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The art of persuasion

Not persuaded

Scriptus Papers

Almost persuaded

If you really want to persuade
someone who doesn't wish to be
persuaded, you should tell him a story.

Steven D. Levitt

quoteany

Biblical perspectives on various topics

Fully persuaded

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"To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible we must be truthful" (Edward R. Murrow)

There are three 'technical' pisteis ('persuaders' or 'means of persuasion'). Persuasion comes about either through the character (êthos) of the speaker, the emotional state (pathos) of the hearer, or the argument (logos) itself (Aristotle)

Introduction

Scriptus means 'having been written', and this *Scriptus Paper* concerns some biblical characters who were not persuaded, others almost persuaded, and others fully persuaded. But first, before introducing the three texts that I have in mind, here is some introduction on persuasion.

The word that Aristotle used above for persuasion (*pisteis*), we translate into English as 'faith', is a signature word of the New testament (NT). Persuading was to the Greeks such a lofty pursuit that they venerated it as the goddess Peitho. Persuasion requires explanation, but most of all, persuasion requires an intimate knowledge of, and genuine respect for, the other person. It requires agreement on both sides, and that's the key issue: a freely and eagerly assumed agreement. Ultimately, certainty is what ensues, and is expressed in statements such as "I'm sure that..." (Romans 8:38, Hebrews 6:9, 2 Timothy 1:5) or "they are convinced that..." (Luke 20:6), or "we are sure that..." (Hebrews 13:18) ([Abarim Publications](#)).

1. Not persuaded

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. 24 He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' 27 He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' 29 Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' 30 He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead (Luke 16:19-31).

The rich man

Luke did not give the rich man a name. Not because he did not have one but perhaps he wanted to define and identify him by his wealth, particularly his clothes and his lifestyle. This man's name was not recorded in the book of life, and so here he is a nobody, except an example to avoid.

He is dressed in purple, and fine linen. The purple was a color dye that was imported from Phoenicia, where it was harvested from the shellfish or snail. It was part of the attire of Israel's High Priest (Exodus 28), and Midianite kings (Judges 8:26), Mordecai's royal attire (Esther 8:15), Daniel's royal robe (Daniel 5:29), and the royal robe they gave Jesus in mockery (Mark 15, John 19). The rich man's fine linen is generally viewed as a fine Egyptian linen that had many more delicate strands than ordinary linen. He feasted sumptuously or ostentatiously. He was entertained and made happy by others with their clever, graceful, original, erudite, heart-warming, fun-loving statements ([Abarim Publications](#)).

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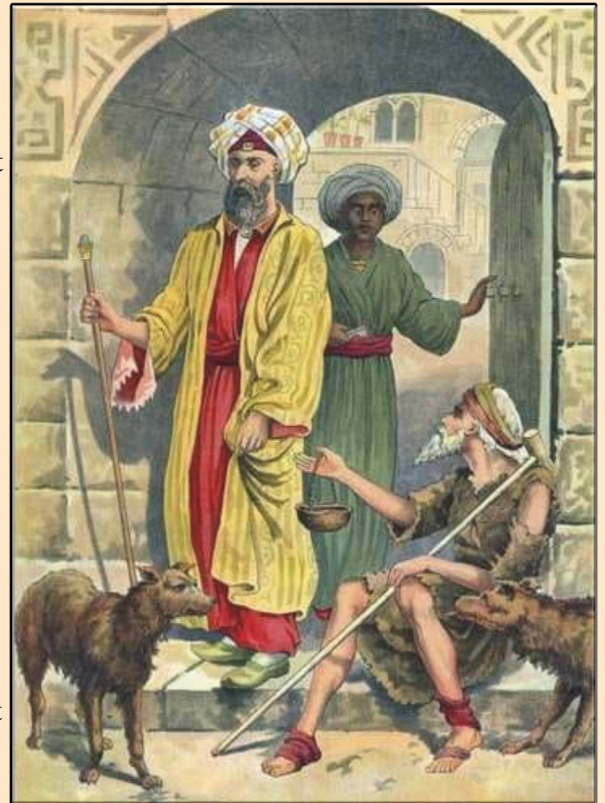
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Lazarus

The Greek name Lazarus (My God Is Helper) is the Hellenised version of the Hebrew name Eleazar. The two best-known Eleazars are the son of Aaron, the arch-father of all priests, and the son of Abinadab, in whose house the Ark of the Covenant resided. Both these Eleazars had brothers whom God killed for their inappropriate handling of the Ark or the sanctuary where it was deposited. So, good men had sinful brothers. Is that a bad omen for the rich man and Lazarus story?

