



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Are You Running on Your Record?

GENESIS 15:6

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As we go into an election season with all its debates, speeches, commercials, and campaign appearances, one thing we often hear is how candidates need to “run on their record”. Giving an account of their voting record or a presentation of accomplishments are all part of an office seeker’s effective campaign strategy.

However, when it comes to standing before God and giving an account to Him, “running on our own record” is a bad idea. The Bible tells us that “**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**” (Rom. 3:23). We are challenged that “**there is none righteous, not even one**” (Rom. 3:10, Ps. 14:3; 53:3). In our last study on Genesis 3:15 we saw how since the fall of Adam and Eve, each and every person are sinners by nature and by choice. We don’t have to examine our own lives too closely to realize we have all told lies, had lustful thoughts, been angry with others, and failed to love God and others as we should. If we compare ourselves with others, our record might look pretty good. If we compare ourselves with an infinitely holy God, whose standard is “you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48), then we realize our own record falls far short.

In our studies this session, we are considering the overall “story” or theme of the Bible which will help us understand the message of the Scriptures as a whole. That theme is the story of redemption through Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. The message of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is how sinful people can be right with an infinitely holy, righteous God. The Bible answers the question of how we who are condemned, guilty sinners can escape the wrath of God and have our guilt taken away so that we are no longer under the just sentence of condemnation from a just Judge.

If we are not careful, we might look at the Old Testament and say that being right with God is a matter of keeping God’s law. In this study, we will see that the “story” of salvation is the same throughout the scriptures. The only way to be right with God is **through faith** in God and His promises. We see this truth portrayed in the life of one of the great Old Testament heroes, Abraham. Let us consider how the Bible says Abraham came to be right with God:

¹After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.”²Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”³And Abram said, “Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.”⁴Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.”⁵And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”⁶Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:1-6

The verse we want to focus on is verse six:

Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to Him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6

How did Abraham become right with God? Was it through his works or actions? No, it was through FAITH. As we shall see later, that faith certainly resulted in actions, but Abraham was made right with God through faith and faith alone. We see the importance of this verse as it is repeated in Romans 4:3, 22; Galatians 3:6; and James 2:23. Paul gives us the clearest understanding of this amazing statement in Romans 4:

*¹What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.³For what does the Scripture say? “**ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**”⁴Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.⁵But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness... Romans 4:1-5*

“Justified” simply means being made right with God. Paul is pointing out that Abraham was not made right with God by anything he did. The Bible does not say Abraham worked for God, and was thereby justified. It does not say that Abraham did acts of love or service and was justified. It does not say that Abraham made progress in

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changing his life and character and was justified. It says Abraham **believed God** and that faith was credited to him as righteousness.

Paul points out that Abraham was not made right with God by his works; otherwise, he would have had reason to boast before God of what he had done. If we work for something, the wages given are simply what we have earned or deserve. Abraham was by no means a perfect person. Yet he was considered righteous by God because of his faith. He is a perfect Old Testament example of the New Testament passage:

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Let us remember that this is the theme or the story of the Bible. Jesus taught the disciples on the road to Emmaus how all the Old Testament scriptures concerned Himself (Luke 24). Let us look a little more closely at this message that salvation and being right with God comes only through faith.

ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD

Genesis 15:6 simply states “Abraham believed God”. This faith was first demonstrated when God called Abraham in Genesis 12. God called Abraham to leave his country and his family and Abraham went. At this time, God made Abraham promises and he believed those promises. In Genesis 15 God formalized those promises with a covenant – a promise or agreement – with Abraham.

Abraham believed God’s promise of a land. He believed God’s promise for a son. He believed God’s promise for a descendant through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed. He knew of the promise made back in Genesis 3:15 that God would send One who would “bruise the serpent’s head”. To some extent, Abraham believed that this promise pointed to Christ, as Jesus taught, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” (John 8:56). This is pointed to in Hebrews 11:13 where it says Abraham and other Old Testament believers “saw these promises and welcomed them from a distance”.

It may be a great encouragement to us to realize that Abraham was justified by faith he was by no means perfect. We find that Abraham

failed to trust God and lied to Abimelech saying Sara his wife was his sister (Genesis 20). We see again Abraham failed to trust God and sought to gain the promised son through other means, causing great grief to his family and descendants (Genesis 16).

ABRAHAM’S FAITH WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Abraham did not stand before God on his own record of good works. God gave him a righteousness or goodness that was beyond his own. “Reckoned” or “credited” is a legal or financial term. It means to place on ones account. It is amazing to consider that God’s own righteousness could be placed on Abraham’s – and our – accounts. This is what Paul wrote about in Philippians 3:9:

...And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith... Philippians 3:9

There is a great transaction that takes place when we repent, believe, and trust Christ and His work on the cross. Our sin is credited to Him as suffered, died, and bore the punishment for it on the cross. His righteousness and goodness are then credited to us, simply on the basis of our faith in Him. Christ died to pay the debt of our sin. Christ lived to provide our righteousness or goodness before God.

CONCLUSION

- **WHEN WE STAND BEFORE GOD WE CAN RUN ON OUR OWN RECORD, OR ON CHRIST’S RECORD. DO YOU TRUST CHRIST ALONE FOR THE RIGHTEOUSNESS YOU NEED?**
- **HEBREWS 11 POINTS OUT HOW ABRAHAM’S FAITH WAS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS OBEDIENCE TO GOD. JAMES POINTS TO ABRAHAM’S EXAMPLE AND SHOWS THAT FAITH, IF NOT ACCOMPANIED BY ACTIONS, IS WORTHLESS (JAMES 2:14-26). THOUGH WE ARE SAVED BY FAITH ALONE AND NOT BY ANYTHING WE DO, WE SHOULD DEMONSTRATE OUR FAITH BY HOW WE LIVE IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND HIS WORD.**