

True Saving Faith; Living Faith James 2:21-26

James 2:21–26 (NKJV)

²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*” And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

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

²⁶ For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Introduction

Prior to this century, no serious theologian would have entertained the notion that it is possible to be

saved yet see nothing of the outworking of regeneration in one's lifestyle or behavior.

Verses like

1 John 3:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.

1 John 2:4 (NKJV)

⁴ He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

The Promise of God in His purpose for Salvation

Romans 8:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

All these plus our passage and James would scream loudly that there is not such thing as justification without transformation. No Salvation without sanctification. No relationship with God without righteousness from God. No faith with out works

Yet that did not stop men like Lewis Sperry Chafer to contradict the historical position of the church for millennia, and the insight of a myriad of Biblical scholarship.

In 1918 Lewis Sperry Chafer published *He That Is Spiritual*, articulating the concept that 1 Corinthians 2:15–3:3 speaks of two classes of Christians: carnal and spiritual. Chafer wrote, “The ‘carnal’ Christian is ... characterized by a ‘walk’ that is on the same plane as that of the ‘natural’ [unsaved] man.” That was a foreign concept to most Christians in Dr. Chafer’s generation,⁶ but it has become a central premise for a large segment of the church today. Dr. Chafer’s doctrine of spirituality, along with some of his other teachings, have become the basis of a whole new way of looking at the gospel

Chafer’s dichotomy between carnal and spiritual Christians was seen by Dr. B. B. Warfield as an echo of “the jargon of the Higher Life teachers,” who taught that a higher plane of victorious living was available to Christians who would lay hold of it by faith. This idea of two classes of believers was

undoubtedly an unfortunate result of Chafer's predilection for dispensationalist distinctions. It is a classic example of how dispensationalism's methodology can be carried too far.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2000). [*The Gospel according to Jesus: what does Jesus mean when he says "follow me"*](#) (Electronic ed.). Academic and Professional Books, Zondervan Pub. House.

This teaching led to a popular and still very dominate teaching of NO Lordship Salvation. There was a deliberate choice among some dispensationalist to separate the office of Savior from the office of Lord in Christ for salvation.

3 Reasons drove this distinction.

1. An unbridled zeal of some dispensationalist to make dichotomies where the bible does not. To make the teaching of Jesus of the kingdom not applicable to the church. To hyper separate law and Grace.
2. To protect Grace. To Keep Grace unstained by works
3. To explain the huge number of professing christians who had no commitment to Christ or holiness.

The ...dichotomies has led to a number of unfortunate impositions on the gospel.

For example, Jesus is both Savior and Lord (Luke 2:11), and no true believer would ever dispute that. "Savior" and "Lord" are separate offices, but we must be careful not to partition them in such a way that we

divide Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 1:13). Nevertheless, loud voices from the dispensationalist camp are putting forth the teaching that it is possible to reject Christ as Lord yet receive him as Savior.

Indeed, there are those who would have us believe that the norm for salvation is to accept Jesus as Savior without submitting to him as Lord. They make the incredible claim that any other teaching amounts to a false gospel “because it subtly adds works to the clear and simple condition set forth in the Word of God.” They have tagged the view they oppose “lordship salvation.”

Lordship salvation, defined by one who labels it heresy, is “the view that for salvation a person must trust Jesus Christ as his Savior from sin and must also commit himself to Christ as Lord of his life, submitting to his sovereign authority.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2000). [*The Gospel according to Jesus: what does Jesus mean when he says “follow me”*](#) (Electronic ed.). Academic and Professional Books, Zondervan Pub. House.

Review.

I. The Question of Dead Faith.

14 What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

14 **What use is it**, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can **that** faith save him?

δύναται ἡ πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν;

Can **this kind** of faith save him

Biblical Studies Press. (2005). [The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible](#)

II. The Illustration of a Deedless Faith.

15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

The illustration is simple yet profound. James brings up something that was very common in those days. Poverty was very real, as we noted before, you were either rich or poor, and there were more poor than rich. It would be common to find someone in this condition. Desperately poor, beggarly poor, not having the basic necessities of life.

