

The prevailing vision of our era ... so permeates the media and academia, and has made such major inroads into the religious community, that many grow to adulthood unaware that there is any other way of looking at things, or that evidence might be relevant to checking out the sweeping assumptions of so-called “thinking people.”³ (p. 6)

69. Here is the expanded translation of:

James 2:20 But are you willing to consistently learn, you vacuous man, that faith without production from a working object from Scripture is constantly useless? (EXT)

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

1. This verse is a question posed by James and it begins with the phrase, “Was not Abraham our father ...? This indicates that James, who is a Jew, certifies that Abraham is the progenitor of the Jewish race.
2. Abraham started out as a Gentile named Abram, the Hebrew proper noun, **אַבְרָם** (*'avram*): “exalted father,” which is used in Genesis 12:1
3. The Lord changed Abram’s name in Genesis 17:1 to **אַבְרָהָם** (*'avraham*): “father of a multitude.” In the context of that chapter, the Lord institutes the ritual of circumcision. It was an outward, physical confirmation of the promise to Abraham that “you will be the father of a multitude of nations” (Genesis 17:4).
4. In between these two verses we have the confirmation of Abraham’s salvation in:

Genesis 15:6 Then he had believed in the Lord; and it was credited to his account for righteousness.

5. His salvation occurred previous to this verse. His salvation occurred in his hometown of Ur after which he was commanded to leave the area and move to Canaan, documented in Genesis 12.
6. The pastor of the Jerusalem church is James, who is a Jew. His parents are Joseph and Mary; both are descendants of David of the tribe of Judah. James is teaching a congregation made up of Jews, therefore, he can correctly proclaim to them that Abraham is “our father.”

³ Thomas Sowell, *The Vision of the Anointed: Self-Congratulations as a Basis for Social Policy* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 2–3, 5, 6.

7. James has advanced in his epistle to James 2:21, where he uses Abraham as a superb example of justification by works. It's a good example because what Abraham did was not possible until he was 120 years old.
8. How old was Abram when he left Haran? He was married to Sarai according to Genesis 12:4 when he was seventy-five years old. Forty-five years had passed before he was commanded to sacrifice his only legitimately born son, Isaac.
9. Abraham did not carry out the commandment to sacrifice Isaac on the spot. No, he was ordered to travel to a specific location to perform the task. His instructions were to leave Beersheba and travel to Mount Moriah where the deed was to be executed. Here is some information on the road Abraham traveled:

A north-south road handled mostly local Palestinian traffic rather than international commerce. It began at Beersheba and reached the central ridge of West Palestine at Hebron; it continued through Jerusalem.
11. The approximate distance between Beersheba and Jerusalem was about 45 miles. Donkeys could travel as much as twenty miles a day, about 15 if carrying a load. So, it was on the third day when these men arrived at Mount Moriah.
12. Abraham had a three-day journey to consider the task ahead of him. On the first day he could have turned back, but he kept going. Same on the second day, but no turning back. Then on the third day he could see Mount Moriah, the site of the sacrifice. He continued his progress toward the objective.
13. Once at the foot of the mount, he dismounted and told his servants to wait with the donkey and said, "we will worship and return to you" (Genesis 22:5).
14. The word "worship" is the verb **שָׁחָה** (*shachah*). Its root meaning is, "to bow down." Abraham did not do this physically, but mentally. He was bowing down mentally for three days running. What he was actually doing was concentrating on the Word of God as the working object of his faith.
15. This application of worship is taught by Jesus Christ in this New English Translation of:

John 4:23 “But a time [**an hour**] is coming—and now is here—when the true worshipers will worship [**predictive future active indicative of προσκυνέω (proskunéō)**: referring to the Church Age] the Father in Spirit [**the filling of the Holy Spirit**] and truth [**doctrines learned from Scripture**], for the Father seeks such people to be His worshipers.

v. 24 God is a Spirit, and the people who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.”
(NET)

