

5. We have noted when Abraham was justified by grace resulting in salvation the working object of his faith was the Messiah in:

**Genesis 15:6** And he [ Abram ] already had been caused to believe [ אָמַן ('aman): Hiphil causative perfect tense: “occurred in the past” ] in Jehovah [ יְהוָה (YHWH) ]; and He kept on crediting [ חָשַׁב (chashav): Qal imperfect: action not finished ] it [ faith alone in Messiah alone ] to him [ Abram ] for righteousness [ imputation of divine righteousness at the moment of faith in Messiah ].  
(EXT)

6. Abram was saved before he and his family members left Ur. The Law of Freedom is a term that refers to the volition of each individual. It makes us free agents in personal decision-making.
7. The working object for salvation is Jesus Christ, referred to in the Tanakh as, Jehovah (See “Jehovah” in Genesis 15:6 above): **יְהוָה (YHWH)**. The Jews refrained from pronouncing the divine name and opted instead for **אֲדֹנָי ('athonay)**: “my Lord.”
8. Paul remarks on the justification of Abraham who placed his faith in the working object of Messiah in Romans 4. In the opening verses he argues that Abraham was saved prior to the institution of the Mosaic Law:

**Romans 4:1** To what conclusion are we forced, that Abraham, our forefather, has obtained?

- (1) This is a hypothetical question followed by a supposition designed to reach a conclusion that will prove a point.

**Romans 4:2** For if we may assume it to be true that Abraham has been justified by means of works, he has a basis for boasting, but absolutely not before God. (EXT)

NOTE: This supposition is in apparent contrast to the principle James establishes in:

**James 2:21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? (NASB)



**Romans 4:3** Now what precisely does the Scripture say? “Abraham had believed in Jehovah and that faith in Messiah was credited to his account for righteousness.”

- (2) The imputation of divine righteousness to believers at salvation is one-third of the integrity of God. We possess His righteousness at salvation which is imputed to us by His justice creating a grace pipeline.
- (3) God knows all things which constitute His omniscience. That knowledge is illustrated as the Divine Decree. Taken as a unit, God’s righteousness, justice, and omniscience make up the Integrity of God or the Love of God.
- (4) In order to be justified, a person must have God’s righteousness imputed following faith alone in Christ alone. The source of this imputation is justice which transfers either blessings or discipline down the grace pipeline to the believer.

**Romans 4:4** Now to the one who works for salvation, his compensation is absolutely not credited to his account according to grace but according to a debt that is due.

**v. 5** But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him Who justifies the ungodly ones, his faith in the working object of Jesus Christ is credited to his account for righteousness. (EXT)

9. The person who works for salvation receives nothing from God because the works of an unbeliever are considered a debt rather than an asset:

Since the unbeliever has rejected the work of Christ on the cross, he must rely solely on his own merit for salvation. All good works of the unbeliever add up to man’s relative righteousness (Isaiah 64:6) which cannot have fellowship with divine righteousness and is the basis for his condemnation. Since all personal sins were judged at the cross, sin is not the issue in condemnation (Revelation 20:13).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See R. B. Thieme, Jr., “The Case of Charlie Brown” in *Slaved Market of Sin*, 3d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1994), 22–25.



10. The person who places his personal faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin immediately receives one-half of the integrity of God. The justice of God is the human race's point of contact with the integrity of God.
11. Faith alone, which has the working object of Jesus Christ's work on the cross, results in deliverance from the lake of fire and the imputation of eternal life (John 3:16).
12. This allows justice to impute to the believer the righteousness of God establishing the grace pipeline through which flows blessings and discipline.
13. From these principles emerge the doctrine of justification which Paul addresses in:

**Romans 5:17** For if, by the transgression of the one man [ **Adam** ], spiritual death ruled the human race through Adam, much more and to a greater degree, those who receive in life the abundance of grace and the gift of imputed divine righteousness shall reign through the One, Jesus Christ.

**v. 18** So therefore, as through one transgression [ **Adam's original sin** ] resulted in condemnation toward all mankind, so also through one sentence of condemnation [ **divine imputation of human sins to Christ** ], the imputation God's righteousness was made available to all mankind resulting in justification.

**v. 19** For as through one man's disobedience [ **Adam's** ] the many were made sinful [ **genetic, sin-nature gene** ], so also through one Man's obedience [ **the Lord's submission to spiritual death on the cross** ], the many will be made righteous [ **imputed at the moment of salvation** ]. (EXT)

14. In this passage two imputations are in view, one is real or actual while the other is judicial. The imputation of Adam's sin to the human body at physical birth is a real imputation since the target is the genetically prepared sin nature in every cell.
15. The imputation of all human sins to Jesus Christ on the cross is judicial. His body did not receive the imputation of Adam's sin at physical birth because His cells had no inherited sin nature gene and, therefore innocent, did not qualify for it.



