

Let's Play a Game

An unfortunate trend in many churches today is that of moving away from sound biblical teaching to that of a more social environment. Though the scriptures are often presented, it's more in line with spiritual application other than dogma as to what the text is actually saying.

Because of the shallowness of such presentation of the scriptures, parishioners are often left confused over verses or topics left untouched. More disturbing is that of application of text that isn't actually applicable for today.

Fewer subjects are more important than that of salvation. Though Paul speaks of the simplicity that is in Christ, this topic often gets misconstrued... "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the **simplicity that is in Christ.**" **2Cor 11:3**

When given opportunity, there is a game that I play in calling attention to the need in rightly dividing the word truth, in presenting the gospel, for this age of grace in which we live... "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, ² If ye have heard of the **DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD which is given me to you-ward.**" **Eph 3:1-2**

In playing this game, I confess that there must first be an agreement as to what the fundamental elements of the gospel are... "Moreover, brethren, **I declare unto you the gospel** which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; ² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins** according to the scriptures; ⁴ And that **he was buried**, and that **he rose again the third day** according to the scriptures:" **1Cor 15:1-4**

The elements of Paul's gospel, declared to the Corinthians, are the death, burial & resurrection of Christ. This is validated, by Paul, in Romans 10.

Rom 10:8-10 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which **we preach**; ⁹ That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God **hath raised him from the dead**, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Before introducing you to the next step of this game, I'll call attention to something that's most often overlooked in Paul's statement to the Corinthians.

1Cor 15:1 Moreover, brethren, **I declare unto YOU the gospel WHICH I PREACHED unto YOU**, which also **YE have received**, and **wherein YE stand**;

We'll circle back to 1Corinthians 15:1 later...

Soon after receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal saviour and began teaching some 50 years ago, I had to start entertaining questions, not only from others, but of myself. One question in particular was... How did Old Testament saints get saved? One response was that theologians were still debating that? Another answer I was given and for a short time conveyed to others was... An O.T. saint got saved the same way as we do today. They simply looked forward to the cross, much the same as we look back to the cross. In other words, putting one's faith in the finished work of Christ.

HERESY!

Heresy, I say? Yep! Heresy!



Now comes the next roll of the dice. Replacing 2 words in Romans 10:8-10, in applying to an O.T. saint.

Rom 10:8-10 But what saith it? The word is nigh **thee**, *even* in **thy** mouth, and in **thy** heart: that is, **the word of faith, which we preach;** ⁹ **That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God **WILL RAISE** him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.** ¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

First, we're not playing the same game as Abraham did with the LORD in finding a certain number of righteous in determining Sodom & Gomorrah's fate. Giving the entire scope between Genesis 1 and Malachi 7, show just one, not two or three, but just one O.T. saint that received imputed righteousness confessing with their mouth the Lord Jesus, believing in their heart that God would raise him from the dead. **JUST ONE.**

Let it be **VERY CLEAR** as to what I'm **NOT** asking!

Acts 17:1-3 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: ² And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days **reasoned with them OUT OF THE SCRIPTURES,** ³ **Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead;** and that this **Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.**

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, whether those things were so.**

I'm not asking to be shown prophecy, references to, typology or symbolism of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are the very things Paul argued in proving just who Jesus was. I'm simply asking to be shown just one O.T. saint that was justified putting their faith in the sufferings & glory of Christ. Just one example.

1Pet 1:9-11 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls. ¹⁰ Of which salvation the **prophets have INQUIRED and SEARCHED DILIGENTLY,** who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: ¹¹ **SEARCHING WHAT, or WHAT MANNER OF TIME** the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when **it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.**

Being the nice guy that I am, in this next roll of the dice, I'm now including the Gospels. Yes, you read that right! Again, just show record of one person in Matthew, Mark, Luke or John justified or received imputed righteousness in confessing Christ, believing in His death, burial & resurrection.

Now, I'm going to quickly pop somebody's bubble and/or save another's time in searching.

John 20:8-9 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. ⁹ For as yet **THEY KNEW NOT THE SCRIPTURE, THAT HE MUST RISE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.**

Luke 24:44-47 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, **which were written in the LAW OF MOSES, and in the PROPHETS, and in the PSALMS, concerning me.** ⁴⁵ Then **OPENED HE THEIR UNDERSTANDING, that THEY MIGHT UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES,** ⁴⁶ And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved **Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:** ⁴⁷ And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Bible-sense tells us one of two things. If confessing Christ, in believing in His death, burial & resurrection, was essential for salvation, then either Jesus' disciples weren't saved or there was a different message at the time; a gospel was being preached... "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, **preaching the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD,** ¹⁵ And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the **KINGDOM OF GOD is at hand: repent ye, and BELIEVE THE GOSPEL."** Mark 1:14-15

There was rejoicing in the days of John the Baptist... "Blessed *be* the **Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and REDEEMED his people,** ⁶⁹ And **hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;** ⁷⁰ As **he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:** ⁷¹ That **we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;** ⁷² To **perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;"** Luke 1:68-72. However, Israel's idea of redemption was soon crushed... "But **WE** trusted that it had been **HE which should have REDEEMED ISRAEL:** and beside all this, **to day is the third day since these things were done."** Luke 24:21

Personal Experiences

Years ago, while visiting a local church in my area, the following verse was read when covering Romans chapter 2... "(For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, **but the doers of the law shall be justified."** Rom 2:13. From the response of the SS class, one would have sworn they never read that verse before! Where did that come from? Though just visiting, I began to offer an explanation, but not only was I immediately shut down, no explanation was offered to a supposed contradiction of theirs.

