

25. Remember that the main verb is the culminative aorist active indicative of *dikaióō*: “to justify, vindicate, to pronounce righteous, to stand approved.” It is translated, “was not Abraham justified.”
26. The culminative aorist indicates Abraham had as the working objects of his faith:

The Five Paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant:

- Par. 1: National Entity:** “I will make you a great nation [Israel]” (Genesis 12:2); **Historical Impact:** “And in you all the families [racial groups] of the earth will be blessed” (v. 3).
- Par. 2: Real Estate: Observation:** “All the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants [chart pedigree] forever” (Genesis 13:15); **Innumerable Descendants: Dust:** “I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth” (v. 16).
- Par. 3: Adulterine Rejected; Heir Predicted:** “This man [Ishmael] will not be your heir; “but one who will come forth from your body [Isaac]; he shall be your heir” (Genesis 15:4). **Innumerable Descendants: Stars:** “Count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendants be” (v. 6).
- Par. 4: Real Estate: Boundaries:** “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18).
- Par. 5: Palestinian Covenant:** “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession” (Genesis 17:8). **Heir Identified:** “Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac [v. 19a]; **Covenant with Isaac & his Progeny:** “and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him” (v.19b).
27. These five paragraphs constructed by God were inculcated in Abraham’s soul and gradually facilitated into paths of least resistance. He had them memorized. He believed them. In Genesis 22, he applied them to the circumstances assigned to him by the Lord.



28. This chapter documents a sequence of decisions made by Abraham as he recalls the five paragraphs of the covenant given to him by the Lord. He is able to concentrate on their details which ultimately included the prediction and fulfillment of the conception and physical birth of Isaac.
29. If God was faithful enough to, first, fulfill the prophecy that he, although sterile, and his wife, Sarah, although barren, would bear their son, Isaac, then, second, if the other paragraphs of the covenant are to be fulfilled, God is obligated to resuscitate Isaac.
30. We have been through the sequence of events that Abraham and Isaac performed over the course of three days. Abraham, accompanied by Isaac and two servants left Beersheba bound for Jerusalem, a route covering about 45 miles, a three-day journey.
31. Abraham is given instructions from God:
- Genesis 22:2** Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”
32. The imagery that emerges from these imperative moods depicts the circumstances that would one day occur on that very Mount in Jerusalem:
- (1) “Take ... your only son” is virtually repeated by Jesus Christ in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.”
 - (2) “Whom you love” is also a remark made by Jesus in John 5:20, “The Father loves the Son.”
 - (3) “Go to the land of Moriah,” which Mount became Jerusalem and the site of the crucifixion, “They brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull” (Mark 15:22).
 - (4) “Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son” (Genesis 22:6). “They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull. There they crucified Him” (John 19:17–18a).
33. “Abraham built the wooden altar, bound his son Isaac, and laid him upon it” (Genesis 22:9). Abraham stretched out his hand, unsheathed his knife in order to slay his son” (v. 10).
34. At this point, God called a halt. Having carried out the entire process required to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham confirmed he had placed his faith in the working objects of the Abrahamic Covenant.



35. Once more then, James 2:21 reads, “Was not Abraham our father [Progenitor of the Jewish line] justified out from the source of the working objects of the Abrahamic Covenant when he offered up”: the aorist active participle of **ἀναφέρω** (*anaphérō*).

36. Grammatical rule: The action of the aorist participle, *anaphérō*: “offered up,” precedes the action of the main verb, *dikaiōō*: “to justify.”

37. Chronologically, the verse would read thusly:

James 2:21 Abraham our father, having offered up Isaac his son on the altar, was he not justified by his faith in the working objects of the Abrahamic Covenant?” (EXT)

38. The phrase “working objects, **ἔργων** (*érgōn*),” is plural and refers, as previously noted, to the applications associated with Abraham’s preparation to leave Beersheba, the three-day ride to Mount Moriah, the ascent to its summit, construction of the altar, assembly of the wood, lifting up Isaac upon it, and the purpose for unsheathing his knife.

39. The working objects of his faith were the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant which he inculcated, retained, and facilitated into paths of least resistance.

40. When the order came to mount up and ride, the sequence of events that transpired between leaving Beersheba and unsheathing the knife were the works by which Abraham was justified.

41. There would have been no works had there not been consistent inculcation of divine revelation followed by Abraham consulting it as the working object of his faith. Without the Lord’s consistent repetition and expansion of the covenant’s promises, Abraham would never have left Beersheba.

42. Understanding the background to James 2:21 is imperative for a clear understanding of the verse. It has absolutely nothing to do with salvation. Abraham was saved over 45 years before this verse’s events transpired.

43. In order to amplify, facilitate, and verify the exegesis and analysis of verse 21, we must systematically observe principles that further confirm the veracity of its expanded translation.

