

Ephesians 2:8-9 Commentary

PREVIOUS

EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH
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Ephesians 2:8 [For](#) by [grace](#) you [have been saved through faith](#); and that [not](#) of [yourselves](#), *it is* the [gift](#) of [God](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [te gar chariti este \(2PPAI\)](#) [sesosmenoi \(RPPMPN\)](#) [dia pisteos; kai touto ouk](#) ex [humon theou to doron:](#)

Amplified: For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God; ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: It was nothing you could or did achieve - it was God's gift to you. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: For by the grace have you been saved in time past completely, through faith, with the result that your salvation persists through present time; and this [salvation] is not from you as a source; of God it is the gift, not from a source of works, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

Young's Literal: for by grace ye are having been saved, through faith, and this not of you -- of God the gift,

FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH: [te gar chariti este \(2PPAI\)](#) [sesosmenoi \(RPPMPN\)](#) [dia pisteos:](#)

- Eph 2:5; Ro 3:24; 2Th 1:9
- Mk 16:16; Lk 7:50; Jn 3:14, 15, 16, 17, 18,36; 5:24; 6:27, 28, 29,35,40; Acts 13:39; Acts 15:7, 8, 9; 16:31; Ro 3:22, 23, 24, 25, 26; 4:5,16; 10:9,10; Ga 3:14,22; 1Jn 5:10, 11, 12
- [Ephesians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 2:8,9 Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ - Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10 Exchanging Living Death for Dying Life](#) - John MacArthur

SOLA GRATIA SOLA FIDE

The reformers' watchwords were [Sola Gratia](#) and [Sola Fide](#).

For by grace - Literally "by the grace". The conjunction "for" (gar) is a **term of explanation** which always calls for us to pause and ponder! As you develop this discipline, you will be amazed at the enhanced spiritual insights the Spirit will enable you to glean from God's Word! Paul now explains God's gracious salvation, specifically that this so great a salvation is derived from God's grace and not in any way emanate from human efforts.

Salmund notes that Paul is saying "by this grace, the grace already mentioned. Grace is the explanation of their own salvation, and how surpassingly rich the grace must be that could effect that!" (Ephesians 2:8-10 Commentary - Expositor's Greek Testament)

Spurgeon - We have this expression, "**by grace are ye saved,**" twice over in this chapter. Paul knew that he needed to repeat himself, or people would forget what he taught. At bottom, all the wanderings from the faith at the present day amount to this, salvation by works instead of salvation by grace. The battle of the Reformation has to be fought over again. Men are justified by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. All the enmity of natural men is against that truth. They want to be saved by their own morality, and all sorts of things that they put instead of salvation by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. **And that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.** "Oh!" said one to me just now, "the man who is saved by his own righteousness cannot do much in the line of praising." "No, my dear brother," I replied, "except he praises himself; and he can generally do that pretty well." Your self-made man usually worships his creator very earnestly; and your self-saved man glorifies him that saved him. ([Exposition](#))

Grace (5485)(charis) is God's generous favor to undeserving sinners and needy saints. Grace is God's free and undeserved bounty. Grace shocks us in what it offers (or at least it should "shock us" when we come to realize the importance of grace in our lives). The grace of God is the expression of God's goodness toward the undeserving. In salvation, men who **deserve hell obtain heaven** because of grace that flows from the Cross (1Co 1:18). This provision of heaven instead of hell cannot be explained apart from **free**, albeit **costly** grace. Grace is a gift that costs everything to the Giver and nothing to the receiver (Amazing Grace!) It is given to those who don't deserve it, barely recognize it, and hardly appreciate it. Paul is teaching in this passage that every conversion is a living supernatural example of God's supernatural grace! Hallelujah!

Blaise Pascal will put it in proper context

To make a man a saint, grace is absolutely necessary and whoever doubts it, does not know what a saint is or what a man is.

And it is important to understand that men in both the Old and New Testaments have always been saved the same way, by grace through faith. God does not have two ways of saving sinners, one by keeping the law and the other by grace, but always and ever by amazing grace that saved a wretch like me. The first mention of "grace" is found in Genesis where Moses records that

Noah found **favor** (grace = charis in the LXX) in the eyes of the LORD. (Genesis 6:8)

The writer of Hebrews adds the details regarding Noah's salvation writing that...

By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the **righteousness** (when one is justified by faith in the NT they are declared righteous, Christ's righteousness being imputed or placed on their "spiritual account") which is according to faith. (see **note** Hebrews 11:7)

Writing of the salvation of Abraham Moses says that...

Abraham **believed** (Heb = **aman** to be firm, speaks of stability and confidence, signifies receiving something as true and sure [See study of related word **amen**]; Lxx = pisteuo) God and it was reckoned (Heb = chashab = impute, consider, an accounting term, almost parallel to a bookkeeping transfer of an eligible item from one column to another as in Lv 25:27, 50, 52, 27:18; logizomai = placed on his spiritual account so to speak) to him as **righteousness** (Genesis 15:6)

Grace is the ultimate ground of salvation, Paul recording that God "saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and **grace** which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (see **note** 2 Timothy 1:9)

Here we see a clear distinction between **God's grace** and **man's works**. All of this **grace** was given to us in Jesus Christ. We could not earn it; we did not merit it. This is the **grace of God!**

The **grace of God** is undeserved, unsought, and unbought (except that it is made available by the precious blood of the Lamb of God, Acts 20:28, Re 5:9-[note](#); 1Pe 1:18, 19 - 1 Peter 1:18). The infinitely high price of redemption was paid for by **the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor (His incarnation), that you through His poverty might become rich (spiritual riches that Jesus gives to all who place their trust in Him - cp Col 2:3-note). (2 Cor 8:9)

So the riches of our salvation (calling, election, justification, sanctification, glorification-see Three Tenses of Salvation) were all made possible by the "impoverishment" of Christ Who became a Man, suffered and died a cruel death on the cross so that grace could be lavished upon (Eph 1:7,8-note) those who were separated from God by their sin (cp Isa 59:2, Pr 15:29). When we realize what it cost God to express **grace**, it helps us realize the extreme wickedness of our sin and the undeserving state of all mankind (Ro 5:12-note). What an amazing divine paradox -- grace was immeasurably costly for God to express and yet is unconditionally free to all men. **Grace** is God's favor freely offered but expensively expressed!

Grace starts with God, continues with God, and ends with God. Anything we do is in response to what God has first done for us. It follows that even after salvation by grace through faith, we remain forever debtors to and dependent upon God's all sufficient grace (cp 2Co 9:8, 2Cor 12:9-note).

Many people fear teaching sinners about God's grace because they think it leads to a "who cares" attitude. "I'm saved and forgiven so now I can live it up like the people of the world." (cp Jude 1:4) But anyone who turns God's grace into an excuse to justify their sinful lifestyle shows they have never understood God's grace in the first place. God's grace saves us and liberates us from the power of sin, so that out of love we seek to obey, and that too, even enabled by grace.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon - "Because God is gracious, therefore sinful men are forgiven, converted, purified and saved. It is not because of anything in them, or that ever can be in them, that they are saved; but because of the boundless love, goodness, pity, compassion, mercy and grace of God." (from "All of Grace")

Wuest describes "**grace**" - "In its use among the pagan Greeks it referred to a favor done by one Greek to another out of the pure generosity of his heart, and with no hope of reward. When it is used in the New Testament, it refers to that favor which God did at Calvary when He stepped down from His judgment throne to take upon Himself the guilt and penalty of human sin. In the case of the Greek, the favor was done to a friend, never an enemy. In the case of God it was an enemy, the sinner, bitter in his hatred of God, for whom the favor was done. God has no strings tied to the salvation He procured for man at the Cross. Salvation is given the believing sinner out of the pure generosity of God's heart. The Greek word referred to an action that was beyond the ordinary course

of what might be expected, and was therefore commendable. What a description of that which took place at the Cross! ([Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#))

The Power of Grace - Lord Kenneth Clark, internationally known for his television series *Civilization*, lived and died without faith in Jesus Christ. He admitted in his autobiography that while visiting a beautiful church he had what he believed to be an overwhelming religious experience. "My whole being," Clark wrote, "was irradiated by a kind of heavenly joy far more intense than anything I had known before." But the "gloom of grace," as he described it, created a problem. If he allowed himself to be influenced by it, he knew he would have to change, his family might think he had lost his mind, and maybe that intense joy would prove to be an illusion. So he concluded, "I was too deeply embedded in the world to change course." (*Our Daily Bread*, February 15, 1994)

Vance Havner once said that someone spelled out "grace" as...

G stands for **G**ift, the principle of grace.

R [stands] for **R**edemption, the purpose of grace.

A [stands] for **A**ccess, the privilege of grace.

C [stands] for **C**haracter, the product of grace.