16. Consequently, the imputation of divine righteousness to the believer at salvation is also judicial. We did not deserve the imputation of divine righteousness, but due to the work of Christ on the cross, God was free to impute His righteousness to us. The judicial imputation may also be referred to as forensic: “Belonging to courts of law; used in courts or legal proceedings.”<sup>2</sup>
17. The judicial imputation of divine righteousness is imputed forensically from the Supreme Court of Heaven based on evidence the individual had placed his personal faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ on the cross for deliverance from the lake of fire and reception of eternal life.
18. From this status, we begin our spiritual journey appropriated by serious and objective inculcation of principles, categories, and doctrines into the *kardía* resulting in the accumulation of working objects for faith to convert into application.
19. Justification by works is the application by faith from the working objects from maximum doctrine resident in the soul.
20. In James 2:21–24, the offering of Isaac was Abraham’s faith application of the working object of the five-paragraph Abrahamic Covenant.

**James 2:21** Was not Abraham our father  
justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son  
on the altar? (NASB)

1. We have been hanging around this verse for several Bible classes, but the passages and doctrines we have noted were designed to drive home a number of principles.
2. Primarily, the doctrine of Abraham’s application of the Law of Freedom. This term refers to his free will or volition. It is a divine law that angelic and human volition is free; every individual is completely unrestrained in the use of his resident inventory of information.
3. It is also true this inventory is absent any divine thought until a person places his personal faith in Jesus Christ and, even then, he is extremely limited in his application of biblical truth.
4. The only way for one’s Law of Freedom to result in pleasing God is for him to consistently acquire divine thought in his soul through consistent Bible study.

<sup>2</sup> Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary: Unabridged, 2d ed., s.v. “forensic.”



5. This results in the buildup of divine principles and doctrine in the *kardía*. This inventory includes a host of working objects for one's faith application.
6. However, there is a vast chasm between knowing doctrine and applying it. A believer can verbalize doctrinal principles which include a host of imperative moods. James recognizes this, but hurries to insert a caveat, directed to those who do not apply what they know: a "hearer of the Word but not a doer."
7. Abraham's buildup of working objects is what led him to unsheathe a knife on Mount Moriah. James uses a phrase in chapter one that describes Abraham as a believer who not only acquired doctrine, but also applied it:

**James 1:25** But the one who looks with an earnest desire to absorb in detail the perfect law of freedom, and continues to live in close proximity to it, not having become a forgetful hearer only, but a doer, this man shall acquire unalloyed happiness by the production of divine good. (EXT)

8. Abram, born a Semite, was justified by faith in Genesis 15:6 resulting in salvation. He left Ur with his father, Terah, wife Sarai, and nephew Lot and went to Haran where Terah died. When Abram and his relatives left Haran for Canaan, he was 75 years old.
9. When he arrived in Canaan, the Lord issued the second paragraph of the Abrahamic Covenant in:

**Genesis 12:7a** The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land [ Canaan ].

10. In Genesis 17:16–17, Abraham was told he would have a son by his wife, Sarah. At that point he was 99 and age one hundred when Isaac was born. When he arrived on Mount Moriah, he was 120.
11. The five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant were communicated to him over a course of more than 45 years. Those working objects in his soul enabled him to make a three-day ride on the road to Jerusalem.
12. They enabled him to arrive atop Mount Moriah and, by faith in those working objects, to unsheathe his knife.
13. **Principle:** The efficient application of biblical mandates demands consistent spiritual growth to the point of facilitated wheel-tracks of righteousness. This enables the believer to perform good works by placing his faith in the working objects pertinent to the circumstance.



