



## BBS – Salvation in Israel's Program

### Session Six

Today we are going to be looking at a passage in the book of James that is misunderstood a lot.

As you read, just know that James is written to the members of the believing remnant (BR) outside the land of Israel. How do we know that? Because the very first verse tells us.

**James 1:1** James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes **which are scattered abroad**, greeting.

The book of James has five chapters. Each chapter deals with a particular issue, so the book of James is about five particular issues which will be very important for the BR to know about and live out of. In other words, the things written in James need to effectually work in them, just as the things written by Paul should be working in us.

The only issue we are going to look at is the one in the last half of chapter two. This chapter has been misunderstood to mean that the saints in Israel's program were saved by faith and works, and that is just not true. But, in order to know that, there are some things you have to know about God's program with Israel.

Let's begin by reading the passage.

**James 2:14** What *doth it profit*, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it profit*? <sup>17</sup> Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. <sup>18</sup> Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. <sup>20</sup> But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? <sup>22</sup> Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? <sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. <sup>24</sup> Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. <sup>25</sup> Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had

received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way? <sup>26</sup> For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

The apostle Paul teaches the body of Christ (BoC) about being justified unto eternal life (JUEL) in the first five chapters of the book of Romans. He makes it clear that justification unto eternal life is by grace, through faith, without works of any kind, at any time.

But then, you come across a passage like the one we just read and if you don't understand what is going on in Israel's program, you will be led to think that James is contradicting Paul. Some preachers who rightly divide the word (RDW) think that these are contradictory, but that is okay because Romans is for the BoC in the dispensation of gentile grace (DoGG), and James is for the believing remnant in Israel's Program (IP).

Let's be clear, James is not contradicting Paul in Romans. Yes, these are instructions for two different programs, but even so, James and Paul are not at odds with each other. The BR get JUEL the same way the BoC gets JUEL; by faith without works.

What people don't seem to understand is that Paul uses two examples from Israel's program to prove that JUEL for the BoC, in this DoGG, is by grace through faith. Who are those two examples? Abraham and David!

Romans 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.** <sup>4</sup> Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. <sup>6</sup> Even as **David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,** <sup>7</sup> *Saying,* Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. <sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Having established that God imputes righteousness without works in both instances of Abraham and David, Paul then asks the question, does this "blessedness" come upon the circumcision only? Who is "the circumcision?" That is Israel. So, Paul is asking, is Israel the only ones that are justified (made righteous) by faith without works?

Now, before we finish that question, think about what Paul is saying. He has just established that the circumcision in their program, are justified by faith without works. And he did this by using Abraham and David as examples.

So, he is asking, is God only justifying the Jews in their program by faith without works, OR, does this "blessedness" come upon the uncircumcision also? Take a look at it.

**Romans 4:9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.**

What is the answer? We also are justified (made righteous) by faith without works. So, our apostle believes that faith alone is reckoned for righteousness in God's program with Israel.

Paul goes on to say that Abraham is the "faith father" not only for those in Israel's program, but also for us in this DoGG.

Paul has already established this back in chapter 3.

**Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**<sup>29</sup> *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles?* Yes, of the Gentiles also: <sup>30</sup> **Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.**

We are not going to go back and reteach Romans 3 and 4, you can see that in our study on Justification. But, we have made the first point we were after, that the apostle Paul thinks that from the beginning of what God was doing with Israel, (Abraham), God had justified them unto eternal life by faith without works.

Based on that alone, if you thought James was saying something contrary to Paul, then one of two things has happened:

- 1) Either Paul or James was wrong, or
- 2) You misunderstood what one of them was talking about

The answer is that one of them was misunderstood and the one that was misunderstood was James. What you will see is that when James is talking about works "saving" someone, he is not talking about saved in the sense of being JUEL.

Knowing right division alone will not solve this problem for you. We must also understand that God not only has two different programs, but also that in Israel's program, there were two different kinds of justification, and James is dealing with that second kind of justification in chapter 2.

So, let's say it again. The BR, like Abraham, are meant to have two justifications; the first justification is unto eternal life and it is by faith alone. James refers to this justification in vs. 23.

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

As you can see, even James knows the truth about how righteousness is imputed to someone in his program, "Abraham believed God." Belief is "faith" and not "works." Everyone knows that.

But notice there are two things in vs. 23; 1) Abraham believed God and righteousness was imputed to him (that is his JUEL), and 2) Abraham was called “the Friend of God.”

The issue of being “the friend of God” is an entirely separate issue from being JUEL. Being called the “Friend of God” is not a result of Abraham’s JUEL; it is a totally separate issue.

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

So, what two issues are we looking at here? The first issue is to be saved (JUEL), but the second issue is about Abraham’s commitment to live for God. Don’t you know that it is one thing to trust Christ as your Savior, but it is another thing to live for Christ in your daily life?

Verse 23 is tantamount to saying, Abraham was justified when he believed God, and Abraham lived for God to such an extent that he became known as “the friend of God.”

This is the second “justification” which is not “in the sight of God,” but this one is “in the sight of men.” That is why this justification is by works. So, is this second justification giving them eternal life? No, they already have that when they put their faith in the gospel of the kingdom.

The second justification has to do with their rewards in the kingdom, which is why it is “by works.” This is the one James is referring to in vs. 21.

