

C. The Working Objects

1. Transitive verbs must have an object. The verb **πιστεύω** (*pisteúō*): “to believe,” is an example and John 3:16 illustrates this principle:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son [Jesus Christ], that whoever believes [πιστεύω (*pisteúō*)] in Him [εἰς αὐτόν (*eis autós*): in Jesus] shall not perish [in the lake of fire], but have eternal life.

2. In this verse, the working object is Jesus Christ. His work on the cross involved the divine imputation of the sins of the entire human race upon Him and their subsequent judgment.
3. Those whose working object for their faith is Jesus Christ have the results of being delivered from the lake of fire and the imputation of eternal life.
4. Post salvation, believers are tasked with the objective of developing within their mentality a high inventory of biblical principles, doctrines, commands, and problem-solving devices.
5. This ever-increasing inventory of divine thought, direction, and guidance results in the acquisition of “working objects” for his faith.
6. Whereas at salvation the working object for one faith is Jesus Christ, post-salvation, the working object for one’s faith is the Word of God present in his soul.
7. In each of these categories there is an ultimate result of justification. At salvation, faith in Christ results in justification by means of faith in Him and results in the imputation of divine righteousness to the believer.
8. Justification by works is the result of the believer placing his faith in the working object of the Word of God in order to accomplish divine good.

Romans 4:13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Romans 4:16, 22¹ For this reason it is by means of faith in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law [**Jews**], but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham [**Gentiles**], who is the father of us all, **v. 22** and therefore it [**faith in Christ**] was credited to Abraham as righteousness [**justification by faith**].

9. In the parenthesis that includes verses 17–21 we see Abraham building an inventory of doctrine that will develop into working objects of Abraham’s faith which resulted in his justification by works in James 2:21:

Romans 4:18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “So shall you descendants be” [**Genesis 15:5b**].

v. 19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb;

v. 20 yet, with respect to the promises of God [**the working objects of Abraham’s faith**], he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith [**advance to spiritual maturity, giving glory to God**] [**grace orientation**],

v. 21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform [**see Hebrews 6:13–15; James 2:21**]. (NASB)

10. In James 2:21 and following, the offering of Isaac was the production of a mature believer functioning with maximum doctrine in his soul.

¹ Verses 17–21 is a parenthesis that emphasizes the missing link between salvation and spiritual maturity. Abraham is the pattern that exists between salvation adjustment to the justice of God and maturity adjustment to the integrity of God.



11. This passage refers to the 50-year period of spiritual growth in which Abraham advanced to spiritual maturity. The working objects for his faith were the five paragraphs of the Abrahamic Covenant that resulted in his reliance on the integrity of God.
12. Abraham's doctrinal rationale that gave him the confidence to sacrifice Isaac is addressed by the writer of Hebrews in:

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.

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].

v. 19 He [Abraham] having calculated [aorist middle participle of *λογίζομαι* (*logízomai*): an accounting term: add up the facts and conclude] that God also was able [the adjective *δυνατός* (*dunatós*): omnipotence] to raise up [aoristic present active infinitive of *ἐγείρω* (*egeíró*): 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)

13. Paul writes in Romans about Abraham's faith in the working object of Jesus Christ for salvation. The apostle uses Abraham as the subject of a rhetorical question in his arguments to Jewish legalists. He argues how Abraham and Isaac were saved before the institution of the Mosaic Law which they revere.