

Sola fide, NEVER ALONE

"We are justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is never alone."

I THE EMPTY HAND: WHAT SAVING FAITH IS

THE GIFT: CHRIST AND HIS MERIT

Faith brings nothing to the exchange. It is the empty hand that receives what a gracious God freely gives.

SAVING FAITH HAS THREE PARTS · APOLOGY IV, §48–55

Notitia KNOWLEDGE	Knows the content of the Gospel: who Christ is, what He has done and what He promises.
Assensus ASSENT	Affirms that this content is true. Even the demons have this much (James 2:19).
Fiducia TRUST	Clings to the promise that God is gracious to me for Christ's sake. This is the heart of saving faith, the faith "that apprehends mercy."

FAITH JUSTIFIES AS AN INSTRUMENT, NOT AS A VIRTUE

REJECTED · KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT TRUST

The demons believe that God is one, and they shudder (*phrissousin*, James 2:19). Correct theology with no personal trust produces terror. This is rationalism.

Bare Assent

REJECTED · TRUST WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

A vague "trust in God" with no definite object and no definite content is sentiment. It may be sincere, yet it has no anchor. This is mysticism.

Feeling

II THE ROOT AND THE FRUIT: PAUL AND JAMES

Coram mundo
BEFORE THE WORLD

JAMES 2:24
"A person is justified by works and not by faith alone."

HOW IS LIVING FAITH TOLD FROM A COUNTERFEIT?

By its visible fruit. Works are the flower of faith, not its root.

Coram Deo
BEFORE GOD

ROMANS 3:28
"One is justified by faith apart from works of the law."

ON WHAT BASIS DOES GOD DECLARE THE SINNER RIGHTEOUS?

By faith alone, apart from works. The verdict (*dikaioō*) is spoken in God's courtroom, not earned in the sinner's heart.

Paul excludes works as the **root** of salvation; James demands works as **its fruit**.
The tree produces the fruit. The fruit never produces the tree.

JAMES 2:14, 20 · "THAT FAITH"

James asks, "Can *that* faith save him?" The article (*hē pistis*) points back to a verbal claim with no deeds. Such faith is barren: a field that yields no harvest.

Argē

JAMES 2:22 · BROUGHT TO ITS GOAL

Abraham was counted righteous years before (Genesis 15:6). His obedience did not complete a deficient faith. God brought a living faith to its designed fruition.

Eteleiōthē

"Faith justifies, not because it is so good a work and so God-pleasing a virtue, but because it lays hold on and accepts the merit of Christ."

FORMULA OF CONCORD, EPITOME III, §13

A weak faith and a strong faith receive the same Christ. The question is never "Is my faith good enough?" The question is always "Is Christ sufficient?"

ORIGIN Sola Gratia WEEK 2	INSTRUMENT Sola Fide WEEK 3	GROUND Solus Christus WEEK 4
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