




GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#155)
Justification –
Paul and James – different perspectives.

PAUL:
But to the one who **does not work, but believes** on him who **justifies** the ungodly, his **faith is credited for righteousness.**
Romans 4:5 (CSB)



JAMES:
... a person is **justified by works and not by faith alone.**
James 2:24b (CSB)

I'M CONFUSED!

WORKS, OR NO WORKS?

AM I SAVED... OR NOT?

PAUL & JAMES – TEACHING US THE NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO **CONTEXT!**

Abram **believed** the LORD, and he **credited it to him as righteousness.**
Genesis 15:6 (CSB)

*BOTH quote this passage from Genesis. But the **context** in which they quote it shows the reasons for the differences.*

- ✓ Paul proves that there are **NO WORKS** involved in obtaining this justification.
- ✓ James shows that there is a connection between **WORKS**, justification *and* **faith!**

HOW CAN THAT BE? THE WORD "WORKS" ISN'T EVEN IN THAT PASSAGE!

LET'S FIND OUT!

PAUL FOCUSES ON "OBTAINING THIS JUSTIFICATION."

There are **NO WORKS** involved! We can't *earn* it... but can only *trust* God to accomplish it.

- ✓ Paul focuses on the event that occurred in Genesis 15.
 - ❖ God made a promise to Abraham. *
 - ❖ Abraham trusted God – that he would do what he promised.

For what does the Scripture say? **Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.**

Now to the one who works, pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed.

But to the one who **does not work, but believes** on him who **justifies** the ungodly, his **faith is credited for righteousness.**
Romans 4:3-5 (CSB)

* (In chapter 17, God changes Abram's name to Abraham.)

JAMES FOCUSES ON "LIVING THIS JUSTIFICATION."

WORKS are involved! They are the *ongoing effects* of justification in a *saved* person's life.

- ✓ James describes an event that occurred in Genesis 22.
 - ❖ This was about **30 years after** Genesis 15!
 - ❖ The quoted passage (from 30 years prior) was *still in effect*, proving itself to be true, by the way Abraham lived.

Wasn't Abraham our father **justified by works** in offering Isaac his son on the altar?

You see that **faith was active together with his works**, and **by works, faith was made complete**, and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, **Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,** and he was called God's friend. *

You see that a person is **justified by works and not by faith alone.**
James 2:21-24 (CSB)

* (He was called "God's friend" in 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; Exodus 33:11.)

PAUL DOES TELL US THAT WORKS ARE A PART OF SALVATION.

*These works occur **after** a person is saved.*
*What Paul says **parallels** what James is saying – even though he doesn't use the word "justified" in those verses.*

- ✓ Works are connected to the word **faith** (but not to attain salvation).
 - For you are **saved by grace through faith, ... not from works, ...**
 - For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.
Ephesians 2:8a, 9a, 10 (CSB)
 - ... the **obedience** that comes from **faith** ...
Romans 1:5 (NIV)
- ✓ Works are connected to the word **repentance**.
 - ... I preached ... that they should repent and turn to God, and **do works worthy of repentance.**
Acts 26:20 (CSB)

OTHERS ALSO TELL US THAT WORKS ARE CONNECTED TO VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SALVATION (INCLUDING FAITH).

These works are the responses of people who have already chosen to follow Jesus. (It doesn't cause them to start following Jesus!)

✓ The author of Hebrews.

[Jesus] became the source of **eternal salvation** for all who obey him ... Hebrews 5:9b (CSB) By **faith** Abraham obeyed ... Hebrews 11:8a (NET)

✓ Peter.

Now that you have **purified** yourselves by **obeying the truth** ... 1 Peter 1:22a (NIV)

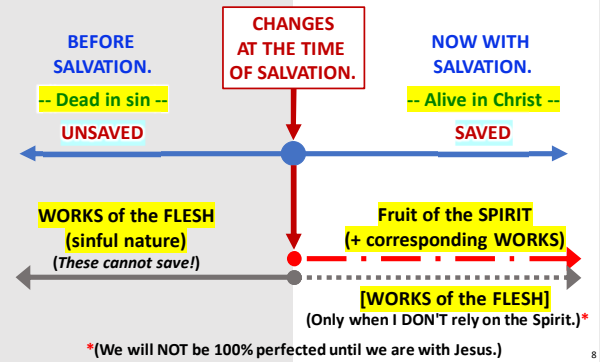
✓ John.

