

# The Doctrine of Justification



## In Simplicity



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### **PART I: The Basics of Justification**

**W**e hear much talk and many sermons today centered on the doctrine of justification. There is a continuous search for man to be justified in the sight of the holy Creator of the universe. But what exactly does it mean to be justified? What does the Bible teach about justification? Are we already justified, do we have to do something in order to obtain justification? These questions and many more pass through the minds of men and women who hear sermons or read doctrinal books on the subject. Is it really that important of a subject after all?

#### **The Meaning of Justification**

Justification has at times been informally defined as "just-as-if-I'd" never sinned, but there is much more to this word and concept. The word justification is a word that has the meaning of: to be cleansed, to be declared as righteous, to render just or innocent, or to reckon as pure. Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary of the English language defines the word, under its number two definition as, "In theology, to pardon and clear from guilt; to absolve or acquit from guilt and merited punishment." Therefore we can see that it basically has the meaning of being declared innocent and holy in Yahweh's "court of law."

Suppose you broke an ordinance of the particular city in which you live, and you received a ticket with a fine of \$100.00 to pay at a specific date. The date arrived and you showed up for your sentence, but the judge decided to wave the penalty and declare you innocent in the sight of the court and the city. You would then be considered justified. While this is just a human, earthly example, we all should be seeking this same right standing of innocence in the sight of our ultimate judge, Yahweh Almighty.

#### **Not a New Question**

The question that we are asking in this article is not one which is new. It has been asked throughout the ages of time, by various individuals, some of whom we find in Scripture. Bildad the Shuhite, one of Job's three "friends" that came to console

him had somewhat to offer on the subject. He stated (Job 25:4-6), "How then can man be justified with Elohim? or how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, *that is* a worm? and the son of man, *which is* a worm?" These question of Bildad do not readily supply us with the answer but they do allow us to ponder on the words spoken by him and ask ourselves as individuals, "Just how is it, really, that a man can be justified before Yahweh?" Bildad's friend Job submitted similar statements when he said (Job 9:2-3), "How should man be just with Elohim? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand." Certainly Job understood the concept that Bildad spoke of. Yahweh is holy and man is not. Yahweh is the supreme Authority and Creator of the heavens and earth and all things therein. There is no way possible to win an argument with Him.

### **The Sinfulness of Man**

There is quite often a tendency for people to think or believe for some reason that a man *could be* justified or declared innocent under the Old Covenant by his obedience to the law of Yahweh. These same individuals think that such is not the case under the New Covenant. It is taught that under the New Covenant we cannot be justified, but things were done differently under the Old Covenant. It is generally taught that people were justified by the deeds of the law under the Old Covenant, but now by grace under the New Covenant. What is not readily understood the majority of the time is that the sinfulness of mankind, and the need for justification *apart from works* was acknowledged during the Old Covenant. The following verses prove this to be true.

The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no Elohim. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good. Yahweh looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek Elohim. They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one. [Psalms 14:1-3]

Hear my prayer, O Yahweh, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. [Psalms 143:1-2]

For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. ...Lo, this only have I found, that Elohim hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions. [Ecclesiastes 7:20, 29]

If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto Yahweh toward the city which thou hast chosen, and

*toward* the house that I have built for thy name: Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, (for *there is* no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near. [1 Kings 8:44-46; also 2 Chronicles 6:36]

Those followers of Yahweh under the Old Covenant recognized their sinfulness and the fact that there is not a just man upon the earth that has never sinned. Usually the New Testament writings are referred to in order to validate such a teaching, but the above Old Testament writings validate it just fine. It ought to be understood that the only "Bible" the New Testament authors had was what we call the Old Testament. This Old Testament was primarily the Scriptures that Paul told Timothy were able to make him wise unto salvation, and to equip him for every good work (2 Timothy 3:15-17). The authors of the New Testament would have derived their understanding of mankind's sinfulness based upon a careful examination of the Old Testament.

### **A Harmony Between the Covenants**

We have all sinned (Romans 3:23) and are in need of justification. Yahweh did declare that it would be the children of Israel's righteousness *if* they would observe everything written in the law (Deuteronomy 6:25). Moses uttered the words of Yahweh when he stated (Deuteronomy 27:16), "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen." The teaching here is that if the Israelites *did not* abide by everything written in the law to do it, they were under a curse. Seeing that there is no man always does what is good that never sins (1 Kings 8:46), all Israel was then under the curse spoken of in Deuteronomy 27. So again we must ask the question, how can people who have sinned against Yahweh, be justified before their Creator who demands perfect obedience for being declared innocent?

As the above paragraph shows, it cannot be done by perfectly obeying the law of Yahweh, for none of the Israelites ever accomplished this. Therefore it is not by the law of Yahweh (also called the law of Moses, Malachi 4:4) that justification is obtained. Acts 13:39 does state, "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." The "him" spoken of in this verse is Yeshua the Messiah (Acts 13:26-38), and it is through this man that our justification comes according to Acts 13:39, and not by the works of the law of Moses. Not only did the Apostle Paul teach this as factual, but so did the prophet Isaiah, as the next comparison demonstrates.

Acts 13:38-39 - "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all

that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Isaiah 53:10-11 - “Yet it pleased Yahweh to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of Yahweh shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

Not only do we have a harmony between covenants on the teaching of justification between Paul and Isaiah, but we also see that such an harmony exists with other passages in the Scriptures. Notice the following:

Romans 3:20, 28 - “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin... Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

Psalms 143:1-2 - “Hear my prayer, O Yahweh, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”

Galatians 2:16 - “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Yeshua Messiah, even we have believed in Yeshua Messiah, that we might be justified by the faith of Messiah, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

Psalms 130:1-8 - “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Yahweh. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, Yahweh, shouldest mark iniquities, O Master, who shall stand? But *there is* forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for Yahweh, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul *waiteth* for the Master more than they that watch for the morning: *I say, more than* they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in Yahweh: for with Yahweh there is mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

Galatians 3:11 - “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of Elohim, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”

Habbakuk 2:4 - “Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”

Galatians 5:4 - "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Romans 9:31-32 - "But Israel (OT Israel), which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because *they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.* For they stumbled at that stumbling stone."

