



# *Epistle of James*

## *James 2:24-26 - Faith & Works – Rahab Illustration*

- Review *James 2:21-23* - Faith and Works - Abraham Illustration.
  - Abraham's faith was demonstrated by his works – offering his son Isaac on the altar, and importantly as James repeatedly emphasized is that *faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect.*
  - *James 2:23* restates *Gen 15:6* - And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*”
  - And because Abraham's faith was exemplified by works, he was called the friend of God – is the same true for us today?
- ***James 2:24 - Ye see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.***
  - *Ye* rather than *you* indicates the broader audience to whom this is being written rather than to *someone* who questions whether *faith without works saves (2:14)*.
    - Constable - Paul and James are best understood as addressing quite dissimilar situations . . . Whereas Paul's audience is in danger of relying on 'works' for salvation (*Rom 4:1-10*), James' readers are excusing themselves from good works, thereby showing only a faith that is dead . . ."



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- Remember that works only declare us as righteous in that our works give evidence to others that we are applying our saving faith.
- ***James 2:25 - Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received (welcomed) the messengers (spies) and sent them (thrust them forth) out another way?***
  - Let’s take a closer look at *Rahab*.
    - » *Joshua 2: 1-4 - Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” So, they went and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country.” So, the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country.” Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So, she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.*
    - » *Joshua 2:8 - (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.)*
    - » *Joshua 6:17 - “Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her*



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*in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.*

»Joshua 6:23-25 - *And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. But they burned the city and all that was in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So, she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.*

- What evidence do we have from these scriptures that Rahab was justified by faith before works?
  - None, that I can discern!
    - Then how do we know that James is not missing the boat here?
      - »Heb 11:31 - *By faith, the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.*
      - Again, what is James' emphasis and to whom?
    - JF&B – 'She *believed* assuredly what her other countrymen disbelieved, and this in the face of every improbability that an unwarlike few would conquer well-armed numbers. In this belief she hid the spies at the risk of her life.
      - Hence *Heb 11:31* names this as an example of *faith*, rather than of obedience.'



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- *and sent them out another way?*
  - How should we interpret this - how, when and to where?
    - From wherever they entered her house, perhaps a window, and then to the mountain?
      - » *Joshua 2:15, 16 - Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. And she said to them, “Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way.”*
- Why does scripture keep referring to *Rahab*, the Gentile, as a *harlot*?
  - JF&B – ‘If an instance of obedience were wanting. Paul and James would hardly have quoted a woman of previously bad character, rather than the many moral and pious patriarchs. But as an example of free grace.
    - But perhaps evidence does suggest that her works were based on faith justifying men through an *operative*, as opposed to a mere verbal *faith*, none could be more suitable than a saved “harlot.”?
      - » *Joshua 2:8,9 - Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, and said to the men: “I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you.*



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- Let's pause and contrast these two examples of faith by works!
  - Man vs. woman; Israelite vs. Gentile; father of faith vs. a foreigner.
  - Is our sin any less than hers?
    - » *Matt 21:31 - "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.*
    - » *Matt 1:5,6,16 - Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah..... And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.*
  - Remember, all sin falls short of the glory of God, yet the consequences are quite different.
- ***James 2::26 - For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.***
  - *For as the body without the spirit is dead.*
    - What *body* and what *spirit*?
      - Living body without the breath of life!
    - And likely a changed life to follow.
  - *so, faith without works is dead also.*



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- *dead* here might be better translated as *useless*.
- How do we assess whether our works are based on faith, and do we ever need to question our salvation?
  - Constable – “Never once does James question whether the rich—or poor—have been saved. Neither does he admonish them in such a way that should cause them to question whether they have been saved. He never says, for example, 'The trouble with you people is that you are not saved.' He does not come forward with a plan of salvation; he does not warn them of a false assurance; he does not go over the basis of saving faith.”
  - Constable – ‘James previously said that not every believer will bear visible fruit (v. 17; *John 15:2*). Such a believer's faith is not productive but "dead." Nevertheless, he has faith. Some unbelievers appear to bear the fruit of saving faith, but God will one day expose their "wheat" as "tares" (*Matt. 13:30*).’
  - Constable - "The faith which is mentioned in this section [2:14-26] can be presupposed in every Christian . . . [James'] intention is not dogmatically oriented, but practically oriented: he wishes to admonish the Christians to practice their faith, i.e., their Christianity, by works.’
    - » *Rev 3:2* - “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for **I have not found your works perfect before God.** (Church at Sardis).