E [stands] for **E**ternal Life, the prospect of grace.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [What is the definition of grace?](#)
- [What does it mean to be saved by grace?](#)
- [What is cheap grace?](#)
- [What does it mean that salvation is by grace through faith?](#)
- [What does it mean to grow in grace?](#)

Have been saved (4982) (**sozo** [word study]) conveys the basic meaning of rescuing someone who is in great peril or danger. Other nuances of **sozo** include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole.

Sozo is in the **perfect tense** (Eph 2:5-note) which underscores the **permanence** of our salvation (once **truly** saved, **always** totally saved) and thus serving as another small but definite marker of the believer's **eternal security in Christ** (cp Jn 10:27, 28, 29). If you are struggling with whether or not you can lose your salvation, then study Paul's letter to the Ephesians and meditate on the truths that firmly nail down the doctrine of the believer's **eternal security in Christ**. This truth can set you free so that you are free indeed (Jn 8:36). Remember that the perfect tense conveys the continuing results of being saved!

The **Believer's Study Bible** writes that...

The full sense of the expression "**you have been saved**" is difficult to capture in English. The Greek **perfect tense** emphasizes action initiated in the past, the effects of which continue into the present and beyond. Therefore, salvation has a moment of initiation in the past, but the results of that primary experience continue (**Ed**: See **Three Tenses of Salvation**). This is another evidence of the permanence of our salvation, a doctrine which is called the "eternal security of the believer." ([Criswell, W. A. *Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version*. 1991. Thomas Nelson](#))

Commenting on the significance of the tense of the two verbs "**been**" (**present tense**) and "**saved**" (**perfect tense**) **Kenneth Wuest** writes...

Not content with the details offered by the perfect tense, Paul uses a periphrastic construction (**Ed note**: a periphrasis is the use of a longer phrasing in place of a possible shorter form of expression = a roundabout way of expressing something. In Greek it specifically means the use of a verb in any tense but aorist in combination with the verb *eimi* = to be as the auxiliary verb) consisting of the participle in the perfect tense and the verb of being in the present tense. The perfect tense speaks of the existence of finished results in present time, whereas Paul wanted to express persistence of finished results through present time. So he borrows the durative aspect of the present tense verb to give persistence to the existing results. The Expanded Translation reads: "*By the grace have you been saved completely with the result that you are in a state of salvation which persists through present time.*" Present time in this instance is always the time at which the reader reads his statement. The security of the believer could not have been expressed in stronger terms. ([Wuest, Kenneth - *The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament - Part II: The Eloquence of Greek Tenses and Moods - Bibliotheca Sacra: Volume 117. Page 142*](#))

Most NT uses of **sozo** refer to **salvation** in a spiritual sense as illustrated in the following passages:

Matthew recorded the angel's conversation with Joseph declaring

She (Mary) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will **save** (sozo) His people from their sins. (Mt 1:21+)

Here **sozo** is equated with deliverance from sins (guilt and power of) with Jesus' name being a transliteration of Joshua meaning "Jehovah is salvation".

Jesus warned His disciples

And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be **saved** (sozo). (Mt 10:22+, cf Mt 24:13)

Comment: Note it is not one's endurance [self effort or works] that saves. That person's endurance is the effect not the cause of salvation, so that genuine salvation enables one to endure.

Jesus was teaching His disciples about salvation and declared

"it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be **saved**?" (Mt 19:24, 25)

Comment: Here He equated entrance into the kingdom of God with being saved.

In explaining to His disciples and the multitudes what it meant to come after Him, denying self, taking up one's cross and following Him, Jesus declared that

"whoever wishes to **save** (referring to one's physical life) his life shall lose it (eternally); but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall **save** (spiritually) it (eternally)." (Mk 8:34+)

Jesus speaking to a

"woman in the city who was a sinner" (Lk 7:37+) "said to her ""Your sins have been forgiven" (Lk 7:48) and then

"Your faith has **saved** (sozo) you; go in peace." (Lk 7:50+).

In these passages Jesus equates **sozo** with forgiveness of sins, confession of faith and experiencing peace!

In a parable explaining the role of the Word of God and the character of the "soil" in salvation, Jesus taught that

those (people) beside the road are those who have heard (the seed, the Word, the Gospel); then the devil comes (Mark's gospel adds "immediately", "at once") and takes away (present tense - continually) the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be **saved**." (Lk 8:12+)

Observe that one cannot be saved unless he believes the word and that merely hearing (and even assenting to the veracity) of the word does not result in salvation.

Jesus addressing the repentant **Zaccheus** declaring for all to hear

Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham (who by faith was reckoned righteousness Ge 15:6). For the Son of Man has come to seek and to **save** that which was **lost** (this word speaks not of annihilation as some falsely teach but of eternal ruin, destitution and spiritual death)." (Lk 19:9, 10+)

Jesus taught that

God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be **saved** through Him." (Jn 3:17)

Comment: One is saved (only) by entering "through Christ" as He amplified later explaining "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be **saved**, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (Jn 10:10)

Peter explained to his Jewish audience how one could avoid the terrifying and dreadful **Day of the LORD's** wrath, quoting Joel 2:32 and declaring

"that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be **saved**." (Acts 2:21+)

Peter later made it very clear that

"there is salvation in no (absolute negative - no exception clauses) one else; for there is no other name (Jesus) under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be **saved**." (Acts 4:12+)

The Philippian jailer summed up spiritual salvation asking Paul and Silas

"Sirs, what must I do to be **saved**?" And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be **saved**, you and your household." (Acts 16:31).

ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD THROUGH FAITH

Through ([1223](#)) (**dia**) in is a preposition which serves as marker by which something is accomplished. Paul is describing the instrumentality of our faith. The idea is "by means of" faith. **Faith** is the "channel" through which salvation flows to sinners. It is the instrument or means.

Harold Hoehner - Whereas **grace** is the objective cause or basis of salvation, **through faith** is the subjective means by which one is saved. This is important, for the salvation that was purchased by Christ's death is universal in its provision, but it is not universal in its application. One is not automatically saved because Christ died, but one is saved when one puts trust in God's gracious provision. Calvin states that a person must receive by faith the salvation offered to him or her by the hand of God. A good illustration of this is the life of Abraham whereby his faith (*e pistis autos*) was reckoned for righteousness (Ro 4:5-note). Notice, it was Abraham's own (*autou*) faith that gave him a right standing. However, faith is never thought of as a work, for the preceding verse (Ro 4:4-note) explicitly states that if a righteous stand before God were obtained by works, it would not be according to grace but according to obligation. Ro 4:5-note continues by saying that it is to those who do not work but believe in the one who justifies the ungodly that their faith reckons to them a right standing. This is confirmed in the present context in Ephesians, for following the above statement Paul reinforces the idea that this salvation was not by means of any kind of works done by humans but solely **by faith**." ([Ephesians- An Exegetical Commentary](#))

D F Salmond adds that...

Paul never says *dia ten pistis*, as if the faith were the ground or procuring cause of the salvation. It is the grace (*chariti*), too, not the explanatory faith (*pisteos*) that has the first place in Paul's thoughts here" ([Ephesians 2:8-10 Commentary - Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Augustine put the meaning of man's need to express faith this way...

"He who created you without you will not save you without you."

Comment: Dr Johnson explains that "what he meant in the context was that our part in salvation, which is not to be confused by being made of works, is simply to receive the salvation by faith. We do believe, God doesn't believe. We believe. But that response, Augustine goes on to say, is something created in us by God. We do believe. By grace are ye saved through the instrumentality of faith. - [His Power, Our Salvation](#)

Wuest notes that...The words, "**through faith**" speak of the instrument or means whereby the sinner avails himself of this salvation which God offers him in pure grace. Expositors says: "Paul never says 'through the faith,' as if the faith were the ground or procuring cause of the salvation." Alford says: "It (the salvation) has been effected by grace and apprehended by faith." ([Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#))

Through (by) **faith** (**dia pistis**) = the means of faith, here signifying the subjective means by which one is saved - This phrase is used 17x in the NT (this makes an interesting study) - Ro 3:22; Ro 3:25, Ro 3:30-31, 2Cor 5:7; Gal 2:16; Gal 3:14, Gal 3:26, Eph 2:8; Eph 3:12, Eph 3:17, Phil 3:9; Col 2:12, 2Ti 3:15; Heb 6:12; 11:33; 1Pet 1:5. Apart from believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there can be no saving faith (cf Ro 10:13-17).

Grace is mentioned first in the Greek for emphasis.

Faith ([4102](#)) (**pistis** [**word study**]) is synonymous with trust, confidence or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. Note that **faith** per se is not viewed as a positive "work" or accomplishment of the believing sinner. Of the 243 NT uses of *pistis*, 142 are by the Apostle Paul, with 8 uses in Ephesians (Eph 1:15; 2:8; 3:12, 17; 4:5, 13; 6:16, 23). A simple illustration of the meaning of *pistis* is to consider a chair in which one sits. We trust in the chair for support

because it is trustworthy, and so we sit in the chair. Even as our sitting is dynamic, not static, so to our faith is dynamic not static. We continually trust in God's gracious salvation, daily (even moment by moment) relying on what God accomplished in His Son on the Cross 2000 years ago. Why? Because God is reliable (trustworthy). We do not work to support ourselves in the chair, and similarly we do not work to obtain salvation initially or daily!