These comparison verses from the New Testament and Old Testament make it plain that in both Covenants it was understood that justification did not come by perfect obedience to the law of Moses, i.e. the law of Yahweh. The astute Bible student may point out that the final comparison has the first verse from Galatians but the second verse from the book of Romans which is a New Testament book. While this is true, the verse in Romans is speaking of *Old Testament Israel*, as the Apostle is writing about happenings during Old Covenant times in which Israel did not seek the law of righteousness by faith, but instead by their obedience to the law.

The fact is that a proper reading of the Old and New Testaments reveals that it has been throughout all time that man is not declared innocent by the works of the law because of the fact that everyone has committed sin. This does not negate obedience in the life of a believer (as we will later show from Scripture), but it does in fact negate *any concept* that our justification comes from our obedience to the law of Yahweh. This is what the passages we have covered thus far declare and show. This is why the Apostle Paul stated what he did in Acts 13:39. Our justification comes to us through Yeshua the Messiah in some fashion. We must not be like the Pharisee that boasted of how he paid tithes of all he owned or how he fasted twice a week and was thankful he was not like the tax collector standing next to him. We must rather be as the tax collector in the sense of acknowledging our sinfulness and being willing to admit that we are a sinner needing the grace of Almighty Yahweh to save us from our disobedience (Luke 18:9-14).

### **Are We Justified by Obedience?**

One "harmony" that is sought for in order to make sense of the writings in both Testaments is that we are not justified by the Old Testament law, but we are justified by the New Testament law. Such a teaching does not conform to the written words of Scripture. All of those teaching such have broken the so called "New Testament law" and therefore are still under a curse. There is no law to be justified by *in any age* throughout history because of the fact that all have sinned. This teaching also contradicts the words of Paul in Galatians 3:21-22: "Is the law then against the promises of Elohim? Elohim forbid: for if there had been a law

given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise by faith of Yeshua the Christ might be given to them that believe." These words tell us that if there could have been a law given which was able to give life, then righteousness would have been by obedience to this law. What this shows is that because of the sinfulness of mankind, there is no law that could be given to give life because of the fact that men are sinners. The Scripture hath concluded all of us under sin, so that the promise might be by our faith in Yeshua and not by the works of the law. We acknowledge our sin and the need to be forgiven, and have faith in what Yeshua did for us. It is by this that we are justified from all things (Acts 13:39).

Galatians 3 goes on to say that before faith came we were kept in custody under the law, shut up to the faith that was to be revealed at a later time. Such words may be taken by some to say that faith was not in existence before the New Covenant. This could not be true, seeing that Yeshua himself stated faith to be a weightier matter of the law (Matthew 23:23). What Paul is telling us is that until faith (that is the Messiah, Galatians 3:22) came we were in the law's custody. It had us confined because of our sinfulness. The Old Covenant saints did not have the Messiah's death as an accomplished fact, but could only look toward to the Messiah's day (and thus his sacrificial death) prophetically (John 8:56). Indeed, Yeshua was the lamb slain from the foundation of the earth (Revelation 13:8), but until the Messiah's blood was shed as an actual finished work, the Old Covenant saints did not have their sins permanently remitted. As Hebrews 9:15 states, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Yeshua's blood redeemed the transgressions of the first covenant, that is, the Old Covenant. All of the Old Covenant saints died in faith, not having yet received the promise of first coming of Yeshua the Messiah (Hebrews 11:13).

### **Justification through Yeshua**

Our declaration of innocence does not come through our obedience to the law, but rather through our faith in Yeshua, what he accomplished for us. As Romans 4:25 states, he was delivered up for our offences or sins, and raised again for our innocence or justification. Romans 3:23-26 echoes this fact when saying, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of Elohim; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Messiah Yeshua: Whom Elohim 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 Elohim; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Yeshua." Everyone has sinned, and thus we have come short of

the perfect obedience that Yahweh demands. We can, however, be justified freely by Yahweh's grace through His Son Yeshua Messiah. Yahweh has used His Son to be the appeasement between us and Him, as it is through Yeshua's shed blood that our peace with Father Yahweh is restored.

Why must we believe in this for justification? The answer is that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Remember, we are under a curse for not continuing in all that the law says to do (Deuteronomy 27:26). We are thus deserving of the penalty of the law, as a man that commits a crime against the city or state is deserving of its penalty. We are all worthy of death because we've all sinned. Yeshua took our place in that he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5). Yahweh hath laid upon His Son the sins of all the lost sheep (Isaiah 53:6; Acts 8:30-35). Yeshua bore our iniquities and it is through our belief and knowledge of him that we are justified (Isaiah 53:11). He truly paid a debt he did not owe, and we owed a debt that we were unable to pay.

### **The Need to Know You Are a Sinner**

There is at this point a fundamental teaching to ascertain. We each need to acknowledge that we have sinned. There are those in the world today that when presented with the gospel message proclaim, "I'm not a bad person. I've never really done anything worthy of death." What they do not realize is that they have done something worthy of death, maybe not in their own human eyes, but in the eyes of the Omnipotent Being that created them. A simple walk through the Ten Commandments should be able to reveal to any person that they have fallen short of Yahweh's law. Take the ninth commandment for example. Have you ever been a false witness that spoke lies? What about adultery? This seventh commandment is abrogated even when a man looks upon another man's wife to lust after her in his heart (Matthew 5:28). Have we men obeyed this to perfection?