Lazarus was "poor" (*ptochos*), although that translation misses the point. Instead, he was destitute, forsaken, disenfranchised. *Ptochos* does not describe someone who has no money, but someone who cowers away, either from fear, timidity, disease or shame. These (*ptochos*) were not able to partake even in the least demanding stratus of normal human economy, or even to function as slaves. Nobody would buy them. These were people who had no family, no friends, no skills or suffered some debilitating disease, and were reduced to begging for food from strangers. These were regarded as worthless people, and that's probably how they felt ([Abarim Publications](#)).

Moreover, Lazarus did not just come and lie at the rich man's door (*pulon*). *Pulon* means gateway, a gate-house or portal behind the gate but before the house. The gateway was an area that belonged to the larger territory of the house, but where people other than the house's owner, family and highest ranking servants resided: a place of fringe people, where lower ranking personnel mingled with soon-to-be-outcast and possibly even dogs and such. Since Lazarus was not simply lying in the street outside the rich man's house, but rather resided in the rich man's gateway, it is implied that Lazarus was actually one of the rich man's slaves ([Abarim Publications](#)).



Further, Lazarus had been cast aside (*ballo* passive) at the gate, implying that others had put him there. Was he cast aside by a family that didn't want him? After all, he was covered in scrapes and abrasions (*helkoo*). That is, Lazarus wasn't gently laid at the rich man's gate but moved there against his will and dragged along. And, the dogs in the street came up to lick his lacerated legs, showing more concern for him than any human being did. Any wonder Lazarus means *My God Is Helper*, because God is the only one that did help him. More of that shortly.

Abraham's bosom

Eventually, both men died; Lazarus first but he received no funeral. However, just as Moses had no human burial but God buried him, so no humans carried Lazarus to burial, but I'm sure that God would have looked after one of His own. Nevertheless, the angels carried his spirit to Abraham's bosom (*kolpos*), commonly translated as 'bosom' but that is incorrect. The *kolpos* was the fold in one's garment as it fell over one's belt or girdle, the sensitive and precious area that the body would most naturally defend. Such a fold would form a pocket in which precious items could be safely kept. Lazarus was one of God's precious people, and the angels took him to God's safe keeping.

Similarly, Jewish tradition was that Abraham's Bosom refers to the custom of reclining on couches at table, an arrangement which brought the head of one person almost into the bosom of the one who sat or reclined above him. To "be in Abraham's bosom" meant to enjoy happiness and rest at the banquet in Paradise ([Abarim Publications](#)).



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Abraham's bosom continued

In contrast, the rich man was buried, and I'm sure that he had an ostentatious funeral with warm eulogies. He had five brothers who still lived, and probably, much of his local town turned out to mourn the loss of this rich man. But, at that very moment he was not in Abraham's Bosom. He was a Jew alright for he called Abraham his father, who acknowledged him as his child, *for a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly—it is spiritual and not literal* (Romans 2:28-29).

The rich man was in *hades* (*hades*), a word constructed from the particle of negation, 'a' and the verb *eido* meaning to see. The two together mean the quality of being invisible. The dead are invisible to those on earth, but notice that the dead rich man could see Abraham and Lazarus. Now, of course, Abraham had been dead some 2000 years, but he was very much alive. In this respect, notice what the Lord said to the resurrection-denying Sadducees:

Now as for the dead being raised, (present tense) have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living (Mark 12:26-27).

The point that Jesus was making was that God identified himself as the God of the three ancient patriarchs, who lived some 500 years before Moses but they were still alive when God spoke to Moses at the burning bush, and so they must have been raised. 'Raised' in the Lord's words above is present tense, not future.

Life's experiences for the rich man and Lazarus are now reversed. The rich man is now in pain, while Lazarus enjoys pleasure. The rich man thirsts for water for the fire has dried him out. There is something intensely spiritual here, rather than literal. As the psalmist put it:

As a deer thirsts for streams of water, so my soul thirsts for you, O God! I thirst for God, for the living God. I say, "When shall I come and behold the face of God?" (Psalm 42:1-2).