16. The principle to which the Lord refers is the new dispensation in which true worship is performed under the enabling power of the Holy Spirit Who teaches truth from the Word of God to the souls of positive-volition believers.
17. When a believer grows in grace by acquiring knowledge from imperative moods and passages that direct him to submit to certain behavior patterns, he is obligated to apply them in his personal life.
18. When executed, it is the result of his faith submitting to biblical principles followed by overt action. This is true worship. Without going through this process, activities that are referred to as worship are not.
19. Here are some examples of activities that should be motivated by resident doctrine but instead are “works without faith responding to human viewpoint: (1) pious expressions or posture, (2) observing the Eucharist, (3) singing hymns, (4) handing out tracts, (5) giving money, (6) constructing Jimmy Carter houses in the third world, or (7) winning a Sword drill.
20. True worship is the application of the Word of God to life and circumstances. The single most important issue in the Christian way of life is learning Scripture, retaining it in the soul’s stream of consciousness, and then, in the status of true worship, applying it to life and circumstances.
21. Genesis 15:6 is a report of Abram’s justification by faith in Messiah. James 2:21 is Abraham’s justification by works whose working object for his faith is the Abrahamic Covenant.
22. The doctrinal rationale for Abraham was complete trust in the integrity of God. God has promised him a great nation under the Abrahamic Covenant. He had promised him a son when he and his wife, Sarah, were both sterile. He had seen his son, Isaac, grow to maturity now old enough to extend the family’s chart pedigree which he would later do with his marriage to Rebekah and the births of Jacob and Esau.



23. Therefore, the commandment to sacrifice his son was something he had the courage to do based on divine promises already made to him. Abraham believed that in order for the promises to be fulfilled, God would bring Isaac back to life by resuscitation.
24. Therefore, Abraham was not carrying out a ritual for the sake of doing a ritual. No father, without certain, confirmable guarantees, would harm his son by just blindly “following orders.”
25. Abraham has acquired power in his soul through the inculcation of doctrine, had seen God’s faithfulness toward him, and trusted His veracity was trustworthy beyond question.
26. Therefore, on Mount Moriah, Abraham was justified by works whose working object was directed toward the integrity of God and His promise.
27. What James is confirming, by distinguishing the differences between the two major events in Abraham’s life, is that there are two certifications of a man’s faith.
28. In Genesis 15:6, Abraham was justified by faith when the working object for his faith was the Integrity of God and His Messiah. In Genesis 22:1–10, Abraham was justified by works by preparing to sacrifice his son because the working object of his faith was the Abrahamic Covenant.
29. In order to please God, the believer must come to understand that divine good is the production of works accomplished by means of recall and application of the Word of God.
30. Therefore, two principles emerge: **(1)** A believer’s “works,” or production of divine good, are not the result of doing something he assumes is the “right thing to do.” **(2)** The working object of one’s “works” must find its catalyst and certification in the Word of God under the filling, recall, and application ministries of the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: It is at this point in our study that we began the exegesis of James 2:21–26. The phrase, “Was not Abraham justified by works ...” (v.21), took us on an extended study of the life of Abraham, né Abram, from his salvation in “Ur of the Chaldeans” in Genesis 11:31, all the way to his intention to sacrifice Isaac on the altar of wood in Genesis 22:10–12.

That analysis began with lesson 95, and continued to its conclusion in lesson 132, a total of 38 lessons.

(End JAS2-82. See JAS2-83 for continuation of study at p. 821.)



The overall theme of *James: Chapter Two* was introduced in its very first Bible class with recitation of this poem:

The Winds of Fate

**One ship drives east and another drives west
With the self-same winds that blow;
’Tis the set of the sails
And not the gales
That tells them the way to go.**

**Like the winds of the sea are the winds of fate
As we voyage along through life;
’Tis the set of the soul
That decides its goal
And not the calm or the strife.**

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

1. Sailing ships are dependent on the wind to move toward an objective. One heads east, the other heads west, but “with the selfsame winds that blow.”
2. One ship may be sailing upwind while the other is heading downwind. On each vessel, the set of the sails is different from the other.
3. The terms for these tactics are “windward” and “downwind.” To sail into the wind requires a maneuver called tacking which is the term for sailing a zigzag course.
4. To sail with the wind, or downwind, decreases the wind’s apparent strength. You are not pushing into the waves but sailing with them.
5. Therefore, “’Tis the set of the sails” that causes the ship to advance forward, whether going windward or downwind.
6. To sail windward requires constant adjustments involving numerous nautical maneuvers in the face of a relentless wind.
7. Sailing downwind, by comparison, is quite a different experience, less calculations and adjustments to both rudder and sails.
8. Miss Wilcox uses the examples of winds at sea to illustrate “... the winds of fate / As we voyage along through life.”
9. “’Tis the set of the soul / That decides its goal.” The “set of the soul” refers to its content. Does it contain the biblical skills to navigate one’s life while confronting “the winds of fate” or not?
10. She correctly asserts that, “’Tis the set of the soul / That decides its goal / And not the calm or the strife.”



