

Justified by Faith or by Works or by Both ?

On the subject of justification some Bible verses seem to contradict each other. However, closer examination will establish that they do not as we know that God does not oppose His own word.

Job asked about justification:

Job 9:2 I know it is so of a truth:
but how should man be just with God?

Bildad the Shuhite asked basically the same question:

Job 25:4 How then can man be justified with God?
or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

Jesus gave an example by contrasting pride and humility in 2 men.

Pharisees were a sect who sought praise for their outward practices of religion, such as ceremonial washings, fastings, prayers, and alms giving.

Publicans were tax collectors, as a class, who were detested not only by the Jews, but by other nations also, both on account of their employment and of the harshness, greed, and deception, with which they did their job.

Luke 18:9-14 And he spake this parable unto certain which **trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:**

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray;

- the one a **Pharisee,**
- and the other a **publican.**

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself,

- God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are,
- extortioners,
- unjust,
- adulterers,
- or even as this publican.

12 • I fast twice in the week,
• I give tithes of all that I possess.

(Luke 18:) 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying,

God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, **this man went down to his house justified rather than the other:**

for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The Pharisees did good works to be admired by others. But because they trusted in themselves, in their works, they were not justified.

Jesus called them 'hypocrites' and said not to follow their example:

Matt 6:1-8 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 But when thou doest alms,

let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret:

and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are:

for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.

Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,

and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret;

and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do:

for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them:

for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6,

1 Pet 5:5). No one can brag before the Lord or vainly exalt themselves:

Rom 3:27-28 Where is boasting then? It is excluded.

By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that **a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**

In an attempt to separate grace completely apart
from the responsibility of works 'mid-Acts-ers' quote:

Rom 11:6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works:
otherwise grace is no more grace.
But if it be of works, then is it no more grace:
otherwise work is no more work.

However, when we read the verse **in context** Paul used the example of
Elijah, who thought he was the only one left (1 Kings 19:10, Rom 11:3-4)
who had not bowed his knee to the image of Baal. 'Grace' in Rom 11:6 had
to do with **God's choosing believers by election** of grace, not works:

Rom 11:5-6 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant
according to **the election of grace**.
6 And if (the election is) by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise
grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: oth-
erwise work is no more work.

The gift of God is eternal life (Rom 6:23).

The summary of the answer to the question faith or works is clear.

We are saved by grace through faith not of works:

Eph 2:8-10 For **by grace are ye saved through faith;**
and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
9 **Not of works,** lest any man should boast.

Many people stop reading there but following in the next verse, is the
relationship between faith and works. God already purposed that the heirs
of salvation (Heb 1:14) would do good works. **Faith PRODUCES works:**

10 For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus**
unto good works,
which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

God saved us by His mercy He justified us by His grace

He made us heirs of eternal life. NONE of this was by any works we did:

Titus 3:4-7 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 **Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,**

by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That **being justified by his grace,**

we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

'Mid-Acts-ers' constantly try to set Paul and James against each other,

saying that • Paul taught salvation by faith alone

(which-they-call the 'body of Christ' program)

and that • James taught justification by works

(which-they-call Israel's program).

'Mid-Acts-ers' fail to recognize the UNITY of the Spirit (Eph 4:3)

which inspired BOTH Paul and James to teach alike. BOTH men's writings

show that God justifies those who 'DO' His will NOT those who 'hear' it:

Rom 2:13 (For **not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.**

James 1:22-25 But **be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.**

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, **he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work,**
this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The justified have always lived by faith (Hab 2:4). In time past, believers in Israel waited for their Promised Messiah (Luke 2:25-32, 14:19-21).

'Mid-Acts-ers' miss this point: **God's righteousness 'WITHOUT**

THE LAW' was recorded 'IN' the law and the prophets:

Rom 3:21-26 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, **being witnessed by the law and the prophets;**

Just like John 3:16 says, ".... whosoever believeth in Him (God's Son) should not perish, but have everlasting life," Paul also agreed:

22 Even **the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:** for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation **through faith in his blood,** to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of **God;**

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that **he might be just,** and **the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.**

The prophet Isaiah foretold of salvation going to all the world:

Isa 45:21-25 Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; **a just God** (like we read in Rom 3:26) and a Saviour; there is none beside me.

22 Look unto me, and **be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:** (also see Isa 49:6) for I am God, and there is none else.