Romans 3:19 states, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before Elohim." Our mouths need to be stopped before Yahweh. This verse is akin to a man standing in a courtroom guilty of a crime, and he has nothing to say so he just stands there and accepts the punishment for his crime. His mouth is closed or stopped because he has been convicted. All of us need to realize this as we stand in the courtroom of Yahweh. We have been convicted, we've all sinned, our mouths must be stopped. We need not be as the Pharisees who thought they were righteous in themselves (Luke 16:15). We must be able to confess our sin and accept the free gift of justification through Yeshua. 1 John 1:8-10 states:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Although the context of this passage reveals the chapter to be referencing born again believers, there is an application to everyone, believer or unbeliever. If we say that we have not sinned against Yahweh we are deceiving ourselves, but if we acknowledge and confess, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our wrong doings. We do not want to make Yahweh a liar, but rather be willing to say that we've fallen short.

The need for people to understand this is vital. There are people in the earth today that are not aware of physical sicknesses plaguing their body, such as cancer, and without knowledge of this problem they will not be able to perform the necessary actions to cause the problem to be resolved. The same applies in the spiritual realm. If people are not aware that they have a serious spiritual problem of sin, they will not feel the need to ask their Creator to forgive them, using the means He has chosen to do such. The result in this case is catastrophic, seeing that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), in this case eternal death.

### **The Difference of Yeshua**

One may reason that if *all men* have sinned (Romans 3:23) and Yeshua is a man (1 Timothy 2:5) then that must mean that Yeshua has committed sin like the rest of mankind, and therefore there is no reason for us to believe upon him for our justification. This reasoning does not take into account the totality of what the Scriptures say. True enough, the Bible does say that all have sinned, but the word all here is not used in an all inclusive sense. Paul stated that all things were lawful to him (1 Corinthians 6:12) but he obviously did not mean that it was lawful for him to murder or steal. The same can be said in that Yahweh gives the believer all things to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17), but that doesn't mean He gives the believer adultery or fornication to enjoy. The word *all* in these verses is used in specific context, just as many Americans use it today when saying something like, "I've been waiting on you *all* day long!" when they have really been waiting for a very long time. Sometimes I ask my children, "Who ate all the cookies?" They understand that I am speaking of all the cookies in my home, or all the cookies in the cookie jar.

The Bible explicitly removes Yeshua the Messiah from the verse of Romans 3:23, in that it tells us in plain language that Yeshua did not sin. He was the lamb of Elohim (John 1:29) without blemish (sin), the anti-type of the Old Covenant Passover lamb which had to be whole, complete, and blemish free (Exodus 12:5).



The verses proving this are as follows:

2 Corinthians 5:21 - "For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of Elohim in him."

Hebrews 4:15 - "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."

Hebrews 7:26 - "For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."

1 Peter 2:21-22 - "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

Isaiah 53:9b - "...because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth."

As you can see from these Bible verses, Yeshua was not guilty of sin. He never transgressed the law of Yahweh (1 John 3:4). Furthermore, the initial context of Romans 3 shows that the *all men* who have sinned must believe in Yeshua for the forgiveness of their sins, thus showing conclusively that Yeshua is not included in the all men of Romans 3:23.

### **Keeping the Law for Justification**

After reading this section in this study, one may come to the conclusion that a perfect obedience to the law of Yahweh is not needed for justification, but such is not the case. You may wonder how this could be so, seeing that the Bible is explicit that we all have sinned. Yet, a perfect obedience to the law of Yahweh is needed for justification. Yeshua kept the law perfectly in order to earn our salvation for us. Yes, the law had to be kept, it had to be kept in every specific way. It had to be obeyed perfectly. Yeshua's death, without his perfect obedience, would have been the death of another faithful martyr, but it would not have been sufficient to cleanse us from our sins. Seeing he obeyed Yahweh perfectly, he qualified himself as the unblemished lamb of Yahweh, and was put to death on our behalf. He was then resurrected as the first fruit offering to Yahweh (1 Corinthians 15:20-23), the first of believers to be resurrected to eternal life (Hebrews 5:9). Isn't it wonderful that Yahweh had enough mercy to send His only begotten Son (John 3:16) to pay the price of sin for us! We should glory in this message, and in the fact that without Yahweh, through Yeshua the Messiah His Son, we would not be able to be declared innocent in the spiritual "court-of-law." I pray that the truth of this blessed grace will be shed abroad in each person's heart

that comes to meet the Messiah. What Yahweh did for us, when understood, is remarkable and astonishing, and will pass the test for our justification! Praise be to Yahweh for His Son Yeshua!

## PART II: Romans 3:9 – 4:25 on Justification

Two of the most powerful chapters on the doctrine of justification can be found in the New Testament book of Romans. The Apostle Paul here declares in unambiguous language that there is no possibility of a man being justified by his obedience, i.e. the deeds of the law. These chapters are of so much concern, that a verse by verse commentary is needed to further our understanding of this important doctrine.

### Commentary

What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. [Romans 3:9-10]

Paul comments on the sinfulness of mankind, all are under sin. The phrase "under sin" has the meaning that everyone has, at one time or another in their lifetime, committed sin. He then turns to the Scriptures by using the phrase "As it is written" and proclaims that there is none righteous no not one. This is not to say that earthly man is incapable of living a righteous life by the power of the Spirit of Yahweh, a point I will discuss further into this study, but it is to say that there is no one who is perfectly righteous - no not one.

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after Elohim. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of Elohim before their eyes. [Romans 3:11-18]

Here we have several quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures that are applied to the universal sinfulness of mankind. It is interesting to note that the places these quotes are taken from (Psalms 5:9; 10:7; 14:1-3; 36:1; 140:3) all deal with whom the Psalmist refers to as wicked and sinful men, fools in the sight of Yahweh. For instance in Psalms 5:8-9 we read (NIV) "Lead me O Yahweh, in your righteousness because of my enemies - make straight your way before me. Not a

word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with destruction. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongue they speak deceit." David is speaking of his enemies and describing his enemies in this Psalm. Paul, on the other hand, takes a passage applied to the wicked enemies of David and applies to humankind. This is certainly not a very flattering picture of humanity to say the least.

