

CREDIT

“However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited to him as righteousness” (Rom. 4:3).

It is interesting to note that many modern inventions are actually adaptations of what God created. For example, we developed radar by studying the bat, sonar from the dolphin, velcro from the thistle, scotch tape from the gecko’s foot, suction cups from the octopus, etc. The idea of something valuable being credited to your account with no physical contact is also something straight out of the Bible and thousands of years old.

On Oct. 5, 1892 the Dalton brothers rode into Coffeyville, Kansas with the daring plan of robbing two different banks at the same time. Fifteen minutes later eight people were dead including four members of the Dalton Gang. The robbery of the Banco Central in Fortaleza, Brazil made it’s way into the Guinness Book of World Records. In 2006 robbers tunneled under that bank and stole 3 tons of currency valued at an estimated 70 million dollars. The world’s greatest bank raid, however, began in 2013 when robbers hacked into the computers of over 100 banks in 30 different countries and stole billions of dollars.

Abraham was not righteous! Nobody is! The first three chapters of Romans present evidence proving that **“there is no one righteous, not even one” (Rom. 3:10)**. It doesn’t matter whether you are a Jew with the Law or a Gentile without it: **“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23)**. The “Good News” is that we can be justified freely by His grace through the redemption that comes from Christ Jesus.

“Faith” is the key that makes this possible. Faith is available to everyone regardless of education or intelligence, age or health, nationality or social standing. Abraham is the pioneer who shows us how it can be done. He was a discouraged 85 year old man and was questioning the truth of God’s promises. Ten years before God had promised him that his descendants would form a great nation, but after all those years he still didn’t have a son. He complained to God that his estate would be inherited by his servant Eliezer of Damascus. God corrected him with the promise that he would have a son that came out of his own body. To stimulate his faith God took him outside and told him to look up and count the stars if he could. It was at that point that “Abram, believed the Lord and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).

This amazing transaction took place 430 years before the Law and also before Abram’s sperm began to grow in the womb of his wife! The word translated as “credited” is “logizomai” and comes from the root “logos” from which we get “logic” and “logical”. Just as funds today can be transferred electronically Abram’s faith removed all of his sins and “credited” him with righteousness. To those who understand the way God works this is perfectly “logical”.

Old habits are not easily abandoned. My mother died in 2002 at the age of 92. Several years before her death she purchased a TV with a remote control. When I would call her on the phone she would frequently say: “Wait a minute, I have to get up and turn off the TV”. As you know, it wasn’t necessary. All she had to do was point the remote at the TV and push a button.

Under the Law a man who sinned had to “do” something in order to be forgiven. He had to make a sacrifice and pay a penalty. Then the priest would make atonement for him and he would be forgiven (Lev. 6:1 – 7). By faith we are justified first and then make restitution to the best of our ability. Sarah did not get pregnant by “faith only”. Abraham had to “do” something to father a child out of his own body. It is crystal clear, however, that he was justified by his faith before doing works of any kind (Rom. 4:1 – 5). In other words: **“We serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code” (Rom. 7:6)**.

Most are aware that children adapt to new things more easily than older people. One joke quotes a little boy who said: “This cell phone is so simple that even my Grandpa can use it”. Perhaps this is why we must become like little children in order to enter into the Kingdom (Matt. 18:1 – 4).