Are you saved and yet find yourself spiritually exhausted and/or frustrated? Perhaps you have fallen into the subtle trap of working for your daily salvation. You know you could not have saved yourself initially, but somehow you have slowly succumbed to the legalistic tendency that you have to DO something in order to merit God's saving grace today. If this describes your Christian life to any degree, then pause and ponder the precious words of Jesus' in Mt 11:28-30-note.

Here is a very interesting line from the Statement of Faith at a Christian College...

We believe that salvation is by grace—plus nothing and minus nothing.

Thomas Chalmers said it this way...

Faith is like the hand of the beggar that takes the gift while adding nothing to it.

Someone has offered the following acrostic defining **faith** as...

Forsaking
All
I
Take
Him

Here are some variations of this acrostic -

- For All I Take Him.
- For All I Trust Him.
- For All I Thank Him.
- For All My Need I Trust Him.

It's humbling to admit that we can do **nothing** to **earn** our deliverance from the domination by sin. But anytime we add anything to grace, we subtract from its meaning. Grace must be free or else it is not grace at all. Free grace? Of course. What other kind could there be? As someone has well said "*Faith is to the soul what a mainspring is to a watch*"

What is faith? Is faith a "work" we do? John MacArthur addresses this question asking "**is faith a work?** Is faith something I exercised, and therefore apprehended salvation? No, because we just read, "**Not** of yourselves," Eph 2:8; "**not**...of works," Eph 2:9. So whatever **faith** is, it isn't from you (**ED: THAT IS, IT IS NOT SELF-INITIATED**), and it isn't your works. Maybe a good way to illustrate what faith is: You're breathing right now, but you're not thinking about it. It would make life very difficult if we had to remember to take a breath. But we don't because there's air pressure exerted on our lungs that causes us reflexively to breathe. And as a believer, faith is the breathing that comes under the pressure of sovereign, saving grace. Breathing is not something we do on our own, it's something **grace produces in us.**"

MacArthur's explanation immediately brings to mind Paul's words in 1 Corinthians where he explains **'by His doing** you are **in Christ Jesus**, Who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that (PURPOSE), just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD." Let it ring out to the highest heavens beloved of God in Christ through the Spirit...

I will not boast in anything
No gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ
His death and resurrection
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart
His wounds have paid my ransom

Play and praise Him - [How Deep the Father's Love](#)

Jerry Bridges has a similar "definition" which describes faith as...

both a **renunciation** and a **reliance**. First, we must renounce any trust in our own performance as the basis of our acceptance before God. We trust in our own performance when we believe we've earned God's acceptance by our good works. But we also trust in our own performance when we believe we've lost God's acceptance by our bad works—by our sin. So we must renounce any consideration of either our bad works or our good works as the means of relating to God. Second, we must place our reliance entirely on the perfect obedience and sin-bearing death of Christ as the sole basis of our standing before God—on our best days as well as our worst. (The Bookends of the Christian Life)

As **faith** relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way, eternal salvation comes **only** through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way.

Luther on faith

God creates faith in the human heart the same way that He created the world. He found nothing and created something.

Be careful to distinction several common misunderstandings concerning faith. **Faith** is not a subjective feeling. True feelings may be emoted in genuine faith, but not all emotions certify the presence of saving faith. Biblical faith is not credulity or the attitude that accepts something as true apart from evidence simply because one wishes it to be true. Biblical faith is not a positive mental attitude the result of which the thing believed is supposed to happen. This false (non-saving) faith was popularized by Norman Vincent Peale in a book entitled "The Power of Positive Thinking". John Stott has analyzed Peale's approach and sums it up as just another word for "self-confidence".

S Lewis Johnson writes that to...

Believe is our responsibility. There is human responsibility. We are responsible to believe. And even though that is the gift of God we are responsible to believe. And so I call upon you, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved if you are not. ([Ephesians 2:1-10 His Power and Our Salvation](#))

The Protestant Reformers emphasized that genuine faith works declaring...

Sola fide justificat sed non fides qua est sola

"Faith alone justifies but not the faith which is alone"

True faith will issue in good works. Now not necessarily seen by you or me, but there must be good works.

Constable explains "**by faith**" writing that...

The instrument by which we receive salvation is faith (i.e., trust in Christ). Faith is not an act or work that earns merit with God that He rewards with salvation. When a person puts out his hand to take a gift that someone else offers, he or she is doing nothing to merit that gift. The giver gets credit for the gift, not the receiver. Likewise faith is not a meritorious work. ([Ephesians Expository Notes](#))

Wayne Grudem defines **faith** that saves one's soul...

Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. This definition emphasizes that saving faith is not just a belief in facts but personal trust in Jesus to save me... Because saving faith in Scripture involves this personal trust, the word "trust" is a better word to use in contemporary culture than the word "faith" or "belief." The reason is that we can "believe" something to be true with no personal commitment or dependence involved in it...

Scripture never says that we are justified because of the inherent goodness of our faith, as if our faith has merit before God. It never allows us to think that our faith in itself earns favor with God. Rather, Scripture says that we are justified "by means of" our faith, understanding faith to be the instrument through which justification is given to us, but not at all an activity that earns us merit or favor with God. Rather, we are justified solely because of the merits of Christ's work (Ro 5:17, 18, 19).([Grudem, W. A. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine Zondervan](#)) (Bolding added)

Wuest explains that...

When (**pistis** and related the related verb **pisteuo**) refer to the faith which a lost sinner must place in the Lord Jesus in order to be saved, they include the following ideas:

the act of considering the Lord Jesus worthy of trust as to His character and motives

the act of placing confidence in His ability to do just what He says He will do

the act of entrusting the salvation of his soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus

the act of committing the work of saving his soul to the care of the Lord.

This means a definite taking of one's self out of one's own keeping and entrusting one's self into the keeping of the Lord Jesus. ([Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#))

William Barclay notes that...

Faith begins with receptivity. It begins when a man is at least willing to listen to the message of the truth. It goes on to mental assent. A man first hears and then agrees that this is true. But mental assent need not issue in action. Many a man knows very well that something is true, but does not change his actions to meet that knowledge. The final stage is when this mental assent becomes total surrender. In full-fledged faith, a man hears the Christian message, agrees that it is true, and then casts himself upon it in a life of total yieldedness. ([Barclay, W.: The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press](#))

Charles Swindoll explains genuine belief writing...

My favorite illustration of what it means to believe is the true story of Ann Seward, a resident of Portland, Oregon. She was asked to costar with high-wire artist Philippe Petit at the opening of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts. Intrigued by the opportunity, she responded, "I'd like to meet this man and see if I trust him." Her stage would be on an eighty-foot wire between the new theater building and the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. On August 31, 1987, the ninety-one-pound Seward placed her life in the hands of the high-wire artist and was carried on his back while he performed high above the street. (from Chris Myers, "*Chance Encounter Led to a Truly High Time*," *Oregonian*, 3 September 1987) She said that her performance had a lesson for those who witnessed it. "I think that one of the most beautiful things about the performance was that it took a lot of trust—absolute trust—to do that," she said. "I think in the world that is a very profound issue... Here it is—I'm putting my life in someone else's hands and trusting the whole crowd not to do anything to distract him."

Many of those who witnessed the performance "**believed**" that Petit could successfully complete the performance with someone on his back. But their **belief** was merely **intellectual** and did not feature the **absolute trust** and **total commitment** exhibited by Ann Seward. She expressed her belief by placing her very life in the hands of the artist. This is the kind of "belief" referred to in the words of Paul, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). This belief is not merely head knowledge; it is the response of a heart to the person of Christ saying, "I trust Your redeeming work to deliver me from sin and carry me safely to heaven." ([Swindoll, C. R., & Zuck, R. B. Understanding Christian Theology.: Thomas Nelson Publishers](#)) (Bolding added)

Faith is relying on what God has done rather than on one's own efforts. In the Old Testament, faith is rarely mentioned. The word **trust** is used frequently, and verbs like **believe** and **rely** are used to express the right attitude to God. The classic example is Abraham, whose **faith** was reckoned as righteousness (Ge 15:6). At the heart of the Christian message is the story of the cross: Christ's dying to bring salvation. **Faith** is an attitude of trust in which a believer receives God's good gift of salvation (Acts 16:30,31) and lives in that awareness thereafter (Ga 2:20-note; cf. Heb 11:1-note).

Faith, like grace, is not static. Saving faith is more than just understanding the facts and mentally acquiescing. It is inseparable from repentance, surrender, and a supernatural longing to obey. None of those responses can be classified exclusively as a human work, any more than believing itself is solely a human effort.