III. The Observation of a Orthodox Faith.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

The rendering of Rotherham retains the literal order of this penetrating appeal: “But art thou willing to learn, O empty man! That faith apart from works is idle?” The

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 168). BMH Books.

Foolish has the idea of “empty” or “defective” and identifies anyone who opposes the truth that true saving faith produces works of righteousness.

James 2:20 (LSB)

20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is **useless?**
different than the kjv,

Argos (**useless**) carries the idea of fruitlessness, lack of productivity. “Every tree that does not bear good fruit,” Jesus said, “is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matt. 7:19). A fruitless life is certain proof that it does not belong to God and is unacceptable to God, because it does not have His divine life within

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 133). Moody Press.

- I. The Question of Dead Faith.
- II. The Illustration of a Deedless Faith.
- III. The Observation of a Orthodox Faith.
- IV. The Examples of True Saving Faith**
 1. Abraham’s Obedience
 2. Rahab’s Fear
 3. The Body’s Life.

1. Abraham's Obedience

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

James was not contradicting the doctrine of salvation by faith. He was not dealing with the *means* of salvation at all, but rather with its *outcome*, the evidence that it had genuinely occurred. After establishing that the absence of good works proves that a professed faith is not real and saving but rather is deceptive and dead, he then emphasized the corollary truth that genuine salvation, which is always and only by God's grace working through man's faith, inevitably will be demonstrated outwardly in the form of righteous deeds.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 136). Moody Press.

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works

The term "Abraham our father" can have reference to 2 possibilities.

1. Abraham our father, in and ethnic sense, since he is the father of the Jewish people
2. Abraham our father in a believing sense, since he is the Father of all that believe.

The ethnic sense should be considered because this book is written to the 12 tribes.

James 1:1 (NKJV)

James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:

The book was written with the Jew in mind. There is as we have already noted a reference to an assembly, using the word for synagogue, and even what we studied last week, that they believe there is one God, “the Shema of Israel” is a clear indication of the Jewish nature of the book and more.

Unlike one commentary I read, that said the 12 tribes scattered abroad is their church.....NO. It is more likely and I believe clearly, the Jews who are professed Christians and those that may be on the fence that make up the true church and the visible church.

But to the Jew, the statement “Abraham our father” would remind them of their physical lineage that so many Jews trusted in for their salvation.

Matthew 3:9 (NKJV)

⁹ and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as *our* father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

John 8:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.”

Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.”

It is clear from the NT that the Jews trusted in their physical lineage from Abraham to save them. Because they were of the chosen nation and the loins of Abraham, they were right with God....they thought.

This is akin to believing you are saved because you are born into a Christian family or that you go to a Christian church or that you are right with God because you believe you are in the right religion.

James may be reminding them that they are not saved because of Abraham or just his faith. But that

even Abraham had more than just a belief. His faith affected his desires, passions, obedience and will.

Also James could be referring to Abraham in the same way that Paul does in Romans. Abraham is the father of all that believe.

Romans 4:1–9 (NKJV)

4 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the Scripture say? “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*” ⁴ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

⁵ But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, ⁶ just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

⁷ “*Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,*

And whose sins are covered;

⁸ *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.*”

⁹ Does this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only*, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

He was not made righteous because of an external sign of the covenant, or a national identity, or ethnic relationship. It was by faith.

Galatians 3:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ Therefore know that *only* those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”*

Because fallen man is morally and spiritually bankrupt, with no redeeming merit at all before God, nothing he can possibly do in himself and by his own power can make him right and acceptable before the Lord. It is for that reason that salvation has always been possible solely through the pure graciousness of God working through a faithful response to His grace. It is not that in the Old Testament men were saved through the law and that in the New they are

saved by faith. At whatever point in the unfolding revelation and work of God men may have lived or will ever live, God requires nothing of them for salvation except true faith in Him. Hebrews 11 makes abundantly clear that both before and after the law was given at Sinai, salvation was by faith. Abraham “believed in the Lord,” Moses tells us; “and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 136–137). Moody Press.

21 Was not Abraham our father
justified by works when he offered Isaac
his son on the altar?

Notice where James starts....

Not in Genesis 15 where Abraham was saved, and
declared and made righteous by the imputation.