Here, the imagery of bodily thirst is a metaphor for spiritual thirst for God's nearness and intimacy. The thirst, the pain of the fire that the rich man felt is separation from God's presence. The same idea is expressed by Paul:

...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

As a Jew, the rich man should have known these things. He would have read and known the Torah:

For the Lord your God is a consuming fire; He is a jealous God. Again, however, pay very careful attention, lest you forget the things you have seen and disregard them for the rest of your life; instead teach them to your children and grandchildren (Deuteronomy 4:9, 24). And Hebrews 12:25, 29:

See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! For indeed our God is a consuming fire.

Rich man wants mercy

The rich man pleads for Abraham's mercy (*eleio*) in his failure to do the will of God, for which he expresses no regret. He just wants his torment lessened or totally eliminated, but he had no regard for Lazarus in his life, but he wants the roles reversed now. The rich man had denied the poor man begging for food and for help, is ironically now begging the same man for even a drop of water.

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Rich man continued

But Abraham denied his request saying, '*Child, remember that during your lifetime you took the good things, and Lazarus likewise the worthless residual; but now he is being called to nearness, to closeness, and you are caused grinding pain* (16:25).

Also, Abraham denied his second request to send Lazarus to his five brothers to warn them to repent in order to avoid the place of pain. Remarkably, he had more compassion for his brothers than he ever showed Lazarus during his life. The rich man was convinced that if Lazarus was raised from the dead and appeared to his brothers it would convince them. Of course, Abraham was not empowered to raise the dead but he made the point that such an act would not persuade his brothers to change their way of thinking. After all, a Lazarus was raised from the dead (John 11:43-44), some believed in Jesus as a result, but others:

...went to the Pharisees and told them what he had done...So from that day on the chief priests and the Pharisees planned to put him to death (John 11:45-53).

In other words, such an outstanding, incredible miracle of raising Lazarus of Bethany from the dead did not persuade some to convincing faith, it would not, as Abraham argued, persuade the rich man's five brothers if they wouldn't be persuaded by the Word of God (Luke 16:31).

2. Almost persuaded

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost you are persuading me to be a Christian (Acts 26:28).

There's quite a story before we get to King Agrippa's amazing admission. Paul's third and final missionary journey (about A.D. 53-57) took in Asia Minor and Greece before returning to Jerusalem (Acts 18:23, 20:1-21:17).

Jews from Asia Minor (see 21:29) decided that they would pursue Paul and moved Jerusalem like a coiled up a spring full of imminent action against Him to kill him (Acts 21:27-40). Reports of Paul's lynching reached the officer commanding 1000 soldiers who immediately took soldiers and centurions and ran to the crowd, which stopped beating Paul at this point. Paul was arrested, taken to the Roman barracks and given permission to address the Jewish crowd in the Hebrew, which was the Aramaic spoken there in the 1st century.

Paul's defence 1

Paul's first defence (Acts 22:1-30) was the first of five that he made. 'Defence' is *apologia* familiar to us in English as apologetics, the practice of defending religious beliefs through reasoned arguments and discourse. Paul recounted his Jewish upbringing, his persecution of believers, his Damascus Road sighting of Jesus, and the Lord's call to go the Gentiles because the Jews wouldn't accept his conversion to Christ. The Jews tried to lynch Paul again but he was rescued by the Romans only to be interrogated by beating him with a lash to extract confessions from prisoners who were not Roman citizens. The lashing was done with a whip of leather thongs with pieces of metal or bone attached to the ends.

When the Romans realised that he was a Roman citizen they stopped, but the commanding officer ordered the chief priests and the whole council, that is, the Sanhedrin, which was the highest legal, legislative, and judicial body among the Jews to hear Paul the next day.

Paul's defence 2

Paul's second defence (Acts 23:1-34) was to the Sanhedrin but he capitalised on the division between the resurrection-believing Pharisees and the non-believing Sadducees. Verbal fisticuffs ensued and the Sadducees next day formed a conspiracy to kill Paul. The plot was overheard by Paul's sister's son, and the commanding officer kicked the decision upstairs to Governor Felix.