Faith is manifest by not believing in spite of evidence but by obeying in spite of the consequences. John uses the related verb *pisteuo* to demonstrate the relationship between genuine faith and obedience writing...

"He who **believes** (present tense = continuous) in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36)

Charles Swindoll commenting on the relationship between faith and obedience in **John 3:36** concludes that...

In John 3:36 the one who "believes in the Son has eternal life" as a present possession. But the one who "does not obey the Son shall not see life." To **disbelieve** Christ is to **disobey** Him. And logically, to **believe** in Christ is to **obey** Him. As I have noted elsewhere,

“This verse clearly indicates that **belief** is not a matter of passive opinion, but decisive and obedient action.” (quoting J. Carl Laney)...

Tragically many people are convinced that it doesn't really matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere. This reminds me of a Peanuts cartoon in which Charlie Brown is returning from a disastrous baseball game. The caption read,

“174 to nothing! How could we lose when we were so sincere?”

The reality is, Charlie Brown, that it takes more than sincerity to win the game of life. Many people are sincere about their beliefs, but they are sincerely wrong!” ([Swindoll, C. R., & Zuck, R. B. Understanding Christian Theology.: Thomas Nelson Publishers](#)) (Bolding added)

A W Tozer would agree having stated that...

True faith commits us to obedience.

When missionary [John Paton](#) was translating the Scripture for the South Sea islanders, he was unable to find a word in their vocabulary for the concept of believing, trusting, or having faith. He had no idea how he would convey that to them. One day while he was in his hut translating, a native came running up the stairs into Paton's study and flopped in a chair, exhausted. He said to Paton,

“It's so good to rest my whole weight in this chair.”

John Paton had his word: **Faith** is resting your whole weight on God. That word went into the translation of their New Testament and helped bring that civilization of natives to Christ. Believing is putting your whole weight on God. If God said it, then it's true, and we're to believe it.

*Nothing before, nothing behind,
The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath -- Whittier*

ILLUSTRATIONS

Salvation - In 1981, a Minnesota radio station reported a story about a stolen car in California. Police were staging an intense search for the vehicle and the driver, even to the point of placing announcements on local radio stations to contact the thief. On the front seat of the stolen car sat a box of crackers that, unknown to the thief, were laced with poison. The car owner had intended to use the crackers as rat bait. Now the police and the owner of the VW Bug were more interested in apprehending the thief to save his life than to recover the car. So often when we run from God, we feel it is to escape his punishment. But what we are actually doing is eluding His rescue.

Faith in the Right Source - In April 1988 the evening news reported on a photographer who was a skydiver. He had jumped from a plane along with numerous other skydivers and filmed the group as they fell and opened their parachutes. On the film shown on the telecast, as the final skydiver opened his chute, the picture went berserk. The announcer reported that the cameraman had fallen to his death, having jumped out of the plane without his parachute. It wasn't until he reached for the absent ripcord that he realized he was freefalling without a parachute. Until that point, the jump probably seemed exciting and fun. But tragically, he had acted with thoughtless haste and deadly foolishness. Nothing could save him, for his faith was in a parachute never buckled on. Faith in anything but an all-sufficient God can be just as tragic spiritually. Only with faith in Jesus Christ dare we step into the dangerous excitement of life.

Saved Through Faith - Back in 1830 George Wilson was convicted of robbing the U.S. Mail and was sentenced to be hanged. President Andrew Jackson issued a pardon for Wilson, but he refused to accept it. The matter went to Chief Justice Marshall, who concluded that Wilson would have to be executed. "A pardon is a slip of paper," wrote Marshall, "the value of which is determined by the acceptance of the person to be pardoned. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged." For some, the pardon comes too late. For others, the pardon is not accepted.

Jim Peterson (in Living Proof, NavPress, 1989, p. 170) illustrates faith that saves ones soul noting that...

Three elements of personality are involved in making a decision to become a Christian, or in making any

significant decision for that matter. They are the emotions, the intellect, and the will.

For example, a young man meets a young woman. They are immediately attracted to one another. They both say to themselves, "Now there is someone I'd like to marry." At that point, if the emotions had their way, there would be a wedding. But the intellect intervenes, questioning the impulsive emotional response. Would we be compatible? What is she really like? Can I afford to support her? Both conclude it would be better to take some more time and answer a few questions before they proceed. So the two begin spending more time with each other. He eventually concludes that she is as beautiful on the inside as she is on the outside. Now his intellect has sided with the emotions on the idea of marriage.

But the final and heaviest vote remains to be cast -- that of the will. It stops the march toward the altar with the questions, "Am I willing to give up this lifestyle for another? What about my freedom -- is it worth the trade? Am I willing to assume the added responsibility?" The marriage will occur only when the will finally agrees with the emotions and the intellect. And so it is in coming to Christ.

RELATED RESOURCES: (Most are from the excellent recommended resource Gotquestions.org)

- [What does it mean that salvation is by grace through faith?](#)
- [How can you believe in salvation by faith alone when the only occurrence of 'faith alone' in the Bible \(James 2:24\) says that salvation is not by faith alone?](#)
- [What is the relationship of faith, works, and security in salvation?](#)
- [How can salvation be not of works when faith is required? Isn't believing a work?](#)
- [Is salvation by faith alone, or by faith plus works?](#)
- [What is lordship salvation?](#)
- [Why is faith without works dead?](#)
- [What was the Old Testament way of salvation?](#)
- [Questions about Salvation](#)
- [What is progressive revelation as it relates to salvation?](#) (See also progressive sanctification)

AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD: kai touto ouk ex humon theou to doron

- Ep 2:10; 1:19; Matthew 16:17; John 1:12,13; 6:37,44,65; Acts 14:27; 16:14; Romans 10:14,17; Philippians 1:29; Colossians 2:12; James 1:16, 17, 18
- [Ephesians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 2:8.9 Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ - Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10 Exchanging Living Death for Dying Life](#) - John MacArthur

SALVATION IS GIFT FROM GOD

That ([5124](#)) (**touto**) refers not to grace or to faith but to the act of being saved. It is not of ourselves but is a gift from God. Here Paul counters the argument of so many who persist in thinking that salvation is God's response to something in us.

"Not" (ouk) signifies absolute negation and definitively excludes human merit in the process of salvation. Salvation is **not** in any sense God's response to anything in us. It is **not** something that we in any sense deserve or merit. We were sons of disobedience and by nature children fully deserving of God's wrath and **not** His salvation. And yet He gives us salvation, epitomizing the essence of grace, unmerited favor.

Wayne Grudem explains it this way...

The word translated "this" (**Ed note: "that"** in the NASB) is the neuter pronoun touto (from tautos [5124](#)) which refers not to "faith" or to "grace" specifically in the previous clause (for they are both feminine nouns in Greek, and would require feminine pronouns), but to the entire idea expressed in the preceding phrase, the idea that you have been saved by grace through faith. ([Grudem, W: Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. IVP: Zondervan, 1994](#))

John MacArthur agrees writing that the word...

“**That**” refers to the entire previous statement of salvation, not only the grace but the faith. Although men are required to believe for salvation, even that faith is part of the gift of God which saves and cannot be exercised by one’s own power. God’s grace is preeminent in every aspect of salvation (cf. Ro 3:20-note; Gal 2:16). ([MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word Pub](#))

Harold W. Hoehner in the **Bible Knowledge Commentary** writes that...

Much debate has centered around the demonstrative pronoun “this” (touto). Though some think it refers back to “grace” and others to “faith,” neither of these suggestions is really valid because the demonstrative pronoun is neuter whereas “grace” and “faith” are feminine. Also, to refer back to either of these words specifically seems to be redundant. Rather the neuter touto, as is common, refers to the preceding phrase or clause. (In Ep 1:15-note and Ep 3:1-note *touto*, “this,” refers back to the preceding section.) Thus it refers back to the concept of salvation (Eph 2:4, 5, 6, 7, 8a), whose basis is grace and means is faith. This salvation does not have its source in man (it is “not from yourselves”), but rather, its source is God’s grace for “it is the gift of God.” ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#))

It is interesting to read the thoughts of an excellent expositor **James Montgomery Boice** who experienced a change in thinking on his approach to this verse. He writes...

In speaking on this text I have sometimes referred to the previous phrase in verse 8 (“and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”) as referring to faith, teaching that even faith is God’s gift. This is probably not what Paul had in mind, because “faith” (pistis) is feminine, and “this” (touto) is neuter. The statements in verse 8 probably refer to the whole of the previous sentence, teaching that the salvation which is ours through faith is not of ourselves but rather is God’s gift. ([Boice, J. M.: Ephesians: An Expository Commentary](#))

The **KJV Bible Commentary** writes that...