Analysis of Genesis 22 in Hebrews 11:

1. This chapter presents the culmination of Abraham’s spiritual growth from salvation to spiritual maturity which covered a period of time in excess of 45 years.



2. We have established that Abram was saved while living in Ur. Genesis 11:31 records the move from Ur to Haran where Terah and his family lived until he died. Subsequently, Abram, Sarai, Lot, and his family left Haran for Canaan. Genesis 12:4 reveals that Abraham was 75 years old when they left town.
3. Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born so he spent 25 years in Canaan. We have been able to establish that Abraham was 120 when events associated with the order to sacrifice Isaac occurred. That's 45 years, plus the unknown amount of time they spent in Haran.
4. These 45 years encompassed the time spent for him to advance to spiritual maturity and acquire complete confidence in the integrity of God. His stream of consciousness is stocked with a large inventory of Bible doctrine which enabled him to apply it with complete faith in its working power.
5. Genesis 15:1 indicates his spiritual progress with the phrase, "after these things," that is, after about a 20-year period of growing in grace.
6. It was a period of personal instruction by the Lord. Abram bought into the idea he was the patriarch of a family that would produce the Messiah. We've noted the paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant interspersed with illustrations revealing the innumerable size of his progeny.
7. In Genesis 13:16, "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth," and in Genesis 15:5, "Count the stars, if you are able to count them. So shall your descendants be."
8. The ultimate test to determine Abraham's willingness to follow the divine guidance of the Lord occurs in Genesis 22:2 with the command, "Take now your son." The verb, "tak," is the Qal imperative of **לָקַח** (*laqach*): "grasp or seize." However, it has many applications, for example:

The primary emphasis is on the responsibility of the subject for that act; it frequently evokes the idea or aspect of initiative regarding a person's actions. The verb is especially frequent in narrative writings and regulations concerning offerings.

In the Qal the meaning of *laqach* extends from "take, seize, grab," "take for oneself" with the result "take away," to a more militant sense of "appropriate for oneself."¹
9. The application in verse 2 is for Abraham to tell Isaac, who is oriented to the authority of his father, that the two of them are going on a journey and to be ready to pull out at daybreak.

¹ *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Grand Rapids: 1997), 8:17.



10. The Lord identifies Isaac as “your only son whom you love.” “Only son” characterizes the crucifixion motif that projects two-thousand years into the future forecasting the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.
11. The Qal perfect of the verb אָהַב (*'ahav*): “whom you have always loved.” The perfect tense emphasizes the love of God for His Son goes back to eternity past and continues uninterrupted forever.
12. Remember, the love of God is the integrity of God. The true humanity of Jesus Christ is the ultimate and unique example of human perfection that reflects the integrity required for personal love to exist.
13. And what is their destination for this journey? The land of Moriah. Not the wind Mariah, but the land of Moriah. Among the mountains of this land is one that became known as Mount Moriah: מוֹרְיָה (*Moriyyah*). Here’s some background on the “land” and “location” of Mount Moriah:

Moriah. The name derives from three elements: prefixed *mem*, meaning “the place,” the root *ra’ah* “to see” and the theophoric element “Yah.”² The name is a play upon both the active and passive voices of *ra’ah*. In the active voice with the preposition it means “to provide,” “furnish.” Hence, the name denotes “the place where Yahweh provides” (cf. Genesis 22:8, 14).

In Genesis 22:2 God instructed Abraham to offer up Isaac on one of the mountains in “the land of Moriah.” The author of Chronicles, by applying this name to the site of the Temple identified the site as the rocky hilltop of Jerusalem north of the city of David where Yahweh appeared to David (2 Chronicles 3:1). The Moslem mosque, the Dome of the Rock, presently sits on the site.³

14. The grace provision is appropriated by the impact of faith on the working object of the Word of God on Mount Moriah, “the place where Yahweh provides.”
15. What happened on Mount Moriah has emphatic doctrinal impact since it by means of types, exhibits prophetically the events that would occur two millennia in the future when God the Father judged “the Son Whom He loved” for the sins of the world.
16. Not only James but also the writer of Hebrews provides a retrospective analysis of what Abraham accomplished on Mount Moriah. It is included among the writer’s documentation of faith-rest heroes in Hebrews 11:

² The combination of *ra’ah* and *Yah* means, “Jehovah sees.”

³ B. K. Waltke, “Moriah,” in *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, gen. ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 4:276.



Hebrews 11:17 By faith rest [doctrine resident in his *kardia*], Abraham, when he was tested, [*πειράζω* (*peirázō*): evaluation under pressure], offered up [*προσφέρω* (*prosphérō*): as a hearer he became a doer] Isaac. He who repeatedly had received [*ἀναδέχομαι* (*anadéchomai*): to seize and lay hold of what is believed] the promises [five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant in the divine decree], yet he was ready to begin the process of offering up as a sacrifice, his only son.