11. “The Winds of Fate” is a brief poem that summarizes the life of the believer who functions in the self-same, cosmic vortex called the Devil’s world as does everyone else.
12. “’Tis the set of the soul” that determines the spiritual life of the believer and not the exigencies he confronts. 
13. This poem is a brief synopsis of James: Chapter Two. The apostle is emphasizing that many in his congregation whose “set of their souls” does not line up with principles required by the Word of God.
14. Instead, they should submit to the conditional statement, “If you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well” (James 2:8, NASB).
15. He then gives examples of the problem with mental-attitude sins in verses 9–20 after which he emphasizes their failure to fulfill the principle stated in James: Chapter One, “Prove yourselves doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”
15. James then presents Abraham and Isaac to illustrate a sequence of events that reveals the process of spiritual growth that occurred in Abraham’s and Isaac’s souls.
16. For Abraham, that process took over 45 years to achieve its objective. Abraham heard the Lord give him promises beginning in Chapter 12 all the way through the childhood of Isaac in chapter 21.
17. Up to the point of chapter 22, Abraham had been a “hearer of the Word,” but not a doer. When he awakened at dawn in Genesis 22, he was ready, willing, and able to become a doer of the Word.
18. The question James poses in 2:21 drives home the point, “Was not Abraham our father, justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?”
19. This was not so much a justification as it was a vindication. Abraham placed his faith in the working object of the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant.
20. What it takes for a believer to become a doer of the Word and not only a hearer is to grow in grace until he is able to place his faith in the working objects of the Word of God, to trust in the veracity of its proclamations, and the faith to apply its doctrines to life and circumstances.
21. This is the message of the second chapter of James. Those who have faith in the working objects of the Word of God are doers and not just hearers only. “’Tis the set of the soul / That decides its goal / And not the calm or the strife.”

 The principles on sailing were developed from Steve Sleight, *Complete Sailing Manual* (New York: DK Publishing, 1999), 30-31, 34, 78–80.



The Expanded Translation of James: Chapter Two

Paragraph 1: The Royal Law and the Integrity of God

James 2:1 Fellow members of the royal family of God, [IM #14] do not exhibit [present active imperative of ἔχω (*échō*)] the mental attitude of partiality in your faith in our Lord Jesus, the Shekinah Glory.

James 2:2 If [the **protasis** of three, third-class conditions] a nobleman [ἀνὴρ (*anēr*): aristocrat] enters into [εἰσέρχομαι (*eisérchomai*): 1st 3dCC] the synagogue of Messianic Christians wearing golden rings on all his fingers and dressed in a dazzling, expensive outfit, and there also enters [*eisérchomai*: 2d 3dCC] a beggar in filthy clothes,

James 2:3 and you kowtow [ἐπιβλέπω (*epiblépō*): 3d 3dCC] to the one who is carrying his flashy multicolored mantle and toga, and you say [ἔπω (*épō*) 4th 3CC] in a pleasant voice, “You sit here in this place of honor,” and you say officiously to the beggar, “Stand there or sit down by my footstool,”

James 2:4 [**apodosis**] have all of you not [οὐ (*ou*): introduces a rhetorical question demanding a positive answer] been discriminating in your *kardías* and become judges [κριτής (*kritēs*)] with evil thoughts and motivations? Yes, you have.

James 2:5 [IM #15] Begin to concentrate [aorist active imperative of ἀκούω (*akoúō*)], fellow members of the royal family of God; has not God elected to privilege [Phase 1: eternity past] the poor of this world [Phase 2, time], to be rich by the systematic accumulation of doctrine inside the evanescent divine power system, as heirs of the kingdom of God [Phase 3, eternity] which He promised to those who love Him?