The grammatical gender of the word “**that**,” occurring in the expression that not of yourselves, is neuter; hence, “**that**” cannot refer to the preceding “**grace**” or “**faith**,” both of which are feminine nouns, nor can it refer to “**are ye saved**” which is a masculine participle. Instead the neuter “**that**” refers back and embraces the entire foregoing “**grace, are ye saved,**” and “**faith**.” This means that no part of salvation is “**of yourselves**” or due to what we do—the whole of salvation is the gift of God. ([Dobson, E G, Charles Feinberg, E Hindson, Woodrow Kroll, H L. Wilmington: KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson](#))

William Hendricksen has an interesting comment regarding the respected Greek scholar A T Robertson noting that in Robertson's comment on this passage he states “*Grace is God's part, faith ours.*” He adds that since in the original the demonstrative “this” (and this not of yourselves) is neuter and does not correspond with the gender of the word “faith,” which is feminine, it does not refer to the latter “but to the act of being saved by grace conditioned on faith on our part.”... (Hendricksen refutes this teaching stating that) Without any hesitancy I answer, Robertson, to whom the entire world of New Testament scholarship is heavily indebted, does not express himself felicitously in this instance. This is true first because in a context in which the apostle places such tremendous stress on the fact that from start to finish man owes his salvation to God, to him alone, it would have been very strange, indeed, for him to say, “Grace is God’s part, faith ours.” True though it be that both the responsibility of believing and also its activity are ours, for God does not believe for us, nevertheless, in the present context (Eph 2:5-10) one rather expects emphasis on the fact that both in its initiation and in its continuation faith is entirely dependent on God, and so is our complete salvation. ([Hendricksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. New Testament Commentary Set, 12 Volumes. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House](#))

The **College Press NIV Commentary** author asks...

What is the meaning of “**this**,” (**Ed note: “that”** in the NASB) which is given of God and is not from yourselves? Is it “**faith**” that is the gift of God? Since “**faith**” is a word of feminine gender, and “**this**” and “**it**” are neuter gender, normal grammar disallows referring back to “**faith**.” For the same reason “**this**” cannot refer back to the feminine word “**grace**.” It is more likely that the neuter words refer to the entire situation of salvation: it is God’s doing, not our own. Even our own responses, such as repenting and believing in Jesus, would not be possible unless God had invited us to do so (cf. Acts 11:18 “*And when they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life”*). (Boles, K. L.. Galatians & Ephesians. The College Press NIV commentary. Joplin, Mo.: College Press. 1993)

In the following passages observe that “**faith**” is presented as a something that is given from God to men and thus is a gift...

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, **to those who have received a faith** of the same

kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: 2 Peter 1:1 (**Comment:** The verb "received" is aorist active which signifies an event occurring at some point in time we received a faith like Peter's faith.)

For to you **it has been granted** for Christ's sake, not only **to believe** in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, Philippians 1:29, and

"And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and **the faith which comes through Him** has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. Acts 3:16.

MacDonald comments that...

A gift, of course, is a free and unconditional present. That is the only basis on which God offers salvation. The gift of God is salvation by grace and through faith. It is offered to all people everywhere. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Not of yourselves is literally "absolutely not out of yourself." This view of salvation is hard for good people to accept because it means we must give up our "goodness" in order to be saved. We must admit that nothing we have done matters in the least when it comes to being forgiven by God. In the words of an old hymn, we must lay our "deadly doing" down. God has designed our salvation so that he alone gets the glory!

In the end grace means that no one is too bad to be saved.

Not (3756) (**ou**) indicates absolute negation.

ILLUSTRATION - The story is told of a man who came eagerly but very late to a revival meeting and found the workmen tearing down the tent in which the meetings had been held. Frantic at missing the evangelist, he decided to ask one of the workers what he could do to be saved. The workman, who was a Christian, replied, "You can't do anything. It's too late." Horrified, the man said, "What do you mean? How can it be too late?" "The work has already been accomplished," he was told. "There is nothing you need to do but believe it."

Hoehner - In the present passage, the **gift of God** does not refer to "**faith**" but rather it refers to whole concept of salvation. The contrast is stark not only in the words themselves but also in their position in the sentence. The words *kai touto ouk ex humon theou to doron* are literally "and this is not of yourselves, of God is the gift." In conclusion, the "**gift**" is that which is outside of ourselves and is to be received. Therefore, the gift of salvation has its origin in God, its basis is grace, and it is received by means of faith. ([Ephesians- An Exegetical Commentary](#))

Gift (1435) (**doron**) is that which is given or granted and stresses the gratuitous character of the gift. Anything given or bestowed. A gift is something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation. Something presented as an act of worship and/or devotion (Mt 2:11). **Doron** is used of offerings to God except in Eph 2:8 and Rev 11:10. In classical Greek *doron* referred to a votive (expressing a vow, wish or desire) gift or offering to a god (little g) or a gift from the gods, as well as a present given as a tribute or even as a bribe. Of the 166+ uses of *doron* in the non-apocryphal Septuagint, most are used in the context of an offering to God (cf Ge 4:4, Lev 1:2, 3, 10, 2:1, Nu 5:15, Dt 12:11, 1Chr 16:29, Jer 33:11, etc).

Vine - *doron* is akin to *didomi*, "to give," is used (a) of "gifts" presented as an expression of honor, Matt. 2:11; (b) of "gifts" for the support of the temple and the needs of the poor, Matt. 15:5; Mark 7:11; Luke 21:1, 4; (c) of "gifts" offered to God, Matt. 5:23, 24; 8:4; 23:18, 19; Heb. 5:1; 8:3, 4; 9:9; 11:4; (d) of salvation by grace as the "gift" of God, Eph. 2:8; (e) of "presents" for mutual celebration of an occasion, Rev. 11:10. ([Gift, Giving - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#))

Mounce - It is most commonly linked with *prospherō* (see bring) as its direct object, and this construction likely infers the OT sacrificial system (See also *sacrifice*, *thyō*). In Jewish society such gifts were usually given through the priesthood (Heb 5:1; 8:3-4). Although a **dōron** was offered to God, Jesus questioned its sincerity and integrity when it is offered with a wrong motive or at the expense of proper obedience (Mt 15:5). (Mounce's complete expository dictionary of Old & New Testament word)

In the Byzantine Liturgy, **doron** the offering of consecrated bread in the Communion.

Gerald Cowen has a lengthy discussion on **doron**...

Salvation is described as the gift of God in Ephesians 2:8. As such it is in accordance with grace and is totally apart from works: "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:9). Salvation is a gift that originates with God and comes to humanity complete, with nothing needed to be added. Persons are simply to receive the gift of faith. The Greek word that is used to denote this gift is *doron*, which means "a gift" or "present."

Doron is from the same root as the verb didomi, which occurs 416 times in the New Testament. It has several other kindred terms. The verb form doreomai (present) is an-other derivation of the same word. Also corresponding to it is the older form dorema (present) and dorea (a present or gift). It is interesting that the accusative form dorean is used as an adverb to describe something undeservedly free.

In classical Greek literature doron "denotes especially a complimentary gift." It is also used to denote a gift or a dispensation from the gods. Conversely, it may refer to a gift or offering brought by men to God. Other meanings include a tax, tribute, or bribe. In the secular papyruses of the New Testament period, it is commonly used for a sacrifice to a god or an offering to the temple treasury. Presents from one person to another are also described by doron. Moulton and Milligan mention an interesting example of a thank-you note that says, "It was good of you, you sent me a present, such a beauty just husks!"

The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) uses doron to translate several different Hebrew words. (1) It refers to gifts from one person to another. Jacob gave a present to his brother Esau (Gen. 32:13). (2) In Judges 3:15 and 17 doron de-notes the tribute that Eglon, king of Moab, forced Israel to give to him. (3) In Deuteronomy 16:19, judges were forbidden to take bribes (gifts) lest justice be perverted. (4) The most common use of doron in the Old Testament is to denote offerings given to the Lord (Lev. 1:2,10,14; 2:1). (5) Finally, it may refer to a gift from God (Gen. 30:20). Leah said that God had endowed her with a good dowry, her six sons.

The kindred term dorea occurs only in the adverbial form dorean in the Old Testament. It most often means "without payment" or "without cause." David would not make an offering to the Lord that cost him nothing (2 Sam. 24:24). Saul wanted to slay David without cause (1 Sam. 19:5).

In the New Testament **doron** occurs nineteen times. Once it is used to describe gifts exchanged between human beings. In another case it describes the gift of adoration that the wise men brought to Jesus (Matt. 2:11). Generally, it is used to denote a sacrifice or offering given to God. Matthew 5:23; Luke 21:1; and Hebrews 5:1 are examples of this use. Only once is it used to refer to the di-vine gift of salvation (Eph. 2:8). The usual word for a di-vine gift to humans is dorea. Jesus spoke of the "gift of God" in His encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:10). Dorea describes the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38); the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:15,17; 5:16 uses dorema); the unspeakable gift, which is probably Christ Himself (2 Cor. 9:15); grace gifts (Eph. 4:7); and the heavenly gift (Heb. 6:4).