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before Elohim. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. [Romans 3:19-20]

Anything that the law says it says to those who are under the law. While the phrase *under the law* does have other meanings, here it denotes those who have fallen prey to sin - disobedience to the instructions of Yahweh. In reading the law we are shown our sins and thus our mouths are stopped because we have no words to say or use in our defense. We are all standing guilty before a Holy Mighty One. Verse 20 begins by saying "therefore" meaning, "on the basis of what I've just stated" by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified (declared innocent) in His sight. The meaning is apparent. We've all fallen short of perfection in the eyes of Yahweh, our mouths are closed, and we cannot be declared innocent by the law because we've broken it. It is through the law that we have the knowledge of sin. We are able to know that we are sinners by reading the holy law of Yahweh Elohim, and seeing exactly how He desires His people to live their lives.

But now the righteousness of Elohim without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of Elohim *which is* by faith of Yeshua Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of Elohim. [Romans 3:21-23]

There is a righteousness that comes from Yahweh without the law being in view. This righteousness was prophesied about within the law and within the prophets of old that spoke by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19-21). This righteousness is of Yahweh by our faith in His Son Yeshua, and what was accomplished for us at Calvary. It is available to all who will believe, for there is no difference in everyone, because of the fact that we have all come short of Yahweh's perfection - His holy law. Our recognition of Yeshua's blood sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 10:12) and our acknowledgment of our own sinfulness causes us to be declared righteous in the eyes of Yahweh. No longer shall we be guilty, but innocent from all of our

sins we've committed.

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Yeshua: Whom Elohim 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 Elohim; To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Yeshua. [Romans 3:24-26]

Here we see that all those who are not righteous (vs. 11) and whose mouths have been stopped (vs. 19) are declared innocent freely by the grace of Yahweh through the redemption that is in His Son. Yahweh hath given Yeshua to be a propitiation through our faith in his blood. The word propitiation has the meaning of making peace or reconciling a matter between enemies. Webster's 1828 dictionary defines it as, "The act of appeasing wrath and conciliating the favor of an offended person; the act of making propitious. In theology, the atonement or atoning sacrifice offered to [Yahweh] to assuage his wrath and render him propitious to sinners." The Apostle John agrees with Paul when he writes (1 John 2:1-2) "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Yeshua Messiah the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Yeshua the Messiah is thus our advocate with Father Yahweh.

Take special note that this propitiation comes through Yeshua's blood that is mentioned directly. The blood notifies the death that was paid. While blood still ran through Yeshua's veins, his life was in him, for the life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:13-14). The removal of Yeshua's blood thus constituted death, which was the wages due to a sinner (Romans 6:23). The Bible is emphatic on the importance of the blood of Yeshua as the following Scriptures declare.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matthew 26:27-28)

And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. (Mark 14:24)

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:20)

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:44)

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of Elohim, which he hath purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

But Elohim commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to Elohim by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (Romans 5:8-11)

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Yeshua Messiah to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. (Ephesians 1:5-7)

But now in Messiah Yeshua ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Messiah. (Ephesians 2:13)

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:12-14)

For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven. (Colossians 1:19-20)

But Messiah being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to Elohim, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim? (Hebrews 9:11-14)

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Yeshua. (Hebrews 10:19)

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of Elohim, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite

unto the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:29)

Wherefore Yeshua also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. (Hebrews 13:12)

But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now Elohim of peace, that brought again from the dead our Master Yeshua, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. (Hebrews 13:19-20)

Elect according to the foreknowledge of Elohim the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Yeshua Messiah: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (1 Peter 1:2)

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Yeshua Messiah his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

And from Yeshua Messiah, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. (Revelation 1:5)

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to Elohim by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our Almighty kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:8-10)

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:14)

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. (Revelation 12:11)

Our faith in Yeshua's blood, in his very death, causes us to be declared innocent in the sight of Yahweh. We accept him as our substitute on the cross, and rely on his perfection along with his death and resurrection to save us.

Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. [Romans 3:27-28]

What room do we have for boasting? If it is not by our own perfection that we have been declared innocent and therefore righteous in Yahweh's court, how on earth are we able to boast? It is excluded, or as one translation says (NLT) "...our acquittal is not based on our good deeds. It is based on our faith." The conclusion is that a man is justified by his faith in Messiah without the deeds or works of Yahweh's law. Paul echoes this same teaching to the assembly at Corinth when he writes (1 Corinthians 1:29-31, NIV) "...no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Messiah Yeshua, who has become for us wisdom from Elohim - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: Let him who boasts boast in Yahweh." We should be proud of our right standing, but only in Yahweh. When we boast it should be lifting up Yahweh for the work He has accomplished in us based upon the death of Yeshua.

*Is he* the Elohim of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing *it is* one Elohim, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Elohim forbid: yea, we establish the law. [Romans 3:29-31]

Yahweh is the Elohim of both the Jews and the Gentiles. There is only one Elohim and he will justify both the Jews (circumcision) and the Gentiles (uncircumcision) by the faith that is talked about in this entire chapter. Neither group has the possibility of being justified any other way. Both groups have fallen into sin and are thus guilty.

Paul does clear up what he obviously felt may be a reaction by some about what he was writing. All this talk about justification by faith may lead some people to believe that there is not any rule we must obey, but Paul corrects this teaching before it surfaces in the actions of individuals. He rhetorically asks if we do away with the law because of this justification by faith. His reply is one which states that Yahweh would forbid such a thing. Rather than nullifying the law it becomes established by faith. As one translation says (NLT) "Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law."