Principles: Abraham is being tested on two fronts: (1) Are the blessings more important than the One Who gave them? and (2) Is the Giver more important than the gift?

v. 18 Toward whom [Abraham] it had been communicated [constative aorist passive indicative of *λαλέω* (*laléō*): “repeatedly”], “In Isaac your gamete shall be designated” [Genesis 22:12c; predictive future passive indicative, prophetic of a new race, the Jew].

Principle: This prophecy clearly indicates that Isaac will have children who will continue the Jewish chart pedigree.

v. 19 He [Abraham] having calculated [aorist middle participle of *λογίζομαι* (*logízomai*): an accounting term: add up the facts and concludes] that God also was able [the adjective *δυνατός* (*dunatós*): omnipotence] to raise up [aoristic present active infinitive of *ἐγείρω* (*egeírō*): instantly by resuscitation] Isaac out from the dead; for which reason also he recovered [culminative aorist middle indicative of *κομίζω* (*komízō*): flashback to Genesis 22] him by means of a comparison [*παραβολή* (*parabolḗ*): equivalent to *τύπος* (*týpos*): “type”] to the cross. (EXT)

Principle: The noun, *parabolḗ*, does not refer to resurrection but indicates an association with something else that is brought alongside for comparison. The synonym, *týpos*, type, is used by the writer of Hebrews to look back retrospectively to the cross. The wooden altar is the type while the cross is the antitype. Isaac is the type while Jesus is the antitype.



Summary:

1. To continue the comparisons, after the Lord intervened, the typology continued when Abraham discovered a substitute:

Genesis 22:13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. (NASB)
2. The substitute was the ram. Christ is the substitute for us on the cross. The resurrection is the fulfillment of Isaac walking back down the mountain to the awaiting servants and mules.
3. Isaac being spared the sacrificial knife means Isaac was emblematic of Christ on the cross being judged for our sins. Being spared the knife is a type for the resurrection of Christ.
4. Isaac's submissiveness to Abraham his father on the wood-covered altar was a type of our Lord's submissiveness to God the Father on the wooden cross as our substitutionary sacrifice.
5. Abraham passed the test by referencing the five-paragraph Abrahamic Covenant as the working object of his faith resulting in him being justified by his works on Mount Moriah.
6. The importance of Abraham's "justification by works" is also the subject of a major passage by Paul in the Book of Romans.

Analysis of Genesis 15 in Romans 4:

1. Paul uses Abraham as the subject of a rhetorical question in his arguments to Jewish legalists. He will indicate how Abraham and Isaac were saved before the institution of the Mosaic Law which they revere. We will develop this passage by constructing an expanded translation with commentary.

Romans 4:1 Therefore to what conclusion are we forced to declare [future active indicative of ἐπέω (*eréō*): introduces a rhetorical question as a debater's technique to communicate a point of doctrine] that Abraham, our forefather [προπάτωρ (*propátōr*): progenitor the Jewish race], in his earthly life, has discovered [perfect active infinitive of εὐρίσκω (*hurískō*): the completed action of finding out for oneself]?



2. Abraham is revered by every Jew. According to Genesis 15:6, he believed in the Lord and that faith was credited to his account for salvation. Faith alone in the Lord (2d Person of the Trinity) alone is the formula for salvation in every dispensation.

Principles:

1. Abraham is the ultimately qualified reference for the Jew regarding salvation. It is always the same regardless of the dispensation.
2. If Abraham was justified by faith apart from works, then it follows that salvation is available to all mankind by faith alone in Christ alone.
3. Abraham is used as the go-to example of salvation by grace through faith, not by works or by keeping the Mosaic Law.
4. In Verse 2, Paul opens his argument with a hypothetical question. He introduces it with a conditional sentence divided into two parts. The first clause is the protasis while the second is the apodosis.
5. The protasis presents the basis from which the apodosis, or conclusion, is drawn. The apodosis is always an inference from the protasis. This formula forms a debater's technique:

Romans 4:2 [**Protasis**] **For if we assume that** [εἰ (*ei*): expresses to legalistic Judaizers a condition which is hypothetical] **Abraham was justified** [aorist passive indicative of δικαίωω (*dikaiōō*): 1st-class condition, and it is considered to be true] **by means of works** [ἔργον (*érgon*): human energy], **he has** [progressive present active indicative of ἔχω (*échō*): continuous action in a debater's technique] **a basis for boasting** [καύχημα (*kaúchēma*): exultation], **but** [ἀλλά (*allá*): adversative conjunction introducing the **Apodosis**] **not before God.**

3. Justification is the function of the integrity of God while righteousness is the principle of the integrity of God. The integrity of God is the love of God and the love of God is the integrity of God.