Thayer makes a distinction between these two phrases: dorean theou (gift of God) refers to an expression of His favor; doron theou (gift of God) refers to something that be-comes the recipient's abiding possession. Whether this distinction can always be made between the two is open to question; however, it does appear to be generally the case.

The word that most clearly underlines the free and unmerited nature of God's gifts is the adverb dorean. Eight times it occurs in the New Testament. Six times it means that something is given "for nothing" or "gratis." Jesus instructed the Twelve as they went out on their mission: "freely you have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8). Paul said that we are "justified freely by his grace" (Rom. 3:24). Twice Paul said he labored with his own hands so that the gospel might be without charge (2 Cor. 11:7; 2 Thess. 3:8). Twice Jesus said in Revelation that whoever is thirsty may take the "water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6; 22:17). In John 15:25 dorean means "without cause," and in Galatians 2:21 it means "for nothing" or "in vain."

God's gifts to us are prominent in the New Testament. He has given us eternal life (John 10:28). He has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). He has given spiritual gifts for the carrying on of the work of the church (Eph. 4:8,11-12). But the greatest gift is the Unspeakable One Himself (2Cor. 9:15). He has given His "only begotten Son" for us (John 3:16). All He wants of us who have received the gift of eternal life is that we offer ourselves to Him (Ro. 12:1-2; 2Cor. 8:5). This is the "only legitimate `offering' which can and should be brought by men to God." ([Salvation- Word Studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

- [See Thayer's Greek- dórōn](#)
- [See Bible Dictionary discussions of "Gift"](#)

And all of it is the gift of God, even the faith that lays hold of God's grace. Even our faith is not of us. It too is part of God's gift. As Martin Luther said, our situation is so hopeless that salvation must come from "another place." That's why the Reformers talked about "alien righteousness." That means a righteousness that comes from outside ourselves. We are not saved by what we do but by what Jesus Christ has done for us and makes freely available to us by faith.

Doron - 19x in 17v - **NAS** = gift(1), gifts(8), given(2), offering(8).

Matthew 2:11 After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him **gifts** of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 5:23 "Therefore if you are presenting your **offering** at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your **offering** there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your **offering**."

Matthew 8:4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the **offering** that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Matthew 15:5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been **given** to God,"

Matthew 23:18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the **offering** on it, he is obligated.' 19 "You blind men, which is more important, the **offering**, or the altar that sanctifies the **offering**?"

Mark 7:11 but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, **given** to God),'

Easton's Dictionary - Corban is a Hebrew word adopted into the Greek of the New Testament and left untranslated. It occurs only once (Mark 7:11). It means a gift or offering consecrated to God. Anything over which this word was once pronounced was irrevocably dedicated to the temple. Land, however, so dedicated might be redeemed before the year of jubilee (Lev. 27:16-24). Our Lord condemns the Pharisees for their false doctrine, inasmuch as by their traditions they had destroyed the commandment which requires children to honour their father and mother, teaching them to find excuse from helping their parents by the device of pronouncing "Corban" over their goods, thus reserving them to their own selfish use. ([See discussions of Corban](#))

Luke 21:1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their **gifts** into the treasury.

Luke 21:4 for they all out of their surplus put into the **offering**; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift** of God;

Hebrews 5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both **gifts** and sacrifices for sins;

Hebrews 8:3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both **gifts** and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. 4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the **gifts** according to the Law;

Hebrews 9:9 which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both **gifts** and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience,

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his **gifts**, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

Revelation 11:10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send **gifts** to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

Doron - 166 verses in non-apocryphal Septuagint -

Ge 4:4 (first use describes Abel's "offering"); Ge 24:53; 30:20; 32:13, 18, 20f; 33:10; 43:11, 15, 25f; Exod 23:7f; Lev 1:2f, 10, 14; 2:1, 4f, 7, 12f; 3:1f, 6f, 12; 4:23, 32; 5:11; 6:20; 7:13f, 16, 29, 38; 9:7, 15; 17:4; 21:6, 8, 17, 21f; 22:18, 25, 27; 23:14; 27:9, 11; Num 5:15; 6:14, 21; 7:3, 10f, 17, 19, 23, 25, 29, 31, 35, 37, 41, 43, 47, 49, 53, 55, 59, 61, 65, 67, 71, 73, 77, 79, 83; 9:7, 13; 15:4, 25; 18:9; 28:2, 24; 31:50; Deut 10:17; 12:11; 16:19; 27:25; Judg 3:15, 17f; 5:19; 1 Sam 8:3; 10:27; 1 Kgs 3:1; 4:20; 10:25; 15:19; 2 Kgs 16:8; 1 Chr 16:29; 18:2, 6; 2 Chr 9:24; 17:5, 11; 19:7; 26:8; 32:23; Neh 13:31; Job 8:20; 20:6; 31:7; 36:18; Ps 15:5; 26:10; 45:11; 68:29; 72:10; 76:11; Prov 4:2; 6:35; 15:27; 17:23; 21:14; 22:9; Isa 1:23; 5:23; 8:20; 18:7; 33:15; 39:1; 45:13; 66:20; Jer 33:11; 40:4; 51:59; Ezek 20:39; 22:12; Dan 11:39; Hos 8:9; Amos 5:11; Mic 3:11:10

Of God - the genitive (possessive) is emphasized by its position before the noun and stands in emphatic contrast with the personal pronoun "yourselves". Salvation is all **of God!**

Wayne Grudem explains salvation is by grace alone and not on account of any merit in ourselves...

After Paul explains in Romans 1:18-3:20 that no one will ever be able to make himself righteous before God

("For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law," Ro 3:20-note),

then Paul goes on to explain that "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Ro 3:23, 24). God's "grace" means his "unmerited favor." Because we are completely unable to earn favor with God, the only way we could be declared righteous is if God freely provides salvation for us by grace, totally apart from our work. Paul explains,

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:8-9; cf. Titus 3:7-note).

Grace is clearly put in contrast to works or merit as the reason why God is willing to justify us. God did not have any obligation to impute our sin to Christ or to impute Christ's righteousness to us; it was only because of his unmerited favor that he did this. ([Grudem, W: Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. IVP; Zondervan, 1994t](#))

Rock of Ages

Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace;

Foul, I to the Fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

[\(play\)](#)

"It's Too Easy" - I read about an instant cake mix that was a big flop. The instructions said all you had to do was add water and bake. The company couldn't understand why it didn't sell—until their research discovered that the buying public felt uneasy about a mix that required only water. People thought it was too easy. So the company altered the formula and changed the recipe to call for adding water and an egg to the mix. The idea worked, and sales jumped dramatically.

That story reminds me of how some people react to the plan of salvation. To them it sounds too easy and simple to be true, even though the Bible says, "By grace you have been saved through faith, ... it is the gift of God, not of works" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). They feel that there is something more they must do, something they must add to God's "recipe" for salvation. They think they must perform good works to gain God's favor and earn eternal life. But the Bible is clear—we are saved "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy" (Titus 3:5-note).

Unlike the cake-mix manufacturer, God has not changed His "formula" to make salvation more marketable. The gospel we proclaim must be free of works, even though it may sound too easy. —Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Salvation is a gift of God,
Not something earned or won;
He freely gives eternal life
To all who trust His Son. —Sper

**We are saved by God's mercy, not by our merit—
by Christ's dying, not by our doing.**

"No Fair!" - Suppose a non-Christian murders another unbeliever. The victim would go to hell (Ro 6:23note; Re 20:11-15-[notes](#)). If the killer later receives Christ as his Savior, he would go to heaven. Is that fair?

From a purely human standpoint, we respond, "No, it isn't!" But God's ways are far higher than our ways (Isa. 55:9), and He does not deal with us according to our sins (Ps 103:10-[Spurgeon's note](#)).

If God were to execute justice without mercy and grace, we would all be lost. In His mercy He does not give us what we deserve, and by His grace He gives us what we don't deserve. Even though God demands perfection, He doesn't leave us without hope.

God has designed a plan of redemption in which He can both "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Ro 3:26-note). His perfect standard is satisfied by the perfect sacrifice--His own Son Jesus Christ. The result? "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Ro 8:1-note).

No one can rightly accuse God of being unfair. His free offer of salvation is open to everyone. If we do not receive His gift of mercy, we will surely face His judgment. God's grace makes it fair. --R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Favor to the undeserving,
Love, when from God we have turned,
Mercy, when His love we've spurned--
That's God's grace! --Anon.

Grace: Getting what we don't deserve.
Mercy: Not getting what we do deserve

A Remarkable Life -This is the story of a man with whom I worked. David was a remarkable man. Remarkable in his steady demeanor through 33 years of service with the same ministry. Remarkable in his gentle, caring love for his wife of 30 years. Remarkable in his unwavering dedication to his children--through triumph and trouble. Remarkable in the respect he earned from co-workers and acquaintances. Remarkable in that when he died too suddenly and too soon at age 56, no one had anything bad to say about him. Remarkable!