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Paul's defence 2 continued

However, Paul was encouraged by the Lord's presence who promised that he would testify of Him in Rome. So, the commanding officer summoned two centurions, 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and 200 spearmen and took Paul to Caesarea (about 100kms) during the night, and Paul's accusers had to state their charges against him before the governor. Meanwhile, Paul was kept under guard in Herod's palace (praetorium).

Paul's defence 3

Paul's third defence (Acts 24:1-27) was before Felix. The high priest Ananias, the elders and a speaker Tertullus reported their case against Paul. The charge was that Paul was a plague, a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarene, and a profaner of the temple. The Jews also asserted that all this was true. Paul denied that he had committed a crime and felt their opposition to him was his belief in the resurrection. Felix deferred, and adjourned the hearing until Lysias the commanding officer attended.

Some days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning faith in Christ Jesus. Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity, I will send for you." At the same time he hoped that money would be given to him by Paul, and for that reason he used to send for him very often and converse with him. After two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and since he wanted to grant the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

Paul's defence 4

Paul's fourth defence (Acts 25:1-12) was before Festus who succeeded Felix. The chief priests and the leaders of the Jews appealed to him to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem for trial but this was a ruse to ambush to kill him along the way. Festus denied that request.

When the Jews came to Caesarea, Paul defended the charges against him that he had committed an offence against the law of the Jews, and against the temple, and against the emperor. Festus gave Paul the option of being tried in Jerusalem, which he rejected, and appealed to the emperor.

Festus was eager to clean up problems left by his predecessor as well as to avoid any actions that compelled the Jewish community in Caesarea to send a delegation to Rome complaining about Felix's mismanagement of the Jews. King Agrippa II, the last of the Herodian dynasty to rule over Jewish territories came to Caesarea to welcome Festus, who sought Agrippa's expertise in drafting a report for Caesar. Agrippa, known for his knowledge of Jewish customs, and who had good relations both with Rome and with the Jewish community worldwide was intrigued by Paul's case and requested to hear him speak. Bernice was the sister of Agrippa (and also of Drusilla, Felix's wife), currently a widow living at her brother's court and active in Jewish matters.

Paul's defence 5

Paul recounted his life, his conversion, and his ministry *to open the eyes of Jews and Gentiles so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus. Both Jews and Gentile should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance.*

Festus had heard enough and declared that Paul was out of his mind. Too much learning was driving him insane. Paul asserted that he was speaking the truth, and immediately challenged the king. "King Agrippa", he said, "do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe". Whereupon, Agrippa said to Paul,

Almost you are persuading me to be a Christian (Acts 26:28).

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Paul's defence 5 continued

Agrippa had been brought in to hear Paul's defense, and now ends up defending himself. The questioner is now being questioned. The tables have been turned (Net Bible study Notes). Agrippa had heard enough, arose and left with Bernice and Festus. They agreed that Paul had done nothing to deserve death or imprisonment. Agrippa said to Festus, *This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to the emperor*, but, it was the Lord's plan for Paul to go to Rome, and to Rome he went. Of course, to be 'almost persuaded' to faith in Christ is as bad as being 'not persuaded'. Sadly, we do not know if Agrippa took that final step to faith in Christ.

3. Fully persuaded

We now come to the final example, from Abraham, the father of the faithful. Here's the text.

1 So how do we fit what we know of our ancestor Abraham into this new way of looking at things?

*2 For if Abraham was brought to **righteousness** by works, he has something to boast about—but not before God. 3 “Abraham **believed** God, and it was credited to him as **righteousness**.” 4 Now to the one who works, his pay is not credited due to grace but due to obligation. 5 But to the one who does not work, but **believes** in the one who declares the ungodly **righteous**, his **faith** is credited as **righteousness**.*

*6 So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God credited **righteousness** apart from works: 7 “Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; 8 blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not credit sin.”*

*9 Is this blessedness, then, pronounced only on the circumcised, or also on the uncircumcised? We say, “**Faith** was credited to Abraham as **righteousness**.” 10 How then was it credited to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised.*

*11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the **righteousness** that he had by **faith** while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the ancestor of all who **believe** without being circumcised and who thus have **righteousness** credited to them. 12 And he is also the father of the circumcised...who also walk in the footsteps of the **faith** that our father Abraham possessed...13 For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the **righteousness** of **faith**. 14 If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, **faith** is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. 16 For this reason it depends on **faith**, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the **faith** of Abraham...*