4. Justification is the judicial act of God whereby mankind makes salvation adjustment to the justice of God resulting in the imputation of divine righteousness.
5. The imputation of divine righteousness forms the basis for the believer's eternal relationship with God and the target for blessings from God.
6. Justification has nothing to do with forgiveness. Forgiveness is subtraction while justification is addition. Forgiveness subtracts sin but justification adds righteousness.
7. No works can be involved because Christ paid our debt at the cross when He was judged for our sins by the justice of God.
8. God is not impressed with human good or human works; He is not impressed with our human abilities, attractive personalities, or rationales. He is impressed with us being a conduit for the application of His Word as the working object for the production of divine good. He gets the credit; we get the blessings.
9. The phrase "justified by works" is meaningless unless the terms are fully understood. "Justification" refers to divine certification of the believer's application of God's Word resident in his soul. "Works" is the end result of the believer's reliance on Word as the working object for the production of divine good.

Romans 4:3a For what does [λέγω (légō): present of ongoing duration] the Scripture continuously say?

10. Scripture is always the final authority. It is the repository of absolute truth. When Scripture is cited, it is pertinent for the proper understanding of the context in question. Here we are advised that what follows is absolute truth. This truth is the specific statement of Abraham's salvation which Paul quotes from Genesis 15:6:

v. 3b "Abraham believed [aorist active indicative of πιστεύω (pisteúō): constative indicating momentary action] God [Θεός (Theós)⁴: Jesus Christ], and his faith was credited [culminative aorist passive indicative of λογίζομαι (logízomai): imputed] to Abraham's account for righteousness."

⁴ In Genesis 15:6 the divine name in Hebrew is יהוה (Yehowah, or YHWH), sans vowels, and has traditionally not been pronounced, primarily out of respect for its sacredness. Whenever Hebrew readers found these letters, they always substituted for them the word יהוה (athonay): "Lord."



11. Abraham was a Gentile Semite living in Ur. In this verse, Abraham stopped worshipping the moon god of the Chaldeans⁵ and placed his personal faith in *Athonay*, the Lord Jesus Christ, for salvation resulting in the imputation of divine righteousness.
12. The immediacy of the constative aorist of *pisteúō*, “to believe,” and the culminative aorist of *logízomai*, denoting the attainment of the process, certifies the instantaneous result of Abraham placing his personal faith in the working object of Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life.
13. This is in clear opposition to Hebrews 11:17–19 which required a prolonged investment of time for the facilitation of the doctrinal inventory contained in the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant. These were the working objects required to carry out the divine mandate to sacrifice Isaac.
14. This process, that took over forty-five years to acquire, resulted in Abraham being justified by his works. It required the accumulation of doctrine over time whereas his justification by faith in Christ took a yoctosecond.
15. This dichotomy is summarized by Paul in Romans 4:4–5:

Romans 4:4 But to him who works for
salvation his compensation is not credited according
to grace, but according to debt. (EXT)
16. The principle from this verse certifies that the harder one works for salvation the deeper into debt he gets. Salvation is acquired by means of grace which excludes human merit, works, or ability.
17. To approach God with the expectation of acquiring salvation through human works is blasphemous. Mankind is flawed by imputed sin, guilty of personal sin, and separated from perfect God due to his imperfections.

(End JAS2-39. See JAS2-40 for continuation of study at p. 391.)

⁵ “The cult of the moon god was the most popular religion throughout ancient Mesopotamia. In Ur, the Stela of Ur-Nammu has a crescent symbol placed at the top of the register of gods because the moon god was the head of the gods. The Ur of the Chaldees was so devoted to the moon god that it was sometimes called Nannar in tablets from that time period. Harran [see below] was likewise noted for its devotion to the moon god. Archeological evidence demonstrates that the dominant religion of Arabia was the cult of the moon god. The Old Testament constantly rebuked the worship of the moon god (see, for example; Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kings 21:3,5; 23:5; Jeremiah 8:2; 19:13; Zephaniah 1:5). When Israel fell into idolatry, it was usually to the cult of the moon god. When the popularity of the moon god waned elsewhere, the Arabs remained true to their conviction that the moon god was the greatest of the gods. In Mecca, the moon god was the chief deity. Mecca was in fact built as a shrine for the moon god. Evidence gathered from both North and South Arabia demonstrate that moon-god worship was clearly active even in Muhammad’s day and was still the dominant cult. The moon god was called al-ilah, the god, which was shortened to Allah in pre-Islamic times” (Robert Morey, *The Islamic Invasion: Confronting the World’s Fastest Growing Religion* [Las Vegas: Christian Scholars Press, 1992], 212, 213, 215). “Harran. In ancient times a strategically important city (in *Acts* 7:2) of north Mesopotamia; residence of Terah and his son, the Hebrew patriarch Abraham (*Gen.* 11:31–32)” (*Merriam-Webster’s Geographical Dictionary*, 3d ed., s.v. “Haran”).

