

10. That beats slightly around the bush, but the foundational concept of the “working objects of Abraham’s faith is what enabled him to vindicate his faith” on Mount Moriah.”

James 2:24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. (NASB)

1. This English translation presents round two in the controversy that arose in verse 21. Let’s note the translations of these two verses from the King James Version:

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

James 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (KJV)

2. In our analysis of verse 21, we established that the best translation of the verb “justified” is “vindicated.” It is important to recall that the Greek verb here is the aorist passive indicative of **δικαίωω** (*dikaiōō*):

To justify. Verbs which end in *-ōō* generally indicate bringing out that which a person is or that which is desired. By implication, to vindicate, approve, honor, glorify, and in the passive voice to receive honor.⁵

δικαίωω. To render a favorable verdict, *vindicate*.⁶

Principle: In James 2:21–26, the offering of Isaac was the production of a mature believer. Abraham functioned from a soul inventory that was developed over the course of forty-five years. His vindication by works was the production of divine good by placing his faith in the working objects of the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant. What Abraham did on Mount Moriah was the result of absolute, unwavering faith in the ultimate divine fulfillment of those paragraphs.

3. Verse 24 begins with the words, “You see,” from the present active imperative of the verb **ὀράω** (*horáō*): “to keep on seeing.” It is a command to concentrate and comprehend important doctrinal information.
4. The active voice indicates that you must personally concentrate on this commandment so as to ascertaining its doctrinal impact. What is to be acquired in the stream of consciousness is introduced by the conjunction, **ὅτι** (*hóti*): “that.”

⁵ Zodhiates, “δικαίωω,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*. 462; 463.

⁶ Walter Bauer, “δικαίωω,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 249.



5. What this conjunction does is direct the subject's attention to something: "Keep on seeing that." The King James translates it "then," but this is wrong because *hóti* is "that." And the "that" that *hóti* is pointing to is the ablative of means of the plural neuter noun, *ἔργον (érgon)*: "works."
6. When *érgon* is preceded by the preposition, *ἐκ (ek)*, it introduces the genitive of source of the neuter noun, "works."
7. So far our translation reads, "Keep on understanding that out from the source of works." This is followed by the noun *ἄνθρωπος (ánthrōpos)*: "mankind, Homo sapiens, the human race." The best translation is "a person."
8. It is something about the person that becomes extremely important. Out from the source of works a person is "justified," the present passive indicative of the verb, *δικαίω (dikaiōō)*: "vindicated."
9. The passive voice indicates that the individual under discussion receives vindication while the indicative mood verifies this as a statement of fact.
10. What follows next is the phrase that has contributed to the problem introduced in James 2:21. In that verse we studied the phrase, "justified by works," which planted the seed from which sprouted the false doctrine of election.
11. Fuel is added to this heresy with the closing phase in verse 24, "not by faith alone." The clause begins with the adversative conjunction, *καί (kaí)*: "and," which is followed by the negative conjunction *οὐκ (ouk)*: "not."
12. Then comes the preposition, *ἐκ (ek)*: "by means of" the noun *πίστις (pístis)*: "faith." Up to this point we have the translation, "Keep on understanding that out from the source of works a person is justified and not by means of faith."
13. There are two words in the translation that cause problems and devastatingly so. First the verb *δικαίω (dikaiōō)*, translated "justified" and the final word in the verse, which is translated by the NASB, NIV, and NET Bibles by the word, "alone." Here's what the dictionaries inform us about the Greek word, *μόνος (mónos)*:

μόνος. Adjective; only, alone, without others, without companions.⁷

μόνος. A marker of limitation, only, limiting the action or state to the one designated by the verb. In isolation οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον, not by faith viewed in isolation. James 2:24.⁸

⁷ Zodhiates, "μόνος," in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, 996

⁸ Bauer, "μόνος," in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 659.



14. The only English translation that comes close to the correct translation is the King James which reads, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”
15. Clarity is achieved when *dikaióō*, translated “justified” in all English Bibles, should be translated by the word, “vindicated.” We see this validated by Zodhiates’s comment, “By implication, to vindicate, approve, honor, glorify,” and By Bauer’s reference, “To render a favorable verdict, vindicate.”
16. The final word, *μόνος*, “alone” although a legitimate synonym of “only,” is grossly misinterpreted by those who support the false doctrine of Limited Atonement. Proponents of the biblical view of Unlimited Atonement profess that salvation is acquired by “faith alone in Christ alone.”
17. What is overlooked, conveniently, by the opposition is that faith is transitive and must have an object, the object clearly stated is Jesus Christ, the working object of one’s faith for receiving salvation of his soul.
18. With these things in mind, let’s see if we can develop a translation of James 2:24 that simply cannot be misunderstood:

James 2:24 Keep on understanding that out from the source of working objects from his soul a person is vindicated. He is not vindicated by means of faith that functions independently of biblically acquired working objects.” (EXT)