Loving God means **obeying his commands**. 1 John 5:3 (ERV)

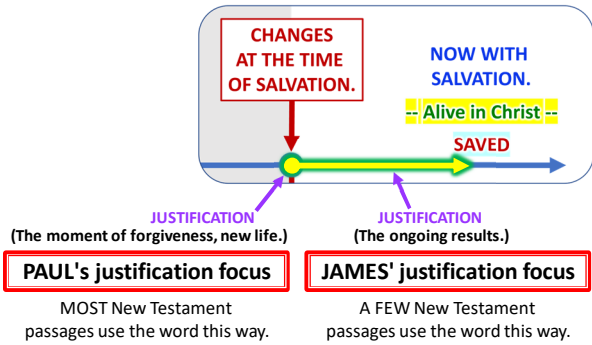
✓ Jesus.

Jesus replied, "All who **love** me will **do what I say**." John 14:23a (NLT)

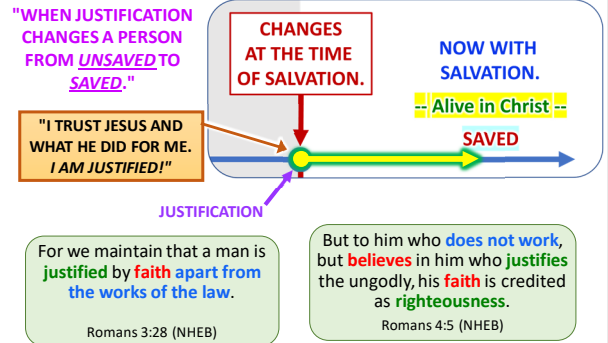
We can illustrate this with a "salvation timeline."



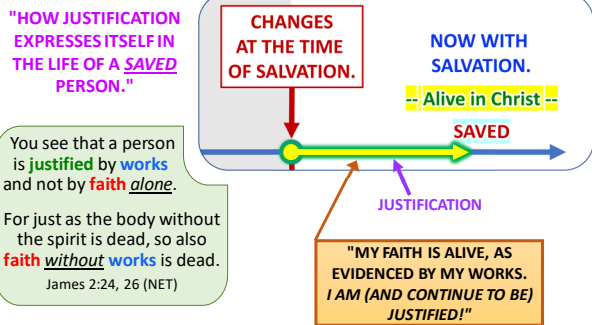
Where JUSTIFICATION fits on this timeline.



Paul's emphasis: The point in time when we are justified. It is not due to human works – not even works required in God's law.



James' emphasis: Unless you have a living faith (evidenced by what you do), there is no evidence that you were ever justified (saved).



WHAT can we learn from all this?

- ✓ **The importance of context.** This is how we can understand what a passage is actually saying.
- ✓ **The precise accuracy of Scripture.** When we pay close attention to details, apparent contradictions tend to disappear.
- ✓ **About justification and works.**
 - It's **not caused** by works. This is the focus of most Scripture passages about justification.
 - It **results** in works. Though equally true, this focus is less-emphasized. (Most of the time, *other words* are used, instead of *justification*.)

✓ **About justification and the changes that take place at the moment of salvation.**


At salvation, justification results in a CHANGED heart and mind.
THIS MEANS:

Before salvation...

- We cannot work **FOR** justification, because the changes haven't yet taken place.

But once salvation has taken place...

- We work **BECAUSE OF** justification, because the Holy Spirit is now empowering us!



This is the reason for the differences between what Paul and James said.

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Be aware that many Bible topics are presented from different perspectives in different passages.

Some are described in different ways because of the time issue (just like justification is).

EXAMPLE #1: SALVATION has past, present and future aspects.

- ⇒ Normally, it's PAST TENSE: [God] **saved** us ... according to his own mercy ... Titus 3:5a (ESV)
- ⇒ PRESENT TENSE: ... to us who are **being saved** [the message of the cross] is the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18b (NIV)
- ⇒ FUTURE TENSE: [We] are shielded by God's power **until the coming of the salvation** that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:5 (NIV)

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EXAMPLE #2: SANCTIFICATION (becoming holy) HAS VARIOUS DIMENSIONS.

(This has to do with the process of becoming holy. It happens throughout the life of the person who is following Jesus.)

⇒ It may be described in PRESENT TENSE – Something we must pursue (with the Spirit's empowerment).

Make every effort ... to be **holy**; without **holiness** no one will see the Lord.
 Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)

⇒ This PAST TENSE verse points to the "starting point" of this process – the moment of salvation:

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 Corinthians 6:11b (CSB)

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Your mission:

⇒ **APPRECIATE THE PRECISE ACCURACY OF SCRIPTURE,** so you will be careful when you study it.

⇒ **PAY ATTENTION TO BOTH PAUL AND JAMES,** and let both influence the way you think and live!

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Credits

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