14. This principle distinguishes inculcation of biblical truth from its application: “Application demands spiritual growth and is the result of one’s faith in Scripture’s “working objects.””
15. This process is made perspicuous by the terms, “worship” and “application.” There can be “no application” if it is not preceded “by worship.” The accumulation of biblical knowledge must precede application. Here are some examples to demonstrate the point:
  1. Worship is inculcation; application is works. The “hearer” inculcates; the “doer” applies.
  2. Worship is the use of working objects in Scripture that are applied to life and circumstances. Here are some examples of what religion regards as application, but are nothing more than rituals and formalities: **(1) Deportment:** genuflecting at an altar, hump-shouldered posture, dour expressions, or putting on airs; **(2) Activities:** Bible study, singing in the choir (sometimes involving antiphonals), giving money, taking communion, and observing the Eucharist.
  3. None of the “Deportments” relates to worship or even legitimate works. Each is a pseudo effort to appear “spiritual.”
  4. There are five categories of biblically approved “activities” in a local church that result from worship and include: **(1)** Bible study, **(2)** prayer, **(3)** singing, **(4)** giving, and **(5)** observing the Eucharist.
  5. These are works that should be developed and applied from the inculcation of doctrine. Doctrine is the working object that should result in application.
16. Abram was justified when he placed his personal faith in the working object of Jesus Christ for salvation in Genesis 15:6. Abraham was justified when he placed Isaac on the wooded altar and unsheathed his knife placing his personal faith in the working object of the Abrahamic Covenant.
17. Salvation is acquired by personal faith in Christ as the working object of that faith. Justification by works is the believer’s application of the working object of doctrine in his soul producing divine good.
18. Historical events recorded in the Tanakh serve to illustrate these principles. James 2 presents two individuals who were saved by grace through faith who grew in grace and at a critical time in their lives used doctrine in their souls to produce divine good.



19. Abraham demonstrated his maximum use of doctrine to become justified by works on Mount Moriah. Rahab demonstrated her maximum use of doctrine when she bravely hid the two Israelite spies in her home in Jericho from the king.
20. What were her working objects that motivated her willingness to hide the spies? She told both she had heard of how the Lord dried up the Red Sea allowing the Jews to escape from Egypt and Pharaoh's army.
21. Rahab also knew of Jewish victories over the Amorites in Numbers 21. Verses 21–24 document the defeat of Sīhon, king of the Amorites, and in verses 33–35, of Og, king of Bāshan.
22. Rahab calls the two defeated kings by name in Joshua 2:10 followed by her testimony of how these events convinced her to place her faith in the God of Israel:

**Joshua 2:11**      “When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

23. With this she appealed to the two spies to tell Joshua to spare her and her family when his army besieges Jericho. The two reported their G-2 to Joshua who gave orders to destroy the city, kill all its residents, but spare the house of Rahab.
24. Because of the two spies' association with Rahab and their report to Joshua about her assistance in helping them to escape Jericho, it is believed that Rahab married one of them. Consequently, he was not only in the tribe of Judah, but also in the genealogy of Christ.
25. The spy's name is recorded in the two New Testament genealogies of Jesus:

**Matthew 1:5**      Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. (See also Luke 3:32)

26. Justification by works is only made possible by an inventory of divine absolutes to which one must refer in order to produce divine good.
27. Our subject, Abraham, produced divine good by referencing the working object of the Abraham Covenant when he offered up Isaac. James refers to this act as justification by works.
28. This passage is introduced by James with a question, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works?”



29. We have been over the phrase, “justified by works,” from stem to stern. No one who has paid the slightest attention can possibly be so confused by this term to assume it has to do with salvation. If so, I calculate such a person has been and remains a hearer of the word, but not a doer.
30. Therefore, we now resume the necessary task of exegesis beginning with the aorist passive indicative of the verb **δικαιόω (dikaiōō)**: “to justify, vindicate, to pronounce righteous, to stand approved.”
1. The aorist tense is culminative: “The aorist is often used to stress the cessation of an act or state. It places the stress on the completion of the action, not merely cessation. Its essential nature to see the aorist itself as summarizing and concluding.”<sup>3</sup>
  2. The culminative aorist looks back retrospectively on Abraham’s accumulation of information regarding God’s intentions for him as the progenitor of a “great nation” (Genesis 12:2) among other promises noted in Genesis, chapters 13, 15, 17 and 21 which we have studied in detail.<sup>4</sup>
  3. With this body of information in his soul, Abraham was able to place his faith in these working objects to follow through on the mandate to take Isaac to Mount Moriah and sacrifice him there.
  4. It was at that point that Abraham was vindicated by what he was physically doing. In other words, he was justified by his works. But remember, he was 75 years old when left Haran for Canaan and he was 120 when he arrived at the top of Mount Moriah.
  5. Over the course of half a century, he was taking in doctrine that he was able to convert into works on that mountain. This is the point where the culminative aorist reaches its termination. It looks back on the consistent progress Abraham made that brought him to that moment.
  6. James is using Abraham’s victorious advance as an illustration of what it takes to be a good soldier for Christ, to be an invisible hero, to be a good witness for the Prosecution, to be a mature believer, to be one who not only hears the Word, but is also a doer of it.
  7. In the progression of a believer’s spiritual growth the culminative aorist may reach its conclusion in a number of ways. Some learn rebound and that’s it. They go right on sinning, pause to rebound, and then continue sinning.
  8. Others get as far as doctrinal orientation by hearing and retaining an inventory of doctrine in their souls, but then walk away from the “mirror” and immediately forget what was heard: “hearers only.”