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before Elohim. [Romans 4:1-2]

Although there is a break in the chapter the thought continues on in Paul's writing. He asks the question of what should we say that Abraham, the father of those he was writing to, has found as pertaining to the flesh. Pertaining to the flesh in this instance does not have to do with the Romans physical ancestry per-se, but rather with Abraham's physical works. What has he accomplished based upon his human capability of producing good works. Paul continues by pointing out that Abraham, a man living many years before Paul's writing, was not justified by his works. If Abraham were justified by his own works, that is, his own perfect obedience to the law of Yahweh, he would be able to glory and boast about it.

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed Elohim, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the unholy, his faith is counted for righteousness. [Romans 4:3-5]

Paul again turns to the Scripture for substantiation of his claim. He points us towards a passage in the book of Genesis that deals with Abraham's justification in Yahweh's eyes by faith. The story goes thusly.

After these things the word of Yahweh came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Master Yahweh, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of Yahweh *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in Yahweh; and he counted it to him for righteousness. [Genesis 15:1-6]

Abram (as he was known at this time in Genesis) was having a problem with his not being able to have a child by his beloved with Sarai. His concern resulted in his thinking that he was going to have to leave an inheritance to his servant, Eliezar, instead of leaving to his son, following the normal procedure of inheritance. Yahweh tells him not to worry for there would come forth out of Abram's own bowels an heir, and from thenceforth would come a seed that would match the number of the stars in the heavens. At this point, Abram must have ceased his anxiety and began to believe what Yahweh was telling him. When Abram believed Yahweh, Yahweh counted it to him as righteousness. Notice that in Romans 4:3-5 the believing one is equated with the one that does not work. In



other words Abram's justification was apart from works.

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom Elohim imputeth righteousness without works, *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. [Romans 4:6-8]

At first glance, one's mind here may wander over to a fairly familiar verse of Scripture which says, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to Yahweh." (Proverbs 17:15) If a justification of the wicked is an abomination to Yahweh, then how can Yahweh justify the wicked? The verses above in Romans show how this process is carried out. In verse 6 it says that David spoke of the righteousness of Yahweh given to or imputed to a man who has not perfectly obeyed the law. David spoke of this in the book of Psalms, Psalm 32:1-5 which says:

Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, whose sin *is* covered. Blessed *is* the man unto whom Yahweh imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. (*Selah*) I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto Yahweh; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. (*Selah*)

Notice here that David is speaking of a time in his life when he would not confess his sin to Yahweh and this caused the entire day to lay heavy upon him. Afterwards David saw the need to acknowledge his sin in the presence of Yahweh, and cease from hiding his wrong doings. When he confessed his transgressions unto Yahweh, Yahweh forgave him. Yahweh is not justifying the unholy, and allowing that person to live in an unholy lifestyle. Yahweh justifies them based upon the work (perfect life, and then death) of Messiah that cleanses them of their sin. He justifies a wicked man, based upon the death of Yeshua. Through this death the wicked man, when he acknowledges his sin as David through confession, has his wickedness terminated, and his sins washed away or forgiven. Yahweh does not impute sin unto this person. He is fully clean based upon his faith, and not based upon his obedience or works of the law.

*Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. [Romans 4:9-10]

A question is now asked by the Apostle concerning the imputation of this blessing of being declared righteous. Does the blessing only come unto the man who is circumcised or does it also come unto the man who is uncircumcised? The words circumcision and uncircumcision do pertain to the actual, physical act, but they also imply much more. New Testament Scripture use the terms in relation to the Jew verses the Gentile. Those who were considered in a right relationship with Yahweh (Jew), and those who were considered in a severed relationship with Yahweh (Gentile).

The passage continues by saying that it was faith or belief in the words of Yahweh (Genesis 15:1-6) that was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. Another question is asked concerning the state of Abraham when he had faith. Was he circumcised or uncircumcised? The answer is obvious for those who read the Scriptures. Genesis 15 finds Abram in an uncircumcised state for the law of circumcision did not come into effect from Yahweh to him until Genesis 17. So his belief was counted to him for righteousness *before* the act of circumcision.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being *yet* uncircumcised. [Romans 4:11]

Even though Abram was uncircumcised in Genesis 15 when he believed, he still obeyed the command of Yahweh given to him in Genesis 17, and here it is called, "a seal of the righteousness of the faith." Do not miss the point of the seal. Abraham truly believed in Yahweh, and this belief was inevitably followed by obedience to the very words of Yahweh. Truly, we see that Abraham obeyed Yahweh fully (Genesis 25:1-6).

This whole act of belief first, and circumcision second, was so that Abraham could be the father of all that believe. Both to the uncircumcised man that has righteousness imputed to him by faith, and to the physically circumcised man who not only worships Yahweh physically but exemplifies the faith that Abraham his father had before he was circumcised. Both parties walk in the faith of Abraham.

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression. Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the

promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. [Romans 4:13-16]

The promise of Yahweh given to Abraham was not based upon his works of righteousness but upon his faith in Yahweh's words. Had it been based upon Abraham's works, Abraham would have failed miserably as the rest of us, for he too falls under the category of "all have sinned" in Romans 3:23. If those who perfectly obey the law could be heirs, faith would be null and void, for the law works wrath. This means that the law shows a person that they are a sinner, and are acting in violation of something holy, righteous, and just (Romans 7:12). This is further explained by the fact that if no law exists, then no transgression can exist. However, the opposite is true also. Where a law does exist, transgression does and inevitably will exist. Such is the case with all of mankind.

For these reasons our righteousness comes through faith, by grace and mercy, so that we all might receive the capability of having our sins remitted freely by Yahweh through His Son. This righteousness does not come only to those who are of the law (Jew), but also to those who are of faith (Gentile). Of the law here does not have the meaning of being perfect in the law, but is only stressing a point that a certain people had the law, that is, were walking with a mindset that the law needed to be obeyed, but the other were walking apart from this mindset. Both parties were involved in sin, and both have to be justified by faith because of this fact, just as their father Abraham was justified by his faith apart from his obedience.