If memory serves me correctly, the very next Sunday a message was preached trying to prove that saints were saved by grace, through faith & without works under the Old Testament; same as today. An article was presented written by a popular author at the time, John R. Rice, who I heard preach many times.

I'm now going to link another experience in tying the two together in this conversation.

An obvious quick response to the question, how did an O.T. saint get saved, would be... 'By faith'; Hebrews 11. Okay? By faith in who or what? What exactly did that look like? This is my go-to question in determining one's ignorance of the scriptures! Around 11 years ago, I was sitting in an audience asking questions to a potential candidate for the pastoral role in that church. So, I asked that question. There was no spontaneous response. After a period of time contemplating, his answer wasn't, 'by faith', but referenced Ephesians 2:8-9. My spontaneous thought was... Really? That was unexpected!

In linking a correlation between these experiences, I'm contrasting examples demonstrating God's opposite means/methods of justification and/or imputed righteousness.

Noah By Faith	Converted Uncovenanted Gentiles/Heathen Through Faith
Gen 6:8-9 But Noah FOUND GRACE in the eyes of the LORD. ⁹ These <i>are</i> the generations of Noah: Noah was a JUST MAN and PERFECT in his generations, and Noah WALKED with God.	Eph 2:8-9 For BY GRACE are YE saved THROUGH FAITH ; and that not of YOURSELVES : <i>it is</i> the gift of God: ⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.
Gen 7:1 And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for THEE have I seen RIGHTEOUS before me in this generation.	Eph 2:1-3 And YOU <i>hath he quickened</i> , WHO were dead in trespasses and sins; ² Wherein in time past YE walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³ Among whom also WE all had OUR conversation in times past in the lusts of OUR flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
Heb 11:7 BY FAITH Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear , prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became HEIR of the RIGHTEOUSNESS which is BY FAITH .	

We're looking at opposites in a dispensational timeline as to how God dealt/deals with the imputation of righteousness! Noah found grace and his household survived an evil world because Noah was seen righteous before the LORD. The grace bestowed upon the heathen is a gift in spite of having walked in step with a present evil world. Noah ended up being heir of the righteousness which is 'by faith', until Paul's reveal of Gentiles becoming heir of righteousness 'through faith', by the faith 'of' Jesus Christ!

Gal 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the **HEATHEN THROUGH FAITH**, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Gal 3:22 But the scripture hath concluded **all** under sin, that the promise **by faith OF Jesus Christ** might be **given to them that believe**.

Gal 4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, **then an HEIR of God through Christ**.

It was Paul who was destined to these heathen/Gentiles... "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called **me by his grace**, ¹⁶ To **reveal his Son in me**, that **I might preach him among the HEATHEN**; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:" **Gal 1:15-16**

Why so Much Division

Christendom is divided into hundreds of denominations. Much of this divisiveness is based on man's individual interpretation of certain topics within the scriptures. Some disagreement is centered around verses or texts taken out of context. Much discrepancy is the mere fact of contradictions found within various Bible translations; a King James Bible is the sole use in all of my Bible studies.

Following are points that have been vehemently argued against me though are actually biblical true.

'What if's' for Consideration

What if the scriptures do display different methods of justification within the biblical timeline...

"Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision **BY faith, and uncircumcision **THROUGH** faith." Rom 3:30**

What if a man under law was actually justified by his faith... "Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: **but the JUST shall live by HIS faith.**" Hab 2:4 (Deut 6:24-25; Luke 1:5-6; Rom 10:4-5)

What if there was a faith to come... "But **before FAITH** came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the **FAITH** which should **AFTERWARDS** be revealed." Gal 3:23

What if Christ's crucifixion was a stumblingblock to all Jews that included Christ's disciples... "But we preach Christ crucified, **unto the JEWS a stumblingblock**, and unto the Greeks foolishness;" 1Cor 1:23

What if Paul actually got his gospel from Christ; not from the Apostles... "But I certify you, brethren, that the **gospel which was preached of me is not after man.** ¹² For I **neither received it of man, neither was I taught it**, but **by the revelation of Jesus Christ.**" Gal 1:11-12

What if there was privacy surrounding Paul's gospel... "And I **went up by revelation**, and communicated unto **them that gospel** which I **preach among the Gentiles, but PRIVATELY** to them **which were of reputation**, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain." Gal 2:2

Circling back to 1 Corinthians 15, what if certain elements of Paul's gospel was different from that of the Apostles' gospel... "Moreover, brethren, I **declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you**, which **also ye have received**, and **wherein ye stand**; ² **By which also ye are saved**, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. ³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" 1Cor 15:1-4 (a loaded question)

What if elements from one gospel would pervert elements of another... "I marvel that **ye** are so soon removed from him that called **you into the grace of Christ unto ANOTHER GOSPEL**: ⁷ **Which is not another**; but there be some that trouble you, and **would pervert the gospel of Christ.**" Gal 1:6-7

What if one's establishment is found in Paul's gospel... "Now to him that is of power to **stablish you according to MY GOSPEL**, and the **preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began**, ²⁶ **But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets**, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:" Rom 16:25-26

What if you had to explain John 3:16 without referencing Paul's teachings... "For God so loved the world, that **he gave his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

What if there is legitimacy to Paul's request of Timothy to rightly divide the word of truth... "Study to shew **thyself** approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**" 2Tim 2:15. After all, who would have best understood, in that... "**Him** would Paul have to go forth with **him**; and **took and circumcised him BECAUSE of the JEWS** which were in those quarters: for **THEY knew all that HIS father was a GREEK.**" Acts 16:3

Let's play a game. I have a question... How did an Old Testament saint get saved?