

# Faith vs Works

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## How to Study Scripture

Some believe that Faith vs Works is the all-encompassing question facing Scriptural Faith in the Messiah. Others believe the Reformation brought this issue to the forefront. However, with the Reformation there were more problems than merely the issue of faith vs works; consequently, the Reformation caused more problems than it solved!

The Reformation continued the Church's ecclesiastical powers and added its Gnostic interpretations of Scripture. A primary area of concern is the question of Salvation by "faith *alone*," or by "faith *plus works*"? Another way of saying this is: "Am I saved *just by believing* in Jesus" or "do I believe in Jesus and good works"?

With Messianic Restoration, we need an all-encompassing fresh start of looking at the Scriptures in its literal, historical and contextual setting. "Messianic Restoration" rejects the Reformation theology of "faith vs works."

## These verses sum up the issue:

Romans 3:28ESV: *For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.*

Eph 2:8-9ESV: *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,*

James 2:24ESV: *You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.* When one is made righteous, he walk in Yeshua's righteousness.

## James 2:14-26

<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup>So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (Believers are to walk in YHVH's precepts.)

<sup>18</sup>But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup>You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! <sup>20</sup>Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup>You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup>and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. <sup>24</sup>You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup>And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? <sup>26</sup>For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

## Historical background:

In James 1:1, the author states that he is James. The confusion lies as to which of the four James mentioned in the Apostolic Scriptures was the author of the book of James. Most historians date this book in the early 60's or before the 50's.

- The Apostle James, not the brother of Yeshua, could not have written this book, because he died in 44 AD, which was too early for this writing.
- The other two men did not have the stature or influence of this writer.
- Most scholars conclude that this James was the brother of Yeshua and the leader of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15).

Yeshua had several brothers, one of whom was James. It is presumed James was the oldest, after Yeshua, since he headed the list in (Matt 13:55). Even though James did not initially believe in Yeshua (Jn 7:2-5), he later became a prominent leader in Yeshua's Body.

- He was one of the individuals to whom Yeshua appeared after His resurrection (1 Cor 15:7).
- Paul referred to James as a "pillar" in the Body (Gal 2:9).
- When Paul visited Jerusalem, he saw James (Gal 1:19), & he also saw James on his last visit (Acts 21:18).
- When Peter was rescued from prison, he told his friend to tell James (Acts 12:17).
- James was a leader in the important council of Jerusalem (first recorded council of Yeshua's Body) (Acts 15:13).
- No doubt James wrote as a pastor to instruct and encourage not only those present and those scattered abroad.
- James' teaching reinforced Yeshua's teaching; furthermore, he taught from the TaNaKh & the wisdom writings such as Proverbs & especially Leviticus & Exodus from Torah.
- James was most likely martyred in 62 AD.

The book of James is Hebraic in nature.

- It was written while Yeshua's body was still all Jewish.
- There is not reference to the controversy over Gentile circumcision.
- Synagogue is used to designate the meeting place of Yeshua's Body (2:2)
- In (1:1) note the twelve tribes and kyrios sabaoth = "Lord Almighty (5:4)

## Homework:

1. Read the book of James twice, Notice the verses he quoted. (Please list 5 references to Torah)
2. What was advice James gave to the Gentiles in Acts 15.
3. Notice the outline in the table of contents, the Hebrew language, & that James 2:14-26 is against Gnosticism!

4. Was Luther against *works*? Was he against Israel? Was Israel the church? Did he consider the book of James to be inspired?
5. Does James speak of the use of Faith in James? Does he use Faith and Works together?