Genesis 15:5–6 (NKJV)

⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

⁶ And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

It is hear in Genesis 15 that Abraham was Justified by Faith.... HE BELIEVED.

But rather in our passage James starts 7 chapters later in Genesis 22

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

Genesis 22:1–12 (NKJV)

22 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!”

And he said, “Here I am.”

² Then He said, “Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

³ So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴ Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. ⁵ And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.”

⁶ So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid *it* on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. ⁷ But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!”

And he said, “Here I am, my son.”

Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?”

⁸ And Abraham said, “My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.

⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

¹¹ But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!”

So he said, “Here I am.”

¹² And He said, “Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me.”

James does not start with the cause of Justification but rather the effect.

He starts with Abrahams obedience, not his faith.

justified by works. That seeming contradiction, which has frustrated and confused believers throughout the history of the church, is clarified by understanding that justification by faith pertains to a person's standing before God, whereas the justification **by works** that James speaks of in this verse pertains to a person's standing before other men.

It is important to understand that the Greek verb *dikaioō* (**justified**) has two general meanings. The first pertains to acquittal, that is, to declaring and treating a person as righteous. That is its meaning in relationship to salvation and is the sense in which Paul almost always uses the term. He declares, for example, that we are “justified as a gift by [God's] grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24), “justified by faith apart from works of the Law” (3:28), and that, “having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:1; cf. v. 9). In another letter

he says, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified” (Gal. 2:16; cf. 3:11, 24). He reminds Titus that “being justified by His grace we [are] made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:7).

The second meaning of *dikaioō* pertains to vindication, or proof of righteousness. It is used in that sense a number of times in the New Testament, in relation to God as well as men. Paul says, “Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, ‘That You may be justified in Your words, and prevail when You are judged’ ” (Rom. 3:4). He writes to Timothy that Jesus Christ “was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated [from *dikaioō*] in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16). Jesus commented that “wisdom is vindicated [justified] by all her children” (Luke 7:35).

It is the second sense in which James uses *dikaioō* in 2:21, asking rhetorically, **Was not Abraham our father justified by works?** He explains that Abraham’s supreme demonstration of

that justification occurred **when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 137–138). Moody Press.

In the words of John Calvin, “Faith alone justifies; but the faith that justifies is never alone.

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

Do you see—

991. **βλέπω** *blépō*; fut. *blépsō / ópsomai* (the fut. of *optánomai* [3700], to see). Used in the NT 137 times, mostly in the pres. tense.

(I) To see.

(A) To be able to see, i.e., to have the faculty of sight, and as spoken of the blind, to recover sight. **(B)** In the sense of to perceive as with the eyes meaning to discern, to understand. Trans

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

Although this can be understood as “to perceive or understand”. I believe it is a word specifically chosen by James to emphasize the seeing of faith. In other words, not that you just understand what I am telling

you but that you “see” with you eyes that faith produces works. What is invisible becomes visible, What can’t be seen is now seen. What is claimed is now characteristic. What is faith is now seen in fruits. This is what James is saying.

\
faith was working together with his works,

4903. συνεργέω *sunergéō*; contracted *sunergō*, fut. *sunergésō*, from *sunergós* (4904), fellow worker. To work together with someone, cooperate, be a co-worker, fellow laborer

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

Faith was working with works to prove that the faith that can’t be seen is real. Works are not saving him, but proving that the faith he has will save.

Matthew 7:16–21 (NKJV)

16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and

thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

. That is the sense in which **faith** is **perfected**. It produces the godly fruit for which it was designed (Eph. 2:10). Just as a fruit tree has not fulfilled its goal until it bears fruit, so also faith has not reached its end until it demonstrates itself in a righteous life.

That is the sense in which Abraham was justified by works. His unreserved willingness to sacrifice Isaac, the only son of promise, was the works by which his justification by faith was demonstrated and made manifest before men

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [*James*](#) (p. 139). Moody Press.

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*” And he was called the friend of God.

was fulfilled— not in the sense that it is a prophecy that is fulfilled but rather that what was declared to be true in Genesis 15:6 was proven to be true by the works of obedience in Genesis 22 of Abraham willing to offer his son on the alter.