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* Elohim, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of Elohim through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to Elohim; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. [Romans 4:17-22]

Abraham is indeed a father of many nations (Genesis 17:5) in the sight of Yahweh Elohim. Abram did not have much reason to hope for a promised seed from his elderly wife Sarai. In spite of this factor he was not weak in his faith, and did not consider his own body incapable of producing a child, neither did he look to Sarai's womb as being inadequate for the promise of Yahweh. He did not

stagger at the words of Yahweh, but had full faith and assurance that Yahweh was able to perform the words spoken to him in Genesis 15:1-6. Because of all this, Abram received the imputation of righteousness. This imputation was not based upon works done by Abram, it was not based upon how good of a life he lived prior to this declaration by Yahweh, but it was solely based upon the faith that Abram had in Yahweh's words.

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Yeshua our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. [Romans 4:23-25]

The words of Genesis 15:6 were not written for Abram's sake alone. This imputation of righteousness goes much further than being granted only to Abram, later called Abraham. It is written also for us, and we can have this same imputation of righteousness based upon our faith in Almighty Yahweh, and His act of raising up Yeshua the Messiah from the dead. Yeshua was delivered up in the presence of sinful men because of our sins, and he was raised on the third day for our innocence or justification. This imputation is not based upon our works, i.e. our lives that we've lived when we come to Yahweh seeking forgiveness. It is solely based upon the life of Messiah and the death which he paid on behalf of you and I. For this we should praise Yahweh daily and thank Him for the beautiful gift of His only begotten Son (John 3:16). If we believe upon Yahweh's Son for our justification, we have a promise that we shall not perish, but obtain life eternally!

### **PART III: Justification and Works**

**T**hus far we have covered the need to know that Yahweh has offered us the free gift of salvation through His Son, and the need to be humble and thankful for this act of mercy, not exalting our own selves. It is not by works of righteousness that Yahweh has saved us (Titus 3:4-7) but rather by His grace. If we say that we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves, but if we confess our sins Yahweh will forgive us of them. We must realize that we all fall under the condemnation of the law (Romans 3:9-11), for if we do not, we will not see the need for having faith in Yahweh to save us and free us by His grace. We must believe in Yahweh as Abraham, and righteousness will be imputed unto us, just as it was to our national father.

### **No Justification by Works**

The Scriptures use plain language in telling us that it is not by works that we are justified, but by faith (Romans 4:1-4). It takes the blood of a man that kept the law perfectly to justify us. Yeshua is our high priest that entered the holiest place of all, by his blood, once and for all, for the sins of humanity (Hebrews 10). If we were able to earn our salvation we would have room to boast because Yahweh would owe it to us, just as a man who labors for a wage of \$50.00 a day is owed that amount at the end of the day. He has worked and earned his pay, it does not come by grace. This is not how it is between Yahweh and us. We have not earned our “pay” but Yahweh has still offered it freely to all those who will believe on Him, through His Son, trusting in Him, and only Him, to bring salvation to their lost souls.

### **A Balanced Approach**

All this being said we *do* need to deal with the fact that those who are justified by faith (Romans 4) are not justified by a dead faith, but a living faith. Both types of faith exist in the world today, and in the world of yesterday. This, generally, is where people become confused and either want to throw out the book of James (as Martin Luther) or throw out the writings of Paul (as some today). True, living faith causes a chain-reaction in the life of the one who has it, but dead, empty faith is one which is spoken in mouth only, but not in heart. It is a general acceptance of the existence of a thing or statement without recognition in action. We shall seek to understand this in light of what the book of James relays to us in the second chapter of his work.

### **Commentary on 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? [James 2:14]

This is the beginning of James’ dissertation of dead faith and living faith. He starts by asking a question of the profit in a man saying that he has faith or belief, but the man never shows any action to back up the belief he supposedly has. The obvious answer is that there is no profit at all in this. It is akin to the 1<sup>st</sup> century party of the Pharisees who professed Elohim with their lips but their heart was far from Him (Matthew 15:7-8). This verse also shows that we are indeed dealing with salvation, as the last sentence in the verse says that this type of faith will not save a person. This explains to the reader that we are not dealing with anything pertaining to justification in the sight of men, as some would teach, but rather with a person’s salvation and justification in the sight of Yahweh.

A very vital, yet technical point of verse 14 is found in somewhat of a mistranslation in the KJV of the verse. The KJV translates the last part of the verse as "...can faith save him?" This is not exactly accurate. The Greek text of the New Testament contains an article before the word faith, and should, in all honesty, read something like, "...can **this** faith save him?" or "...can **such** faith save him?" True to the text, many translations of the Bible insert the article into the English rendition (NIV, NASB, RSV). This is a vital point, because without the article the passage would seemingly (on the surface) contradict the teaching of Romans 4 on justification apart from works or perfect obedience. James is telling us that "this faith" cannot save a person. That is, the faith that merely acknowledges Yahweh but denies Him in its actions is not a saving faith.

If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? [James 2:15-16]

Here James gives us his first example of this type of faith. If someone is in physical need and we have the means to relieve them, but we just say go and be warmed or fed, it does not profit these needy people. Our words simply enter the air and fall upon ears that are seeking for literal food, shelter, clothing, etc. If we had a living faith we would (1) see the needy and believe they were in true need of physical help, and (2) given them what we had to help them. 1 John 3:17-18 explains that if we have the ability to help a needy brother and we do not, the love of Elohim cannot possibly dwell in us. John goes on to teach that we should not love in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth. The meaning here is not that we should cease from telling people we love them with our words, but rather that this is not where the process should stop. We should continue in showing our love through actions. In this case, giving a person a blanket for warmth or food for nourishment would be an act of faith. For example, husbands can say we love our wives fifty times each day, but if we do not ever show them we love them, our relationship with our wife will grow cold and eventually be damaged severely. The same goes for wives to husbands, parents to children, and people to people.