*17 As it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations. In the presence of the God in whom he **believed**, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. 18 Who against hope, upon hope **believed** into becoming the the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” 19 He did not weaken in **faith** when he considered his own body already having been made dead, for he was about a hundred years old, and that Sarah's womb, too, was dead.*

*20 He was not made to waver at the promise of God to unbelief, but was intrinsically enabled to **faith** giving glory to God, 21 after **being fully persuaded** that which he has forcefully promised he is able to do.*

*22 Therefore it was credited to him as **righteousness**. 23 Now the words, “it was credited to him,” were written not for his sake alone, 24 but for us also, to whom it will be credited who **believe** upon him who raised Jesus our Lord out of the dead, 25 who was handed over on account of our falling aside from God's purposed way, and he was raised on account of our being declared **righteous** (or, our **righteous** living (Romans 4:1-25).*

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Three key words

Three key words appear throughout the above passage of text. They are believed (verb 6 times, faith noun 10 times), credited (10 times), and righteousness/righteous (11 times).

Believed/Faith

The verb (*peitho*) and its derived noun (*pistis*) are possibly the signature words of the Greek New Testament. The verb means to persuade or be persuaded, and the noun means faith, trust or certainty. From the noun in turn derives the equally important verb (*pisteuo*), meaning to have faith, that is, to behave as someone who has been persuaded into certainty. Biblical faith is a real and measurable mental capacity that, once acquired, changes someone to the core, and as fundamentally and wholesale as a caterpillar that changes into a butterfly (Romans 12:2). It can't be undone, revoked or forgotten; it can never go away. Someone who doesn't have it doesn't understand it.

Our English noun "faith" (from the Latin word *fides*, meaning trust or confidence) is in modern times almost wholly reserved for religious sentiments, and if it is used in a secular way it denotes the accepting of something for which no evidence exists. Hence we take something on faith, or have faith in something untried. In New Testament times there was no such thing as "faith" as we know it, and with the word (*pistis*) people referred to the mental substance that results from intelligent and reasonable inquiry or instruction; the mind's response to valuable information. It described sureness in every way.

Persuading was to the Greeks such a lofty pursuit that they venerated it as the goddess Peitho. Peitho in turn was thought to bring Eros to Venus, which prompted the Greek custom of having young Greek suitors demonstrate their potential prowess as a husband by persuading the father of the bride of this. In other words: of all the human qualities they could choose from, the Greeks had taken it upon themselves to artificially breed humanity's knack for persuasion. Why? Long before salesmen invented advertising, the act of persuasion represented everything that was good and brilliant about humanity. It meant a departure from coercion, from bulky hulks enforcing their will by bludgeoning it into the others. A genuinely persuasive man could prevent costly wars from ever starting, whilst having the same effect of peace and increased riches.

Persuasion requires explanation, which requires mental agility and a broad knowledge base. Persuasion required the development and veneration of logic thought. But most of all, persuasion requires an intimate knowledge of, and genuine respect for, the other guy. Persuasion requires agreement on both sides, and that's the key issue ([Abarim Publications](#)).

Of the six occasions in Romans 4 where 'believe' is mentioned, either the act of Abraham or the believing of those who follow in his footsteps, five are 'active', that is, the subject does the action. One reference, however, is passive which indicates that the subject receives the action instead of performs it. That one instance appears in verses 20-21:

*20 He was not made to waver (passive) at the promise of God to unbelief, but was intrinsically enabled (passive) to **faith** giving glory to God, 21 after **being fully persuaded** (passive) that which he has forcefully promised he is able to do.*

Clearly, Abraham's strong active believing was, firstly, a God-given enablement, which is consistent with this text: ...*Let not the strong man man boast in his strength...but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am Yahweh...*(Jeremiah 9:23).

Yes, that God-given enablement must have occurred on those numerous occasions when Abraham either saw or heard God and understood His commands and promises. Beginning with God's appearing to him in Mesopotamia (Acts 7:1-8), and those times in Canaan when God made Himself known to him (e.g. Genesis 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 22). Nevertheless, a God-given enablement must be activated by human beings, whether Abraham or his faithful followers.