Abraham had no written divine revelation to read and knew very little about the Lord. But he responded positively to all that he was told by God, and it was then that his faith **was reckoned to him as righteousness**.

But how, we wonder, could God have justified and saved Abraham—who lived some two thousand years before Christ—when apart from Jesus Christ no one can be saved (Matt. 10:32; John 8:56; Rom. 10:9–10; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; etc.). It is because “to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living” (Rom. 14:9). Jesus said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). Despite his limited theological knowledge, Abraham’s trust in the Lord was sufficient, and tantamount to belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah and Savior of the world. Like all true believers who lived before Christ, who “died in faith, without receiving the promises,” Abraham nevertheless was enabled by God to understand that a Savior would come to fulfill all God’s promises and he “welcomed them from a distance” (Heb. 11:13).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (pp. 139–140). Moody Press.

And he was called the friend of God.

Due to his belief and his resulting obedience, Abraham **was called the friend of God**. What dignity, honor, and joy! Because his faith was genuine and was therefore manifested and proven, he entered the wonderful fellowship of those whom God calls his friends. The writer of 2 Chronicles exults, “Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?” (2 Chron. 20:7). Through Isaiah the Lord Himself spoke of “Abraham My friend” (Isa. 41:8). The basis of that divine friendship was Abraham’s obedience, his justification by works. Just as he was the father of the faithful (Rom. 4:11; Gal. 3:7), he might also be called the father of the obedient, because those two godly characteristics are inseparable. “You are My friends,” Jesus said, “if you do what I command you” (John 15:14).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 140). Moody Press.

24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

ὁράω *horáō*; To see, perceive with the eyes, look at, trans. implying not the mere act of seeing, but also the actual perception of some object, thus differing from *blépō* (991), to see.

Zodhiates, S. (2000). In [The complete word study dictionary: New Testament](#) (electronic ed.). AMG Publishers.

IV. The Examples of True Saving Faith

1. Abraham's Obedience
2. Rahab's Fear

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

The second person James uses to illustrate justification by works stands in stark contrast to Abraham. She was a woman, a Gentile, and a prostitute. Abraham was a moral man; she was an immoral woman. He was a noble Chaldean; she was a degraded Canaanite. He was a great leader; she

was a common citizen. He was at the top of the social-economic order; she was at the bottom. Yet **Rahab the harlot** is listed along with Abraham in the great gallery of the faithful (Heb. 11:8, 17, 31) and was even in the human lineage of Jesus, being the great-grandmother of David (Matt. 1:5).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 140). Moody Press.

Joshua 2:1–16 (LSB)

- 1 Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, “Go, see the land, especially Jericho.” So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab and lodged there.
- 2 And it was told to the king of Jericho, saying, “Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.”
- 3 And the king of Jericho sent *word* 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 land.”
- 4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them, and she said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from.”

- 5 “Now it happened when *it was time* to shut the gate at dark, that the men went out; I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them.”
- 6 But she had brought them up to the roof and concealed them in the stalks of flax which she had laid in order on the roof.
- 7 So the men pursued them on the road to the Jordan to the fords; and as soon as those who were pursuing them had gone out, they shut the gate.
- 8 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof
- 9 and said to the men, “I know that Yahweh has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you.
- 10 “For we have heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction.
- 11 “Indeed we heard *it*, and our hearts melted, and a *courageous* spirit no longer rose up in *any* man because of you; for Yahweh your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

This is a perfect example of a pagan Gentile person responding to general revelation and specific revealing unto salvation

Romans 1:19–21 (LSB)

19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, both His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

21 For even though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Josh 2:12

12 “So now, please swear to me by Yahweh, since I have shown lovingkindness to you, that you also will show lovingkindness to my father’s household and give me a pledge of truth,

13 and preserve my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters alive, with all who

belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.”

- 14 So the men said to her, “Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it will be when Yahweh gives us the land that we will show lovingkindness and truth to you.”
- 15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, for her house was on the city wall, so that she was living on the wall.
- 16 And she said to them, “Go to the hill country, lest the pursuers reach you. And hide yourselves there for three days until the pursuers return. Then afterward you may go on your way.”