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. [James 2:17]

Just as the needy people in verses 15-16 will not profit, so also faith by itself ("this faith" verse 14) if it has no works is dead. We all know that a dead person is not profitable to society. This is not said to sound harsh, but to be realistic. While we mourn and weep for a deceased loved one, they are simply unable to function anymore and will return to dust. This deceased person exemplifies a faith that

merely professes but does not act.

Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. [James 2:18]

We show our faith *by*, not without, our works. This is how we know that a person has truly has faith in Yahweh. They will operate in this faith and perform those actions that Yahweh deems necessary to accomplish.

Thou believest that there is one Elohim; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? [James 2:19-20]

Just because a person says with his mouth that he believes Yahweh is one does not mean anything in relation to his salvation. The demons themselves believe this, and other passages tell us that they also acknowledge Yeshua as the Son of Elohim (Matthew 8:29). The demons even tremble and shudder in their belief, but they do not have any works behind what they believe. It is this type of belief or faith that is without profit. The mental recognition or cognizance of Yahweh Elohim, and His being one, is similar to those people today who would say something like, "Yeah, I believe in Elohim." but yet they live a life as though He did not exist.

Scripture tells us of a people who profess to know Yahweh but they deny Him in works (Titus 1:16). These people say that they know Yahweh, but they really are nothing more than liars for they do not keep His commandments (1 John 2:3-6). We can say we love Yahweh, but then just continue to commit those things that are abhorrence in His sight, such as committing adultery or hating our brother in our heart. Matthew 21:28-32 tells us of a father that asked both of his sons to work in his vineyard. One son told his father he would go and work and never did, but the other refused in words, but afterwards repented and went to work. Obviously the son who repented did the will of his father, even though he refused at first in words. True belief will automatically produce good works in the life of the one who believes.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed Elohim, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of Elohim. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. [James 2:21-24]

It is in these verses that the explanation of faith and works does get exciting. Abraham, whom we've covered at length in chapter two, is used here to show how a man is justified by works. The works mentioned in particular is his offering up Isaac his son upon the altar. Through Abraham's works his faith was made perfect, or better put, complete. If his faith was made complete through works, then without works his faith would be incomplete, and an incomplete faith does not save. If we are children of faith, we will follow in the works of Abraham as well, meaning obedience (John 8:39). This does not mean that we are earning our way to the kingdom, but instead that Yahweh's grace shed abroad in our hearts is working out that which Yahweh has ordained. Yahweh saves us from our sins, thus we no longer practice sin.

Verse 23 above shows us that when Abraham offered Isaac the Scripture in Genesis 15:6 was fulfilled, yet this Scripture says nothing about works in its immediate context. *This is explained by understanding that a living faith automatically implies works!* Think about this. Abraham *believed* Yahweh (Genesis 15:6), and this was fulfilled when Abraham *obeyed* Yahweh (Genesis 22:1-14).

These verses also negate the position of some theologians that James 2 is dealing with justification before men rather than before Yahweh. Those who preach this doctrine have read and preached on Genesis 15:6 many times in relation to justification and have taught that it is speaking of justification before Yahweh, not men. Yet this verse is quoted in part and referred to right in the very text of James chapter 2. We should ask ourselves, what man was Abraham trying to be justified before in Genesis 22? Genesis 22:5-8 shows that Abraham had taken some young men along with him, but at the appointed time to carry out the command of Yahweh he asked these young men to stay with their donkey and he and his son would go by themselves to worship. Abraham did what he did, in order to obey Yahweh, not man. He truly had a living faith towards Yahweh.

Verse 24 of James 2 makes it plain that it is not by a dead faith that we are justified before Yahweh. The faith spoken of here is the same faith the people who will not help needy brethren have and the faith the demons have. For people to insist that a man is justified by faith alone, if they are speaking of a dead faith, is simply futile. You could say that man is justified by a living faith alone, because the words living faith or true faith are an automatic implication of works.

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

In a follow up to Abraham, Rahab is mentioned as being justified by works, in hiding the spies of Israel upon her rooftop. Hebrews 11:31 tells us that it was by faith that Rahab did this, and please notice her faith caused action. In reading



Joshua 2:1-13 we see that the reason Rahab hid the Israelite spies was because she had faith in the Elohim of Israel. She had heard of all that He (Yahweh) had done for the Israelites in bringing them out of Egypt. She believed in Yahweh and not in man. Therefore her belief in Yahweh caused her to act in hiding the spies of Yahweh, and she was justified by her works. This is what James tells us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.  
[James 2:26]

Faith, apart from works, is like a body without a spirit. Adam, before Yahweh breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, was not a living soul, but a dead soul. We find in Scripture that the spirit of Yahweh or even of a man is parallel with life itself. Genesis 45:27 tells us that when Jacob heard his beloved son Joseph was still alive his spirit came alive within him. In Revelation 13:14-15 the word spirit (Greek = *pneuma*) is translated as both "life" and "live." The Bible also tells us that to be spiritually minded is *life* and peace, and to be fleshly minded or carnally minded is death (Romans 8:5-8). A lifeless body exemplifies faith without works, while a living body which moves and functions exemplifies a working faith. Which do you desire to be?

### **The Act of Phinehas: Similar but not Exact**

We need to take a moment to consider obedience or living faith in the context of the man named Phinehas. There was a time in the history of Israel when the Israelites were committing whoredom with the daughters of Moab and were joining themselves in idolatry with Baal-peor (Numbers 25:1-3). This caused Yahweh to become very angry with them, so he commissioned Moses to execute physical judgment on the men who were participating in these abominations (Numbers 25:4-5). Moses obeyed and relayed Yahweh's words to the judges of Israel.