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 559.

<sup>4</sup> See Cyrus Scofield’s synopsis of The Abrahamic Covenant at Genesis 12:2 in his *Scofield Study Bibles*.



9. Some advance to acquire a personal sense of destiny and begin orienting to the importance of developing a personal love for God. However, people-testing prevents significant progress toward loving God.
10. The most difficult test along the spiritual growth spectrum is unconditional love for people. Such an advance is made difficult by failure to honor the principle of the Law of Freedom: what other people do may not meet your approval, but they are the overseers of their own destiny, not you.
11. Only those who are able to advance to the copacetic spiritual life are primed to maximize the spiritual advantage of sharing the happiness of God and being totally occupied with Christ.
12. Along this upward pathway is the accumulation of biblical principles, doctrines, and problem-solving devices that aggrandize the believer's spiritual life and accompanied by maximum imputations of divine blessings.
13. This system of biblical advance has several checkpoints for the culminative aorist. Along the way, those things a believer hears must be converted into application. If not, there is an accompanying halt in the advance.
14. What God desires is the inculcation of His Word which the believer must reference as the working object of his faith and the production of divine good.
15. The power is in the Word. It resides in the soul from "hearing" what is taught. If it remains there, it still has its power, but its energy is only potential: a hearer, but not a doer of the Word.
16. When the power of the Word is applied to life and circumstances, its energy becomes kinetic: the one having heard becomes a doer.
17. The indicative mood is the reality of Abraham being vindicated by works at the point of unsheathing his knife.

**Principles:** (1) Abraham did not blindly follow the Lord's mandate to take Isaac to Mount Moriah and slit his throat. (2) This would have meant Abraham was a sycophant of the Lord. (3) He could not have followed through on this duty without the five iterations of the Abrahamic Covenant. (4) It is only the accumulation of doctrine in his soul, recalled, and applied that enabled him to unsheathe the knife.

18. The working objects of Abraham's faith were repeated promises from God that he would be a great nation which would span the whole of Arabia, populated by enumerable Jews, ultimately including the Messiah, and its complete fulfillment in the millennial kingdom.



19. Abraham's justification is by works indicated by the ablative of source of the preposition **ἐκ (ek)** and the plural noun **ἔργων (érgōn)**: "by works." It is plural because for three days Abraham was applying doctrine in: **(1)** his preparation to leave Béershéba, **(2)** the three-day ride to Mount Moriah, **(3)** climbing the mount, **(4)** building the wooden altar, **(5)** lifting Isaac upon it, and **(6)** the final act of unsheathing his knife.
20. What accompanies this application is the relaxed mental attitude that defines the copacetic spiritual life. Such a believer has fully bought into the idea that God is in control. His plan is on point. You are involved in it. How it plays out is God's will and you are good with that.
21. Therefore, you are along for the ride. Your specific responsibility is to use your doctrine as the working object of your faith. Abraham was justified by the application of the Abrahamic Covenant to his situation.
22. What were the pertinent points within the five paragraphs that enabled Abraham to ride the road to Mount Moriah? "I will make you a great nation" (**Genesis 12:2**), "To your descendants I will give this land" (**v. 7**), "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth" (**Genesis 13:16**), "One who will come from your own body, he shall be your heir" (**Genesis 15:4**), "Look toward the heavens, and count the stars. So shall your descendants be" (**v. 5**), "Your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates" (**Genesis 16:18**), "You will be the father of a multitude of nations" (**Genesis 17:4**), "'I will bless her [Sarah], and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her" (**v. 16**),<sup>5</sup> and "Do not be distressed because of the lad [Ishmael] and the maid [Hagar]; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac you descendants shall be named" (**Genesis 21:12**).
23. James 2:21 continues, "... Was not Abraham our father justified out from the source of the working objects of the Abrahamic Covenant when he offered up ...." The phrase "offered up" is the aorist active participle of **ἀναφέρω (anaphérō)**.
24. The prefix **ἀνα (ana)** is a preposition that denotes "up or upward." The verb **φέρω (phérō)** means, "to bring, carry, or bear up." *Anaphérō* means that Abraham physically lifted up his son, Isaac, and carried him to the wooden altar as an offering to the Lord.

**(End JAS2-38. See JAS2-39 for continuation of the study at p. 381.)**

<sup>5</sup> The birth of Isaac is recorded in Genesis 21:2–5. "Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him" (v. 5).