Yet as friends and family sat in solemn silence at the funeral, David's pastor put his life in perspective. Family members had extolled David's character and comforted everyone with the assurance that he was in heaven. Then the pastor said, "None of the good things David did earned him one second in heaven. He is there because he accepted God's salvation through Christ."

It's true. No matter how remarkable our lives are, we cannot earn heaven. It's a gift.

Examine your life. As religious and well-loved as you may be, you won't go to heaven unless you accept God's gift of eternal life. Ask Jesus Christ to forgive your sins. That will make your life truly remarkable. --J D Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The ABCs Of Salvation
Admit you're a sinner (Ro 3:23-note).
Believe in Christ who died for you (Jn. 3:16).
Confess Him as Savior and Lord (Ro 10:9, 10-notes 10:9; 10).

The most exemplary life is nothing without Christ.

Not of yourselves - A marshal in Napoleon's army -- a man who was devotedly and enthusiastically attached to him -- was mortally wounded in battle. As the last struggle drew near and he lay dying in his tent, he sent for his chief. Napoleon came. The poor man thought his emperor could do anything. Perhaps he even sought to put him in the place of God. So he earnestly pleaded with his leader to save his life. The emperor sadly shook his head and turned away. But as the dying man felt the cold, merciless hand of death drawing him irresistibly behind the curtain of the unseen world, he was still heard to shriek out, "Save me, Napoleon! Save me!" In the hour of death, that soldier discovered that even the powerful Napoleon could not give him physical life. ([Ibid](#))

The Gift of God - During the Spanish-American War, Clara Barton was overseeing the work of the Red Cross in Cuba. One day Colonel Theodore Roosevelt came to her, wanted to buy food for his sick and wounded Rough Riders. But she refused to sell him any. Roosevelt was perplexed. His men needed the help and he was prepared to pay out of his own funds. When he asked someone why he could not buy the supplies, he was told, "Colonel, just ask for it!" A smile broke over Roosevelt's face. Now he understood--

the provisions were not for sale. All he had to do was simply ask and they would be given freely. ([Ibid](#))

Ephesians 2:9 **not** as a **result** of **works**, **so that no one may boast**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [ouk](#) ex [ergon](#), [hina me tis kaucheshtai](#). ([3SAMS](#))

Amplified: Not because of works [not the fulfillment of the Law's demands], lest any man should boast. [It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.] ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: No one can pride himself upon earning the love of God. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: not from a source of works, in order that no one might boast; ([Eerdmans](#))

Young's Literal: not of works, that no one may boast;

NOT AS A RESULT OF WORKS: ouk ex ergon:

- Romans 3:20,27,28; 4:2; 9:11,16; 11:6; 1 Corinthians 1:29, 30, 31; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:3, 4, 5
- [Ephesians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 2:8.9 Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ - Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10 Exchanging Living Death for Dying Life](#) - John MacArthur

NOT OUR MANY WORKS HIS ONE WORK

Not ([3756](#)) (**ou**) indicates absolute negation.

Result ([1537](#)) (**ek** or **ex**) is a preposition which literally means out of or from but in this context it serves as a marker denoting origin or source. In other words, **works** are **not** the origin or source of salvation.

Salvation is a gift of God and does not find its source in man. Furthermore, this salvation is not "out of a source of works" thus explaining salvation by grace. It is not produced by man nor earned by him. It is a gift from God with no strings tied to it.

Works ([2041](#)) (**ergon**) means the results of any activity in which one exerts strength, energy or faculties to do or perform something.

This verse literally reads "**and this not out from you as a source, of God (it is) the gift**"

Wuest That is, salvation is a gift of God. It does not find its source in man. Furthermore, this salvation is not "out of a source of works." This explains salvation by grace. It is not produced by man nor earned by him. It is a gift from God with no strings tied to it. ([Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#))

That salvation is not "**out of works**" is reiterated several times by Paul...

Romans 3:19-20 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God because by the **works** of the Law no flesh will be justified (declared righteous) in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin (thus we see one major purpose of the Law - that men might come to understand what sin is and how they cannot in their own power cease from committing sins). (see **notes** Romans 3:19; 3:20)

Romans 4:4-5 Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor (charis = grace), but as what is due (that which is owed and must be paid)

5 But to the one who does not **work**, but (note the strong contrast) **believes** in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned (accounted to him) as righteousness (see **notes** Romans 4:4; 4:5)

2 Timothy 1:9 God "has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, **not according to our works**, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (see **note 2 Timothy 1:9**)

Titus 3:5 He (God) saved us, not on the basis of deeds (works) which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit (see **note Titus 3:5**)

Galatians 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified (declared righteous) by the **works** of the Law but through **faith** in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

Not of Works - A businessman well known for his ruthlessness once announced to writer Mark Twain, "Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and read the 10 Commandments aloud at the top." "I have a better idea," replied Twain. "You could stay in Boston and keep them." (Moody Bible Institute - Today in the Word, September, 1991)

Comment: Twain's comment is pithy but conveys no significance regarding salvation which is by faith alone.

Not as a result of works - D L Moody once said that "The thief had nails through both hands, so that he could not work; and a nail through each foot, so that he could not run errands for the Lord; he could not lift a hand or a foot toward his salvation, and yet Christ offered him the gift of God; and he took it. Christ threw him a passport, and took him into Paradise." (Moody, D L: "Day by Day with D. L. Moody. Moody Press)

SO THAT NO ONE MAY BOAST: hina me tis kaucheshtai. (3SAMS):

- [Ephesians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 2:8,9 Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ - Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10 Exchanging Living Death for Dying Life](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

1 Cor 1:30-31+ But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

1 Cor 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

NO BOASTING ALLOWED

One reason why salvation is a free gift of God and not earned by works, is given us in the words "so that no one may boast." To quote David...

Some boast in chariots, and some in horses but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God. (Psalm 20:7-[Spurgeon's note](#))

My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear it and rejoice. (Psalm 34:2-[Spurgeon's note](#))

So that (in order that) ([2443](#)) (**hina**) expresses purpose of something (marking the end), the cause for or on account of which anything is done ("toward that end"). "It may also be used simply to indicate a happening, event or result of anything, or that in which the action terminates." (Zodhiates) Here **hina** could either introduce a purpose clause explaining why salvation is not of works. If it were, men could (and would) boast! On the other hand **hina** could express a result "so that no one may boast." When God is involved, we know that what God purposes will result. Either way, the praise is all to God and to Him Alone!

May boast ([2744](#)) (**kauchaomai** akin to **aucho** = boast + **euchomai** = pray to God <> **auchen** = neck which vain persons are apt to carry in proud manner) means to boast over a privilege or possession. The idea is to take pride in something (in a bad sense - Ro 2:23-note, in a good or legitimate sense - Ro 5:2-note, Ro 5:3-note; Ro 5:11-note)

To boast means to take pride in something and so to glory in, to pride oneself or to brag about something. Salvation is a gift all of God's grace so that men cannot express pride in themselves or their accomplishments as if those accomplishments merited

salvation. Grace glorifies God. Works would glorify man.

Boasting is appropriate when the purpose is to acknowledge the greatness and glory of God and His salvation and even of our tribulations which the Master Architect is able to weave together for our good and His glory! And so in the wonderful chapter, Romans 5 Paul records...

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we **exult** (**kauchaomai** - continually = present tense) in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also **exult** (**kauchaomai** - continually = present tense) in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance and proven character; and proven character, hope and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (see **notes** Ro 5:1; 5:2; 5:3; 5:4; 5:5)

Harold Hoehner summarizes this section - In conclusion, Ephesians 2:8-9 spell out salvation in summary form. Its source is God, its basis is by grace, and it is obtained as a gift by means of faith. It is external to human beings and becomes a reality to them when they appropriate it by faith. This salvation is not something that is inherent in a person nor can it be gained by his or her efforts. Hence, a person cannot boast of any self-achievement but must boast in the gracious gift of God. ([Ibid](#))

Spurgeon said...

I could wish that every time the clock struck, it said, "By grace are ye saved." I could wish that there were a trumpet voice ringing out at daybreak both on sea and on land, over the whole round globe the words, "By grace are ye saved." The larger portion of mankind do not believe that salvation is by grace. Another part of them profess to believe it, but do not understand its meaning. And many who do understand it have never surrendered to it and embraced it.

If the faith whereby I have laid hold on Christ to be my Savior be altogether wrought in me by the Holy Ghost through grace, then I defy the devil to take away that which he never gave me or to crush that which Jehovah Himself created in me. I defy my free will to fling away what it never brought to me. What God has given, created, introduced, and established in the heart, He will maintain there.