At a later time, an Israelite brought one of these idolatrous women in the sight of Moses and the congregation of Israel, right out in front of the tabernacle. A man named Phinehas saw this lewd act and grabbed a javelin and thrust it through the both of them (Numbers 25:7-8). This caused the plague to cease on the Israelite people. Afterwards Yahweh spoke to Moses concerning how great an act Phinehas had accomplished by his zeal and how he would receive Yahweh's covenant of peace (Numbers 25:11-12).

What does all of this have to do with the subject matter? There is another Scripture that recounts the actions of Phinehas, and says something akin to the matters of this writing.

They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them. Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and *so* the plague was stayed. And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore. [Psalms 106:28-31]

Does the last verse above sound familiar? In Genesis 15:6 we see the same words said about the faith of Abram - it was counted to him for righteousness. As a matter of fact, Genesis 15:6 and Psalms 106:31 read identical in the Greek translation of the Old Testament writings, the Septuagint. The point is *not* that the two texts are parallel in every respect, for Genesis deals with a belief Abram had in Yahweh's words, and that was reckoned to him for righteousness apart from his perfect obedience. It is on this basis that Paul speaks about justification in Romans 4. However, Phinehas' act was *works produced by a living faith*, and it was counted to him for righteousness. This is extremely similar to the place where James speaks of the fulfillment of Genesis 15:6 in Abraham offering up Isaac upon the altar. Had Phinehas or Abraham not really believed Yahweh's words, neither of the two would have obeyed Yahweh.

### **Justification by Our Words**

The Bible makes it very clear that our faith must work. If we do not live a moral life, according to Yahweh's standards, yet we say that we love Yahweh or have faith in Yeshua as our sacrifice, we are deceiving ourselves. True faith causes a chain reaction in the life of a person and they will automatically operate their lives in a different manner, obedience. There are other passages that speak of justification in relation to our obedience that stems from faith.

Matthew 12:33-34 talks about good fruit and corrupt fruit, each coming off of a tree that is also either good or corrupt. Notice that the fruit is produced by the nature of the tree and not the other way around. The good fruit here is our obedience to the sayings of Yahweh. Yeshua reprimands those he is speaking to because they cannot speak good things if they are evil people, people that have not accepted him as the Master of their life. He then mentions that it was out of the abundance of their heart (evil heart) that their mouth spoke. They were living against the admonishment to let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouths (Ephesians 4:29) and thereby cause the Holy Spirit to be grieved. The Scripture tells us that it is from within the heart of man that many evils come (Mark 7:20-23). This is why we must be changed, putting off the old man, and replacing him with the new. Matthew 12:35 shows that there are those who bring forth good fruit from their heart, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth

forth evil things." We can be this good man by the grace of Yahweh. Next we come to the crux of the passage as it relates to justification.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. [Matthew 12:36-37]

These words of Yeshua are extremely strong. We will give an account for our idle words that are spoken. The word "idle" has the meaning of barren and unfruitful speaking. 1 Timothy 5:13 speaks of young widows who remain idle, wandering from house to house as busybodies in the matters of others. Yeshua tells us that by our words (actions produced by a living faith) we will be justified or condemned. We can attempt to say that this is not speaking about literal justification, but the passage shows otherwise. It talks about "giving an account" on the "day of judgment". Doesn't that sound like justification before Yahweh? It also mentions justification and condemnation specifically, proving beyond all doubt that we are dealing with justification in the same context of James 2. Do we consider our tongue enough as it pertains to our holy living before Yahweh?

### **The Doers of the Law**

For not the hearers of the law *are* just before Elohim, but the doers of the law shall be justified. [Romans 2:13]

Upon reading this verse one may think that it is a contradiction to passages like Romans 4 or Galatians 2:16, but such is not the case. True enough, we can attend church meetings and hear great preaching, or we can listen to radio and televangelists all the time, but this hearing of the Word will not justify us. Faith does come by hearing (Romans 10:14) but hearing without doing is like a body without a spirit.

How do we harmonize this with the verses telling us we are not justified by the law? Just remember that those verses are dealing with the sinfulness of mankind, the fact that we all have sinned and fallen short of Yahweh's perfect standard of morality in our past lives. Romans 2:13 then must be dealing with the Christian life. A person that has truly been born again will exemplify standards of holiness in his or her life that match up with the holy law of Yahweh. They will live by the spirit and mind the things of the spirit.

Romans 2:1-3 shows us that hypocrisy is sinful. A person may spend their entire life looking at and judging others. They are so very quick to tell a person what to do, while ignoring the commandments of Yahweh in their actions. These

types of people do not realize how kind and tolerant Yahweh is with them. He has given them much time to turn away from their sin, but they refuse to do so, and continue to focus on the lives of others. For this reason, they are storing up terrible punishment because of their stubbornness in refusing to repent from their transgressions (Romans 2:4-5). There will come a day when Yahweh will judge the world, rendering to every man according to his works (Romans 2:6; Matthew 16:27). Those who patiently wait for the second coming of Messiah by doing right and having a living faith will receive glory, honor, immortality and everlasting life. Those who are self-seeking and full of strife and envy, not obeying the truth will receive tribulation and anguish for their evil deeds. Yahweh shows no respect of persons in His judgment. (Romans 2:7-11). In every nation, those who fear Him and work righteousness are accepted with Him (Acts 10:34-35).

### **Conclusion**

We are justified by our works in the context of *works produced by faith*. We must understand that faith always **precedes** true genuine works, not getting caught up in thinking that we are saving ourselves without Yahweh. A man cannot deliver himself from the bondage of sin in earning his salvation, but after the salvation experience, and his faith in what Yahweh has done for his life, he *will* abide by Yahweh's standards in action. Those not willing to adhere to this teaching will be no better off than the demons who believe with their mouth and even shudder at Yahweh (James 2:19). Their faith will be dead, empty, vain, useless, and worthless. People as this will not make it to the kingdom. Are you going to follow the faith of demons, or are you going to follow the faith of Abraham?