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Credited

Credited (*logizomai*) from the familiar word *lógos*, which means reason, word, so *logizomai* refers to a process of careful reasoning, of calculation, deliberation, or estimation, whether applied to literal counting or to more abstract concepts like considering something's value or imputing a quality. *Logizomai* is also related to our English term logic, the method of valid thinking reveals how to draw proper conclusions from premises after weighing the options, after careful perusal of the facts. It is not a spur of the moment action. In secular Greek, it was sometimes used to describe mathematical or financial calculations – to “run the numbers,” hence [BDAG](#) calls *logizomai* an accounting term, a bookkeeping expression that means “to put on one's record” or “to credit to one's account”.

In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), the term often appears where individuals must treat a person or object as if it were something other than what it is. For example, when the Levites received tithes, they were not to treat them as tithes, but as their income and then pay a tithe to the Lord from what had been given to them (Numbers 18:25–32).

Accordingly, in Romans 4 *logizomai* means to credit to a person's account and consider that person according to what is credited to his or her account, not according to who they are, or what they have done. As David asserted that those whose lawlessness and sins (a failure to hit the bull's-eye) have been covered over, and are therefore, safe and secure, and those errors will not be put on their record or credited to their account (Romans 4:6-8).

[J. D. Grear](#) gives ‘the wild card’ as an analogy of being credited. A wild card is a playing card that can have any value, suit, colour, or other property in a game at the discretion of the player holding it. Another example is when a tennis player is given the opportunity to enter a tournament without qualifying or being ranked at a particular level. Such a player gets a wild card, that is, pass at the discretion of the tournament organisers because of who he is, not what he has achieved.

As we noted, ‘credited’ appears 10 times in Romans 4, and in each instance it is an act of God. Further, it was not only for David or Abraham, but for ‘our sake, to whom it will be credited, who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead’ (4:23-24).

Righteousness/justification

Righteousness along with steadfast love, and justice in the earth, are the things that the Lord delights in (Jeremiah 9:24). In Romans 4, righteousness is *dikaiosune*, and in 2 Corinthians 6:14, Paul places *dikaiosune* alongside lawlessness (*anomia*), when he asks, *what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness?* This demonstrates that *dikaiosune* means lawfulness. Also, we noted that David said that those whose lawlessness has been covered over are safe and secure, and that lawlessness will not be put on their record or credited to their account (Romans 4:6-8).

So, to repeat Paul, righteousness is lawfulness. Of the believer, God says, *their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more* (Hebrews 10:17, Jeremiah 31:34), and *Jesus Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all lawlessness* (Titus 2:13-14).

Of the unbelieving, John wrote *sin is lawlessness* (1 John 3:4), and the Lord will say *Go away from me, you who are working lawlessness* (Matthew 7:23). In Paul's day, *the hidden power of lawlessness was already at work, and then the lawless one will be revealed, and the arrival of the lawless one will be by Satan's working* (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

Finally, ‘righteousness’ or ‘justification (*dikaiosis*)’ in 4:25 occurs only twice in the NT, here and in (5:18). Mohrmann suggests that ‘righteous living’ is a better translation as the verse is a segue to the subject of sanctification, or righteous living in Romans 5 and subsequent chapters.

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Summary of Romans 4

Romans 4 is a sandwich (or a bracket, a fence, an envelope, a bookend) beginning with Abraham believing God, and it being credited to him as righteousness. Similarly, it ends with Abraham believing God, and it being credited to him as righteousness, and us also who have believed. This then is the theme of the chapter.

4. Conclusion

To paraphrase the quotations at the commencement we could say that to persuade people to change their attitudes, beliefs, values, or behaviors, we must be believable, credible, truthful, and make a logical argument. So, how would we assess the success of the persuading characters we met in the three texts of Luke 19, Acts 26, and Romans 4 - Abraham, David and Paul?

Certainly, each of these men were believable, credible, truthful, and made sound biblical arguments. Of course, it's impossible to be definitive. However, King Agrippa was only partly persuaded and undoubtedly, many have been persuaded by Paul's argument in Romans 4. Nevertheless, the text is silent about the five brothers of the rich man. And, therein lies a persuasive argument. Don't pin your eternal hopes on experiencing a spectacular miracle to convince you to change your mind. God has left a credible record of His amazing works, and nothing else will be provided.

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