19. There are several ways the translation could express the necessity of applying the Word of God to one’s faith. In salvation, that resource is the gospel of Jesus Christ. For the believer, it is the resources that he possesses in his stream of consciousness.
20. Faith has to have something that will work for it. When that working object is missing, then faith, by itself, is nonfunctional. A person can say, “I have faith,” but until the object of that alleged faith is cited the statement means nothing.
21. I have developed the habit of signing off notes I send to others with the phrase, “Keep the faith.” My reference to faith has to do with the necessity of us all to maintain a lifestyle oriented to the Word of God which is the working object of our faith.
22. The problem with my statement is that all my recipients may not have a working object for their faith. This means my comment leaves out the necessity of that faith having an expressed working object.

23. Based on the controversy exposed in James 2:21–24, I need to give my salutation some thought in pursuit of a rewrite that has a working object. Or, I could just opt out with, “Sincerely yours.”

James 2:25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? (NASB)

1. This verse mentions Rahab for the third time in the New Testament. She is listed in the chart pedigree of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:5, as a faith-rest heroine in Hebrews 11:13, and commended for her vindication by referencing the working objects of her faith to protect Salmon and his associate at Jericho in this verse.
2. Rahab is one of five women mentioned in the Lord’s chart pedigree in Matthew 1 which also includes Tamar, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary.
3. Matthew’s chart pedigree begins with Abraham and contains the Jewish line of Christ down to David which inaugurates the royal line and continues until it terminates with “... Joseph, the husband of Mary by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah” (Matthew 1:16).
4. The genealogy of Jesus is interrupted in Matthew following Joram. Three missing names are recorded in 1 Chronicles 3:11–12: Āhazíah, Jōash (v. 11), and Amazíah (v. 12). The list resumes with Azaríah which is listed as Uzzíah in Matthew 1:9 (NASB).
5. The inclusion of five women in the chart pedigree is completely unorthodox for Jewish genealogies. Matthew’s presents Solomon’s bloodline forward to Joseph while Luke’s documents Mary’s bloodline back to Nathan. Each is a son of David confirming both Joseph and Mary were in the royal chart pedigree of Judah.
6. Matthew’s genealogy is the first entry in the New Testament canon and its construction provides some interesting information beginning with the inclusion of women’s names:

It is unusual to find names of women in a genealogy, but here we have four—Támar, Ráhab, Ruth, and Bathsheba—are probably all Gentiles. Three of the four are of morally dubious reputation. Matthew is surely saying that the gospel is for all people, not Jews only, and that the gospel is for sinners.

Thamar is the first woman to be mentioned in the genealogy; this is curious not only because she was a woman but because the children were conceived out of wedlock. Only here do we find Rahab featured in David’s ancestry. This fact is not recorded elsewhere in Scripture. The information about Ruth is not found in Chronicles; it is recorded in Ruth 4:13–22. (p. 23)



The genealogy concludes with Joseph, described as *the husband of Mary* but not as the father of Jesus. Matthew will tell us a little later that the child was conceived as a result of the activity of the Holy Spirit ([Matthew 1:] 20).⁹ (p. 24)

7. The unorthodox inclusion of five women in Matthew's genealogy implores us to inquire about them, purposefully to glean God's divine design by His insertion of their names in the royal chart pedigree of Messiah.
8. We will peruse biographies of the five women in the order of their references in Matthew 1: (1) Tamar, v. 3, (2) Rahab, v. 5a, (3) Ruth, v. 5b, (4) Bathsheba, v. 6b, and (5) Mary, v. 16.

A. Tamar [תָּמָר (*Tamar*); Θάμαρ (*Thámar*)]:

The Bible is silent as to her genealogy. All we know is that she was a Canaanite as her heathen name suggests. Tamar married Er, the oldest son of Judah and Shuah—who, like Tamar, was also a Canaanite. What Er did to displease God we are not told. It was sinful enough for God to slay him. Tamar did not remain a widow long, for in accordance with Hebrew law, she married the next son in the family so that he could raise up seed for his deceased brother. (p. 162)

Onan was Tamar's second husband, but he failed to fulfill his responsibilities to his dead brother's memory and posterity. Unwilling to do his duty according to the law of the Levirate marriage [he practiced onanism].¹⁰ For this act of faithlessness to the dead, God slew him also. Widowed again, the next son of Judah, Shélah, should have become the third husband of Tamar as the tribe-law required. Judah promised to give his third son to the childless widow, but when Shelah became of age, his father broke his promise. The refusal of Judah to give Tamar his son Shelah in marriage led to far-reaching results. (pp. 162–63)

Denied Shelah, Tamar was determined in an incestuous way to save from extinction the family and tribe from which the Messiah was to spring. If she could not marry Shelah, then according to the law of the country his father should marry her. Thus it came about that she laid a trap for Judah, and consequently she and her sons found a place in the greatest of all genealogies.