Note:

Jericho is considered by Archaeologist to be the oldest city in the area. Within the last 50 years, it has been proven that this is Jericho, NE of Jerusalem is the one that Joshua conquered. They uncovered Canaanite pottery that dated to the exact time of the conquest. Also the Bible says that it was the time of Spring and the harvest of grains. And pots were discovered full of grain, which proves the time but also that the Israelites did as God told them to only take the gold and silver but to leave everything else.

Archeologist discovers a burn layer, where massive fires were used to burn the city Just as Joshua 6 says.

Also in

Joshua 6:20 (LSB)

20 So the people shouted, and *the priests* blew the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down beneath itself, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city.

Jericho was surrounded by two walls, one lower than the other, the first wall approx 40 feet and then another further up and about as tall. In between the inner and outer wall homes were built.

From an army's perspective it was impossible to scale the walls. So God said he would bring the walls down, KJV says the wall would fall flat, but the Hebrew text means fall beneath. The wall fell out and beneath the foundations of the walls an created a ramp for the armies of Israel to easily ascend and conquer.

What is most fascinating is that Archeologist discovered that on there northern section of the wall, one area of the wall and the houses in that

area did not collapse. Many believe this was Rehab's home.

Both Abraham and Rahab, believed in True God of Israel. Yahweh. and both were willing to act on that belief. When put to the test, it was more than an academic belief.

Also it should be noted what kind of works they manifested.

Because their faith was true faith, saving faith they were willing to put everything on the line

Abraham was willing to give his only son, the son of promise. To go against everything he thought he knew about the God that called him out of Ur. He was willing to risk it all even though it did not make any sense to him. But his passion and desire was to obey no matter what.

Rahab was willing to put her life on the line. She knew that if she were found out about hiding the spies she would be killed. She believed in the God of Israel. Knew Him by name and set Him apart in her mind as Holy and regarded no other God as the true God. She was willing to die for it.

Rahab not only acknowledged that the God of Israel was the true Lord, but she obviously trusted in Him. Although she doubtless knew nothing of salvation as Christians understand it, or even as the ancient Israelites understood it, her heart was right before the Lord, and He graciously accepted her faith for righteousness. He also accepted her protection of the spies as an act of obedience to Him, and she was therefore **justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way**

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 141). Moody Press.

Her belief was real, so that she would give all.
Luke 9:23–24 (NKJV)

²³ Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

Matthew 10:37 (NKJV)

37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

They were supremely committed to the Lord, whatever the cost. It is in the vortex of the great plans, decisions, and crossroads of life—where ambitions, hopes, dreams, destinies, and life itself are at stake—where true faith unfailingly reveals itself. Long before Jesus' crucifixion, Abraham and Rahab were willing to take up their crosses, as it were, and follow Him (Mark 8:34). They hated their life in this world in order to keep it in the world to come (John 12:25).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 142). Moody Press.

IV. The Examples of True Saving Faith

1. Abraham's Obedience
2. Rahab's Fear

3. The Body's Life.

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

He likens dead faith—professed faith without works—to a body without the spirit. Both are useless, devoid of any life-giving power.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 142). Moody Press.

The body is meaningless without the spirit. It is just meat and bone. Without the live giving nature of the spirit it is unable to move, to act, to work and to do. It is a form without function. A thing without thought. Just as faith without works is a body without a spirit so only a body is alive with its spirit so faith is true faith that is alive with works.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

An inactive faith, entombed in an intellectually approved creed, is of no more value than a corpse. A saving faith is an active faith. As Epp notes, “Faith

is first, but works must follow in order to demonstrate that faith is real. Although works will not bring one into right relationship with God, they are to be the natural result of salvation.”

Hiebert, D. E. (1997). [James](#) (Revised Edition, p. 179). BMH Books.

The relevance of this test of faith for our own age is inescapable. It offers “a greatly needed corrective to the unreal, verbalistic kind of religion that claims allegiance to high doctrine but issues in living on a low and selfish level.” James does not disparage the importance of correct doctrinal views, but he insists that such views are no substitute for practical holiness. Christian faith must manifest its existence in active obedience to God’s Word.