God has not granted His love, His favor, His mercy to me because He foresaw that I would repent of my sin and trust in his dear Son. Nothing in my disposition or character could move His heart to me. His heart must have moved spontaneously. It must have welled up because of its own deep love

For Sinners Only - Many non-Christians know the hymn "Amazing Grace" but may not know what grace means. One day when evangelist D. L. Moody was studying the meaning of God's grace, he dashed into the street and shouted to the first man he saw, "Do you know grace?" Mystified, the man replied, "Grace who?" No doubt Moody then explained grace —that God has compassion on sin-sick people and freely offers them forgiveness and new life through faith in Christ.

I heard of a man who had lived a troubled life and died without understanding the message of God's grace. A minister had talked to him and encouraged him to come to church, but his response was, "I'm too undeserving." He didn't know that God's grace is for the undeserving.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he bluntly described their pre-Christian lives as being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ep 2:1-note). Then he used two hope-filled words: but God (Ep 2:4-note). They introduce God's mercy and grace that provide forgiveness and new life through Christ. Salvation is through faith, not works, so no one can boast (Ep 2:8,9).

Let's help others to understand that God's salvation is for sinners only-and that includes all of us. That's what makes God's grace so amazing! —Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Amazing grace— How sweet the sound—
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see. —Newton

The first step to receiving eternal life is to admit that we don't deserve it.

God Ran Him Down - In his book *Illustrations of Bible Truth*, H. A. Ironside included the story of a new convert who gave his testimony during a church service. With a smile on his face and joy in his heart, the man related how he had been delivered from a life of sin. He gave the Lord all the glory, saying nothing about any of his own merits or what he had done to deserve the blessings of redemption.

The person in charge, who was very legalistic, didn't fully appreciate the reality of salvation by grace through faith alone, apart from human works. So he responded to the young man's comments by saying, "You seem to indicate that God did everything when He saved you. Didn't you do your part before God did His?"

The new Christian jumped to his feet and said, "Oh yes, I did. For more than 30 years I ran away from God as fast as my sins could carry me. That was my part. But God took out after me and ran me down. That was His part." Commenting on this testimony, Ironside wrote, "It was well put and tells a story that every redeemed sinner understands." - R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Red Cross - During the Spanish-American War, Clara Barton was overseeing the work of the Red Cross in Cuba. One day Colonel Theodore Roosevelt came to her, wanted to buy food for his sick and wounded Rough Riders. But she refused to sell him any. Roosevelt was perplexed. His men needed the help and he was prepared to pay out of his own funds. When he asked someone why he could not buy the supplies, he was told, "Colonel, just ask for it!" A smile broke over Roosevelt's face. Now he understood—the provisions were not for sale. All he had to do was simply ask and they would be given freely. ([Ibid](#))

A devotional from Our Daily Bread

After hearing the gospel explained, people often say,

"You mean there's nothing I can do to deserve it? That's too easy."

People object to the idea that God gives unmerited favor so freely to unworthy sinners. Many find it difficult to trust a God who offers salvation as a free gift.

Bible teacher G. Campbell Morgan told of a coalminer who came to him and said,

"I would give anything to believe that God would forgive my sins, but I cannot believe that He will forgive them if I just ask Him. It is too cheap."

Morgan said,

"My dear friend, have you been working today?"

"Yes, I was down in the mine."

"How did you get out of the pit? Did you pay?"

"Of course not. I just got into the cage and was pulled to the top."

"Were you not afraid to entrust yourself to that cage? Was it not too cheap?" Morgan asked.

"Oh, no," said the miner, "it was cheap for me, but it cost the company a lot of money to sink the shaft."

Suddenly, the truth struck him. What cost him nothing salvation—had not come cheap to God. This miner had never thought of the great price God paid to send His Son so He could rescue fallen humanity. Now he realized that all anyone had to do was to "get into the cage" by faith.

Because of God's grace, salvation is a free gift. But to receive it, we must stop trying to pay for it and start trusting what Christ has done on the cross. It's free, but it's not cheap. —Paul R Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Salvation is free to us,
but it cost God an enormous price.**

A devotional from **Our Daily Bread** - Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us (Titus 3:5).

A headline in The Grand Rapids Press caught my attention: "Conversion to Hindu Faith Is Torturous." The article stated,

"A West German businessman has completed his conversion to the Hindu faith by piercing himself through the cheeks with a one-quarter-inch thick, four-foot-long steel rod, and pulling a chariot for two miles by ropes attached to his back and chest by steel hooks... Others walk through twenty-foot-long pits of fire, don shoes with soles made of nails, or hang in the air spread-eagle from hooks embedded in their backs."

What a contrast to the reality of Christianity. The teaching of salvation by grace, through faith, apart from human works, distinguishes Christianity from all other religions of the world. The conversion experience of a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is not "completed" through acts of self-torture. We may have to suffer for the cause of Christ, and good works should always prove the genuineness of our faith, but neither suffering nor serving save us. Paul wrote,

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (see **note** Ephesians 2:10).

Self-inflicted torture is completely foreign to everything the Bible teaches about salvation.

We are not saved on the basis of what we can endure; rather, our hope is in what Christ has already endured for us on the cross. The Christian way is not conversion by torture—it's salvation by grace.—R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We are saved by God's mercy,

Not by our merit—

By Christ's dying,

Not by our doing

Instant Cake - I read about an instant cake mix that was a big flop. The instructions said all you had to do was add water and bake. The company couldn't understand why it didn't sell—until their research discovered that the buying public felt uneasy about a mix that required only water. Apparently people thought it was too easy. So the company altered the formula and changed the directions to call for adding an egg to the mix in addition to the water. The idea worked and sales jumped dramatically.

That story reminds me of how some people react to the plan of salvation. To them it sounds too easy and simple to be true, even though the Bible says, "By grace you have been saved through faith.; it is the gift of God, not of works" (Eph. 2:8-9). They feel that there is something more they must do, something they must add to God's "recipe" for salvation. They think they must perform good works to gain God's favor and earn eternal life. But the Bible is clear—we are saved, "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy" (Titus 3:5-note).

Unlike the cake-mix manufacturer, God has not changed His "formula" to make salvation more marketable. The gospel we proclaim must be free of works, even though it may sound too easy. R W De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A devotional from **Our Daily Bread** - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (Ephesians 2:10).

Several centuries ago, a Japanese emperor commissioned an artist to paint a bird. A number of months passed, then several years, and still the artist did not deliver the painting. Finally the emperor became so exasperated that he went to the artist's home to demand an explanation. Instead of making excuses, the artist placed a blank canvas on the easel. In less than an hour, he completed a painting that was to become a masterpiece. When the emperor asked the reason for the delay, the artist showed him armloads of drawings of feathers, wings, heads, and feet. Then he explained that he couldn't complete the painting until he had done exhaustive research and study.

In a sense, Christians are similar to that piece of art. We are "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ep 1:13-note), and predestined by God "to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Ro 8:29-note). But the process takes time. The "artist" is the Holy Spirit—sent by the Lord Jesus at Pentecost to indwell believers. Slowly but surely He leads us to spiritual growth and maturity. Our transformation requires years of patience and will not be finished until we enter the presence of our King.

The day is coming when all Christians will be like Christ. But now we are growing and preparing. As we follow the Spirit's guidance through one experience after another, we become more and more like the masterpiece we will be someday in Glory. —D. C. Egner.

**The work Christ accomplished for us on the cross,
His Spirit can now accomplish in us on earth.**

In the mid-1500s, when Peter Gabriel began preaching Reformation truth in the reeds and thickets throughout Holland, it was announced there would be a great service outside Amsterdam on July 14, 1566. Authorities shut the city gates, but people swam the canals or forced their way out in the early hours when the milkmaids left for the fields. Thousands gathered. Gabriel announced his text—Ephesians 2:8, 9, 10—and preached for four hours, but nobody minded. They hadn't heard the gospel in a thousand years, and they were hungry for its message. Gabriel's sermon that day helped establish the Reformation in Holland. ([Morgan, R. J. Nelson's Annual Preacher's Sourcebook: 2002. Thomas Nelson](#))

A Truth We Cannot Hear Too Often - When Charles Spurgeon was a teen, he was asked to preach at his grandfather's church in Suffolk. His train was late, so Grandfather Spurgeon began the sermon, preaching from Ephesians 2:8, 9. There was a commotion at the door, and in walked Charles. "Here comes my grandson," exclaimed the old man. "He can preach the gospel better than I can, but you cannot preach a better gospel, can you, Charles?" Charles replied, "You can preach better than I can. Please go on." The grandfather refused, but he explained to Charles where he was in his sermon. The younger preacher stepped to the pulpit and took over just where his grandfather had left off. After a few minutes, the grandfather interrupted, wanting to preach a little more. Then he sat down again, and Charles resumed, with his grandfather sitting behind him, saying, "Good! Tell them that again, Charles. Tell them that again." Ever after, Charles Spurgeon said that whenever he preached from Ephesians 2, he could hear his grandfather whispering, "Tell them that again, Charles. Tell them that again." ([Ibid](#))