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father **justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**

It is true that James is using Abraham as the example, but he is not referring to the time when Abraham was JUEL. He is talking about the time Abraham was going to offer Isaac upon the altar.<sup>1</sup> Abraham’s JUEL took place about 30 years before Isaac was born, so these cannot be the same kind of justification.

When James talks about Abraham being justified by works, he’s not talking about the same kind of justification that Abraham received when he “believed God” as described in Genesis 15:6.

What James is saying is that there were two justifications at work with Abraham, and in the last days of Israel’s program, the BR will also be required to have two justifications. Why?

Understand that the situation the BR will find themselves in during the 5-5 CoP will be very similar to what Abraham faced, and so what God wants to do with them will be very similar to something He did with Abraham.

Like Abraham, they will have the privilege of putting their relationship with God on display in the eyes of men.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see the video and notes for: BBS: *An Apologetic of God’s Command to Sacrifice Isaac*.

They have already emulated Abraham's first justification when they, by faith, believed the gospel of the kingdom. They believed that Jesus is the Christ, and it was counted to them as righteousness.

From the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> installment and all during the 5<sup>th</sup> installment, the BR are called to produce some "works" which will make it evident that they, like Abraham, are the "Friend of God." If they are going to be counted "worthy to escape" the events of the 5<sup>th</sup> installment, if they are going to be physically saved (delivered), if they are going to receive honor and reward in the kingdom, then they will need to have a "justification by works" like Abraham had. This is the issue James is teaching them.

If it seems odd to you that there are two different justifications in the Bible, just know that we find several different "justifications" in the Bible,<sup>2</sup> not just these two. But we will not take time in this session to go through all of these as we have already done this in our study on Justification. You can see it there if you need more information.

So, what is the point? James 2 is not a contradiction of JUEL by grace through faith. It is a different kind of justification which is only for those who are already JUEL, and living in the final stage of Israel's program.

Justification in the eyes of men, as the "Friend of God" involves specific works. Out in the 5<sup>th</sup> installment, these works were meant to stand out in contrast against Israel's vain religious system (VRS). When the BR do these works, they are justifying themselves, in the eyes of men, that they are the "Friend of God" and this is a very big issue for a member of the believing remnant.

The whole issue of James 2:14-26 is to drive home the point to the BR that merely trusting Jesus as the Messiah is not sufficient for them to be "the Friend of God."

James is writing to a people who are JUEL already. In fact, in order to have this second justification, you must first already possess the first justification.

James is essentially saying: Look you guys, JUEL is great, but if you want to be counted worthy to escape alive unto the end of the Tribulation, and "stand before the Son of man" with reward in the kingdom as part of the Lord's royal house, then it is this second justification that allows for that to happen.

When Abraham is JUEL, he is reconciled to God, but friendship with God is an issue of a close, intimate relationship, and that is the issue of being justified by works. The pinnacle of

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<sup>2</sup> See Luke 7:29 and 1 Corinthians 4:4 for two more kinds of "justification" in the Bible.

Abraham's works which showed him to be the Friend of God is when he was willing to offer his son, Isaac, upon the altar.

Because of being "a kind of firstfruits of his creatures," the believing remnant for the first time since Abraham, have the privilege of manifesting to men that they are the Friend of God. And they will be doing this at the time when Satan is seeking to demonstrate that men would rather live in his world than God's, and that he should be possessor of heaven and earth (H&E).

James 2:12 **So speak ye, and so do**, as they that shall be **judged by the law of liberty**.

<sup>13</sup> For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. <sup>14</sup> **What doth it profit**, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and **have not works?** can faith save him?

The "save him" is not about his JUEL, but about escaping the calamities of the Tribulation. As the believing remnant take the Lord's corrective doctrine and manifest themselves as operating differently from the VRS, and as they suffer in connection with that testimony, they are providing that second justification in the eyes of men.

They will be judged by the "law of liberty" to determine their rewards in the kingdom.

Let us step aside for a moment to define a couple of terms. What is the "law of liberty?" It is the Law, set free from the corruptions of the VRS, whereby it is made honorable again. In a nutshell, the "perfect law of liberty" is the Lord's corrective doctrine where he teaches the BR the Law in the manner God intended it to be taught and not after the precepts of men.

There is another term in James, "the royal law." What is that?

James 2:8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**, ye do well:

Why is that called "the royal law?" Because to obey this is to conduct yourself as a member of the Lord's royal house who will rule with Him in the kingdom. It is the requirement for rulership! No wonder Jesus said that whoever would be greatest among them let him be your servant.

So, if the BR do not obey the law of liberty (the Lord's corrective doctrine), but follow after the behaviors of the VRS, there will be no reward in the kingdom, just as Jesus told them in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for **great is your reward** in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Matthew 5:46 For if ye love them which love you, **what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?**

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

What did the VRS do?

Matthew 6:2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not **sound a trumpet before thee**, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, **that they may have glory of men**. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Matthew 6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: <sup>4</sup> That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall **reward thee openly**.

Matthew 6:5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, **that they may be seen of men**. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Matthew 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall **reward thee openly**.

Matthew 6:18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

We tend to look at these things like they are no big deal, after all, is it really that important to God? Indeed it is.