

Short Studies for the Skeptic Series – Part 4

The Gospel Under the Old Testament

Okay, so the word ‘gospel’ isn’t found in the Old Testament. I have a few ‘pet’ questions I like asking when engaged in conversations on similar themes being discussed in this series. One such question is... How was an O.T. saint saved (Deemed righteous & just in the sight of God)? The most common response is, ‘by faith’ followed by a blank stare. ‘By faith’, because of one’s familiarity with Hebrews 11, the Faith Chapter. A blank stare, because of being clueless of what exactly that encompasses. I once asked a preacher, who was a potential candidate for a church, that question. After a very long pause, unbelievably, he quoted Eph 2:8-9. From my experience, I’ve found that not many preachers can correctly answer that question either! How would your pastor respond?

If, as challenged in Part 1 of this series, that no O.T. saint had imputed righteousness confessing with their mouth the Lord Jesus, believing in their heart that God would raise Him from the dead, then how & when was righteousness imputed? What exactly was it to be ‘just’ in the sight of God... “An **unjust man** is an abomination to **the just**: and **he that is upright in the way** is abomination to **the wicked.**” **Prov 29:27**

The 'Gospel' Under Law (The Imputation of Righteousness)

Deut 6:1-6 Now these *are* the **commandments**, the **statutes**, and the **judgments**, which the **LORD your God** commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it: ² That **thou mightest fear the LORD thy God**, to **keep all his statutes** and **his commandments**, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. ³ Hear therefore, **O Israel**, and **observe to do it**; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the **LORD God of thy fathers** hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey. ⁴ Hear, **O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:** ⁵ And **thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.** ⁶ And **these words, which I command thee** this day, shall be in thine heart: **Deut 6:24-25** And the **LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always**, that he might preserve us alive, as *it is* at this day. ²⁵ And **it**

shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

Deut 30:10-15 If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. ¹¹ For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. ¹² It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? ¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? ¹⁴ But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. ¹⁵ See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

Confusion as to how an O.T. saint was ‘saved’ is in not understanding the trinity aspect of Justification ‘by faith’, under the O.T. There are 3 unbreakable components to justification/imputed righteousness under Law: Loving & fearing Israel’s God; the law itself and one’s faithful obedience to the law... “but the just shall live by his faith.” **Hab 2:4b**

Paul's Comparison of Imputed Righteousness Under Grace

Paul gives explicit contrast as to how righteousness was imputed under law in comparison to under this dispensation of grace. The imputation of righteousness which is ‘**of faith**’ is exactly **OPPOSITE** of that under law!

Rom 10:1-10 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to **God for Israel** is, that they might be saved. ² For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of **God's righteousness**, and going about to establish **their own righteousness**, have not submitted themselves unto the **righteousness of God**. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. ⁵ For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. ⁶ But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) ⁷ Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) ⁸ 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.

Simply explained: God was the **OBJECT** of righteousness under law. The **MEANS** of this righteousness were the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments. The **METHOD** of the imputation of this righteousness was by loving faithful obedience. In Contrast, God still being the **OBJECT** of righteousness under grace, the **MEANS** now is by the ‘faith of Christ’. The **METHOD** is ‘of faith’ which is by grace, through faith and without works (Eph 2:8-9). Under law, one **lived unto righteousness**. Under grace, one **believeth unto righteousness**; again, exactly **opposites!**

Earlier in Romans, Paul points out this contrast... **Rom 3:29-30** *Is he the God of the **Jews** only? is he not also of the **Gentiles**?* Yes, of the **Gentiles** also: ³⁰ Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the **circumcision by faith**, and **uncircumcision through faith**.

A verse follows, most often taken out of context, of Paul speaking here of current truth... **Gal 2:16** Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the **faith of Jesus Christ**, even **we have believed in Jesus Christ**, that **we might be justified by the faith of Christ**, and not by the works of the law: **for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**. Today, no man is justified by the works of the law. Even under law, if either triune element of loving God or faithful obedience were absent, there was no imputed righteousness.

How much clearer can it be made to the denier of there being a ‘work’ element to justification under law than... **Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth!**

Though the principal of justification ‘by faith’ was in place from the very beginning of creation, in Part 5 of this series, we’ll trace certain elements of the O.T. ‘gospel’ under law into the gospel of the kingdom.