Disguising herself to look like a harlot, she sat in an open place where she could be approached. Not knowing Tamar's true identity, Judah bargained for her favors and secured them.¹¹

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(End JAS2-51. See JAS2-52 for continuation of study at p. 511.)

⁹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 23; 24.

¹⁰ *Coitus interruptus* (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (2003), s.v. "onanism.")

¹¹ Herbert Lockyer, "Tamar," in *All the Women of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Books, n.d.) 162–63.



Learning that Tamar had been playing the harlot, he commanded, “Bring her forth and let her be burnt.”¹ But when he learned that he was the cause of her guilt, Judah was compelled to vindicate Tamar and was forced to admit that she had been more righteous.² Twin sons were born of that incestuous union, Perez, and Zerah. Through Perez Judah and Tamar became ancestors of Jesus (Matthew 1:3).³

B. Rahab [רַחַב (*Rachav*); Ῥάαβ (*Rháab*)]:

As an Amorite, Rahab belonged to an idolatrous people. Some of the ancient Jewish fathers who held her in high reputation reckoned that she was the wife of Joshua himself, but in the royal genealogy of Jesus, Rahab is referred to as being the wife of Salmon, one of the two spies she sheltered. In turn she became the mother of Boaz, who married Ruth from whose son, Obed, Jesse the father of David came, through whose line Jesus was born. Salmon was a prince of the house of Judah, and thus, Rahab, the one time heathen harlot, married into one of the leading families of Israel and became an ancestress of our Lord, the other foreign ancestresses being Tamar and Ruth. The gratitude Salmon felt for Rahab ripened into love, and when grace erased her from life of shame he made her his wife. (pp. 130–131)

Although man’s sense of refinement may be shocked, the fact remains that Rahab, Tamar, and Bathsheba were sinful women who were purged by God, and had their share in the royal line from which Jesus sprang.

It was from some travelers Rahab entertained and sinned with, that she came to learn the facts of the Exodus of Israel, the miracle of the Red Sea, and the overthrow of Sihon and Og:

Joshua 2:10 “We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt [**Exodus 14:21–22**], and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed [**Numbers 21:23–24; 33–35**].

So, when the two spies from Joshua sought cover in her house, she knew that sooner or later the king of Jericho would get to know of the accommodation she gave them. These were men of God, not idolaters, bent on one mission, namely, the overthrow of the enemies of His people, and brilliantly she planned their protection and escape.

¹ Genesis 38:24.

² Genesis 38:26.

³ Herbert Lockyer, “Tamar,” in *All the Women of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Books, n.d.), 163.



The flax that she spread on her roof and the scarlet cord she used as a sign indicated that Rahab manufactured linen and also dyed it. (pp. 131–32)

Rahab's skillful scheme succeeded. The two Jewish spies were in desperate straits, seeing the Amorite pursuers were hot on their trail, but Rahab, although her safety and patriotism as an Amorite would be assured if she informed against the spies, decided to hide and preserve them.

Shortly after, when the pursuers had tracked the two spies to Rahab's house, she met them with a plausible excuse that they were there but had left by way of the Eastern Gate.

When Rahab hid the spies, put those who sought them on a false trail and helped the spies to escape and melt away into the shadows of the night, and lay concealed until they could reach Joshua with their report, she took her life in her own hands. (p. 132)

As Rahab offered to shelter the spies and aid them in their escape, she received from them the promise that when they returned to her country, along with Joshua and his army, that she and her family would be spared alive. (pp. 132–33)

When Joshua entered the city he set about the execution of the divine command, but respected the promise made to Rahab by the spies. Under the protection of the scarlet line, Rahab and all her kindred were brought out of the house. The spies came to her house, not to indulge in sin with Rahab, but to prepare the way for Joshua to take Jericho. She saved the spies because she knew that they were servants of the Lord. In turn she was saved.

The threefold reference to Rahab in the New Testament reveals how she became a faithful follower of the Lord. As a result of her marriage to Salmon, one of the two spies whom she had saved, who "paid back the life he owed her by a love that was honorable and true," Rahab became an ancestress in the royal line from which Jesus came as the Savior of lost souls.⁴ (p. 133)

C. Ruth [רֹּוּת (*Ruth*); Ῥούθ (*Rhouth*)]:

The first glimpse we have of Ruth is as a young wife robbed by death of her husband. Elimelech and his wife, along with their two sons Mahlon and Chilion, in order to escape prevailing famine in Bethlehem, emigrated to the neighboring country of Moab, the inhabitants of which were idolaters. After a while Elimelech died, and the two fatherless sons married women of Moab. Mahlon took Ruth to wife, and Chilion, Orpah. After some ten years' sojourn in Moab, Mahlon and Chilion died leaving their wives childless.

⁴ Ibid., "Rahab," 130–133.

