

# James 2:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

## Analysis

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**Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?** Was not Abraham justified (edikaiōthē, ἐδικαιώθη) by works when he offered Isaac? James references Genesis 22 to show faith's obedience. Abraham's earlier justification (Genesis 15) was by faith; here, works demonstrate that faith. The verb can mean declared righteous or vindicated.

Reformed interpreters note that James speaks of demonstrative justification before men, evidencing genuine faith Paul describes. Faith leads to costly obedience even when promises seem threatened.

## Historical Context

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Judaizers boasted in Abrahamic lineage. James reminds them that Abraham's faith manifested in obedience. Paul's use of Abraham in Romans 4 emphasizes initial justification; James highlights subsequent obedience. Together they present a full picture.",

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does Abraham's obedience challenge your own sacrifices?
2. In what areas is God calling you to demonstrate faith through costly action?
3. How can you keep God's promises in view while obeying difficult commands?

## Interlinear Text

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Ἀβραὰμ	ὁ	πατήρ	ἡμῶν	οὐκ	ἐξ	ἔργων	ἐδικαιώθη
Abraham	G3588	father	our	not	by	works	Was
G11		G3962	G2257	G3756	G1537	G2041	G1344
ἀνενέγκας	Ἰσαὰκ	τὸν	υἱὸν	αὐτοῦ	ἐπὶ	τὸ	
when he had offered	Isaac	G3588	son	G846	upon	G3588	
G399	G2464		G5207		G1909		
θυσιαστήριον							
the altar							
G2379							

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 8:39** (References Abraham): They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

**Matthew 12:37** (Righteousness): For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.