

TITLE: James (Lesson 14)

TEXT: James 2:21-23

INTRO: We are now moving from the *if* to the *was* in verse 21. (See vs. 2, 15) James is now moving from the hypothetical to an historical example that illustrates the relationship between faith and works.

I. When was Abraham justified and how was he justified?

A. It is important to remember the object of faith is always Jesus!

NOTE: O.T. saints looked forward to the promised One while N.T. saints look back.

1. His Person and His work are the only means of salvation.

B. The O.T. record is found in Gen. 15:1-6.

1. Abraham was a man of faith who believed God's promise.

2. Abraham was justified before Isaac was even born!

NOTE: Paul is quoting from Gen. 15:6 in Rom. 4:1-3. James's illustration is from a much later incident in Abraham's life concerning his offering of Isaac in Gen. 22.

C. The Apostle Paul explains that righteousness is inputted to our account without works the moment we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: Rom. 4:4-5:1; 2 Cor. 5:21

II. (vs. 21) James is teaching that works demonstrate the authenticity of our faith.

A. Key to reconciling Paul and James is the Greek verb translated *justified*.

1. There are two basic definitions depending on context and use.

NOTE: **δικαιόω Dikaioo**: "(a) to show to be right or righteous (b) to declare to be righteous, to pronounce righteous...Paul is occupied with a right relationship with God, James, with right conduct. Paul testifies that the ungodly can be justified by faith, James that only the right-doer is justified." *Vine's Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words*

B. The testing of Abraham.

1. (Gen. 22:1a) Up to this point God has been growing his faith.

2. (Gen. 22:1-2) God's ultimate test for Abraham.

3. (Gen. 22:3-12) Abraham passes the test with flying colors!

4. (Gen. 22:13-19) God provides and confirms His covenant!

III. (vs. 22-23) God tests the lives of His children.

NOTE: Here are three principles to remember when going through trials.

A. Faith focuses on God and His Word.

NOTE: Heb. 11:1-3, 17-19

1. We may not understand why God would allow this trial.

2. We have a choice to make. Trust God or not.

B. God may test the most vulnerable areas of our lives.

1. Instead of the trivial He deals with the treasure.

C. Remember God has a plan for good in our lives.

1. He wants to build our character, strengthen our faith, and build perseverance.

NOTE: "...he was called the Friend of God." See 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; John 15:14