense in which men are justified by works. But that is not the way men are justified before God. That is, it does not establish their legal standing before Him.

**Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”**

This statement, taken directly from Gen 15:6, is equivalent to saying that Abraham was justified by faith; this verse is quoted with the same meaning in Gal 3:6 and Jas 2:23.



**Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”**

Accounted **λογίζομαι** [logizomai] -- bookkeeping term: to put to one's account.

**“Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.”**

His faith was credited to him for righteousness. Rom 4:5, 9

The result of this is that he was that he was fully justified.  
“Faith credited as righteousness” is the same as justification by faith,

**Rom 4:5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,**

**Rom 4:6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:**