23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, **That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.** (like PAUL quoted in Rom 14:11 and Phil 2:10)

24 Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. (Luke 9:26; Rom 9:33, 10:11; 1 Tim 1:12; 1 John 2:28)

25 **In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified,** and shall glory.

That sounds like where Paul wrote, "And so all Israel shall be saved," (Rom 11:26-a). Don't forget who 'all the seed of Israel' are (written by Paul):

Rom 9:6-8 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.

For **they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:**

7 Neither, because they are the (physical, fleshly) seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, **In Isaac shall thy seed be called.**

8 That is, **They which are the children of the flesh,**

these are not the children of God:

but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Who's the seed of Abraham now (written by Paul)?

Gal 4:28 Now **we**, brethren, **as Isaac was,**
are the children of promise.

BOTH Paul and James testified that Abraham was justified by faith by believing God. The Spirit of God giving inspiration to the writers of the scriptures does not CONTRADICT Himself.

Again, clearly, justification is by faith along not by works:

Rom 4:2-5 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

3 For **what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But **to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.**

James, like Paul, also quoted Gen 15:6, and wrote the same thing as Paul:

James 2:23 And **the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness:**

and he was called the Friend of God.

But other verses in James chapter 2, are the 'battlefield' of the controversy.

As we read the CONTEXT of James 2:23 be reminded that James CANNOT be conflicting with Paul. The repeated point in this passage, is, "What you DO speaks louder than what you SAY." For example:

1 John 1:6 If we **say** that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, **we lie**, and do not the truth:

1 John 1:8 If we **say** that we have no sin, **we deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.

"When you SAY one thing and DO another then the words you SPOKE have no value." They are vain words (Eph 5:6). They are words.... that do not 'WORK'. Faith operates on that same principle. FAITH WORKS. If your so-called faith does not work, then you really do not have true faith:

James 2:14-26 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man **say** he hath faith, and have not works? **can faith save him?** (Does he PROVE that he has SAVING FAITH just by SAYING so if he does not work? No!)

Here is a very practical, 'real-life' example:

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,
16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (Nothing! It will not help at all, to just 'TELL' them not to be cold and hungry. You must 'GIVE' them clothing and food.)

That is the same way faith is:

17 Even so **faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.**

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works:
shew me thy faith without thy works, (You can't! According to Heb 11:1, faith is invisible, and cannot be seen. Faith only shows 'by works':) and **I will shew thee my faith by my works.**

The devils knew Who Jesus was (Matt 8:29; Mark 1:24, 5:7; Luke 4:34):

(James 2:) 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well:
the devils also believe, and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O **vain** man,
that **faith without works is dead?**

Have you ever heard the saying, "Put your money where your mouth is"?

- Abraham was justified by faith **when** he believed God (Gen 15:6).
- Abraham was justified by works **years later when** he took the knife to slay Isaac (Gen 22:3-14).

21 Was not **Abraham our father justified by works,**
when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 Seest thou how **faith wrought with his works,**
and by works was faith made perfect?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, **Abraham believed God,**
and it was imputed unto him for righteousness:
and he was called the Friend of God.

24 **Ye see then how that by works a man is justified,**
and not by faith only.

Abraham's works were evidence of his faith. So it was also, with Rahab:

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

26 For **as the body without the spirit is dead,**
so faith without works is dead also.

The scriptures show how their faith produced their works

and certified their faith was REAL and ALIVE and ACTIVE:

Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac:
and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Heb 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that
believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

In John 8:31-45, Jesus spoke to those Jews which believed on Him, and told them He knew they were Abraham's seed, but they sought to kill Him:

John 8:39 They answered and said unto him, **Abraham is our father.**
Jesus saith unto them, **If ye were Abraham's children,**
ye would do the works of Abraham.

Jesus said they were of their father the devil and they did his lusts.

Some **UN**believers SAY they are believers but their LACK of works demonstrates that they are not:

Titus 1:16 **They** (the defiled and unbelieving) **profess**
that they know God;
but in works they deny him,
being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work **reprobate.**

'Reprobate' means 'not standing the test' 'not approved'

'that which does not prove itself' 'unfit'.

The Greek word is also translated 'castaway' and 'rejected'.

It is critically important that we analyze and test our own works:

2 Cor 13:5 **Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;**
prove your own selves.

Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you,
except ye be **reprobates?**

Our works authenticate our faith. Are we happy with what we see?

Gal 6:4 But **let every man prove his own work,**
and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

This is David Dowell saying, "Think about it!"