NOTE: There are 3 imperative moods in v. 3, all made by reversionistic Chazzan and underlined in blue. These are not included in our ongoing survey.



James 2:6 [Peroration] But you have oppressed the poor man. Is it not the rich men who oppress you and personally force you before the magistrates of the courts?

James 2:7 Do the rich not keep on blaspheming the honorable name of Christian by which you have been forever surnamed?

James 2:8 If [protasis of a 1st-class condition] you apply the Royal Law according to the Scripture, “You shall unconditionally love from personal integrity those you encounter,” [apodosis] honorably, you must keep on doing this.

James 2:9 If, on the other hand, you keep on showing partiality within the advanced stages of reversionism, you are committing sin and in doing so stand convicted by the authority of the Royal Law as transgressors of it.

James 2:10 For whoever perfectly obeys the whole law but yet goes astray from one of them, he has become guilty of all.

James 2:11 For He who said, “Do not commit adultery mentally or overtly,” also said, “Do not commit murder mentally or overtly.” Now if you do not commit adultery mentally or overtly, but do commit murder mentally or overtly, you have become a violator of the law.

James 2:12 In light of these things, [IM #16] keep on speaking or communicating [present active imperative of λαλέω (*laléō*)] and [IM#17] keep on applying [present active imperative of ποιέω (*poiéō*)] just as those who are about to receive judgment by the law of freedom.

James 2:13 Evaluation will be without mercy for the one not having shown mercy; grace in action exults over the Evaluation Tribunal.



Paragraph 2: The Principle of Vindication: James 2:18–20

James 2:14 What advantage, my fellow members of the royal family, if anyone alleges he has faith in the Bible, but keeps on not having production? Is faith alone able to evangelize his neighbor? No, it cannot.

James 2:15 If [**protasis**] a couple, fellow members of the Royal Family of God, is destitute, being poorly clothed and without proper daily nourishment,

James 2:16 and if a believer should say to a couple who are unbelievers, [**IM # 18: apodosis**] “Go [**present active imperative of ὑπάγω (hupágō)**] in peace [**חַלְקוּ שְׁלוֹמִים halak shalom**]. [**IM #19**] Be warm [**present active imperative of θερμαίνω (thermainō)**] and [**IM #20**] be filled [**present passive imperative of χορτάζω (chortázō)**],” but you do not provide for them what is necessary for the body, what advantage is that?

James 2:17 So also the faith, if it does not have a working object of Bible doctrine, it keeps on being observably dead, being by itself.

James 2:18 But someone will say, “You keep on having faith (in the working object of the Word), and I will keep on having faith in the working object of my works; [**IM #21**] demonstrate [**aorist active imperative of δείκνυμι (deíknumi)**] to me faith without the works, and I will demonstrate to you my faith from the source of my works.”

James 2:19 You believe that there is only one God [**ignoring Jesus and the Holy Spirit**]. Do you benefit by believing this? The demons also believe and shudder with fear.

James 2:20 But are you willing to learn, empty of doctrine man? Faith without a working object is useless.



Paragraph 3: Abraham's Working Objects of His Faith, James 2:21–26

James 2:21 Abraham, the progenitor of our Jewish heritage, was he not vindicated by works when his volition consulted wisdom and knowledge from the working objects of the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant and from that inventory, from his own volition offered up his only son, Isaac, on the altar? Yes, he was.

James 2:22 Do you now comprehend that faith in the Abrahamic Covenant was working simultaneously in coordination with his works on Mount Moriah and out from the source of these works, faith was made complete, mature, perfected;

James 2:23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “And Abraham had believed God, and it was imputed to him as a credit to his account for righteousness,” and he was called, one whom God loves?

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.”

James 2:25 Similarly, was not Rahab the harlot also caused to be vindicated out from the source of working objects when she placed herself under the authority of the two spies and caused them to be sent out of Jericho to a place of safety? Yes, she was.

James 2:26 For just as the body without the human spirit is dead, so also faith without working objects also keeps on being dead.

(End JAS2-83. This is the conclusion of the study of *James: Chapter Two*.)

(See JAS3-01 for the study of *James: Chapter Three* at p. 1.)

