

“How can you believe in salvation by faith alone?”

“How can you believe in salvation by faith alone when the only occurrence of ‘faith alone’ in the Bible ([James 2:24](#)) says that salvation is not by faith alone?”

It is entirely true that the one verse in the Bible that contains the exact phrase “**faith alone**” *seems* to argue against salvation by faith alone. [James 2:24](#) reads, “**You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone**” (ESV). However, rejecting the doctrine of salvation by faith alone based on this verse has two major problems. **First**, the context of [James 2:24](#) is not arguing against the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. **Second**, the Bible does not need to contain the precise phrase “**faith alone**” in order to clearly teach salvation by faith alone.

[James 2:14-26](#), as a whole, and especially [verse 24](#), causes a lot of confusion. The passage definitely seems to cause serious problems for the “**salvation by faith alone**” concept. **First**, we need to clear up a misconception, namely, that James means the same thing by “**justified**” in [James 2:24](#) that Paul means in [Romans 3:28](#). Paul is using the word *justified* to mean “**declared righteous by God.**” Paul is speaking of God’s legal declaration of us as righteous as Christ’s righteousness is applied to our account. James is using the word *justified* to mean “**being demonstrated and proven.**”

The 2011 NIV provides an excellent rendering of [James 2:24](#): “**You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone**” (emphasis added). Similarly, the NLT translation of [James 2:24](#) reads, “**So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone**” (emphasis added). The entire [James 2:14-26](#) passage is about proving the genuineness of your faith by what you do. A genuine salvation experience by faith in Jesus Christ will inevitably result in good works ([Ephesians 2:10](#)). The works are the demonstration and proof of faith ([James 2:18](#)). A faith without works is useless ([James 2:20](#)) and dead ([James 2:17](#)); in other words, it is not true faith at all. Salvation is by faith alone, **but that faith will never be alone.**

While [James 2:24](#) is the only verse which contains the precise phrase “**faith alone,**” there are many other verses that do, in fact, teach salvation by faith alone. Any verse that ascribes salvation to faith/belief, with no other requirement mentioned, is a declaration that salvation is by faith alone. [John 3:16](#) declares that salvation is given to “**whoever believes in Him.**” [Acts 16:31](#) proclaims, “**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.**” [Ephesians 2:8](#) says, “**For by grace you have been saved through faith.**” See also [Romans 3:28](#); [Romans 4:5](#); [Romans 5:1](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [3:24](#); [Ephesians 1:13](#); and [Philippians 3:9](#). Many other scriptures could be referenced in addition to these.

In summary, [James 2:24](#) does not argue against salvation by faith alone. Rather, it argues against a salvation that is alone, a salvation devoid of good works and obedience to God’s Word. James’s point is that we demonstrate our faith by what we do ([James 2:18](#)).

Pastor Leadership Sunday School

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

Regardless of the absence of the precise phrase “**faith alone,**” the New Testament definitely teaches that salvation is the product of God’s grace in response to our faith. “**Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? . . . On that of faith**” ([Romans 3:27](#)). There is no other requirement.