

COMPREHENSIVE EXEGESIS OF EPHESIANS 2:8-9

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” For by grace are ye saved through faith; and
that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God.”
(King James Version)

These verses of scripture, among others, as interpreted by various factions of both the Sovereign Grace and Free Will camps, form the basis of their many debates concerning the role of men’s faith in the reception of salvation. Those of the Free Will persuasion state that “it is God’s will to save all men”. From this, they foist the conception that God has a general or universal will to save all men but the specific enactment of salvation depends upon some supplemental catalyst, i.e., ones reception of or concurrence to God’s will. Some who supposedly espouse Sovereign Grace, assert that God in eternity had a desire to and did in fact made provisions to save all men, but in effect only chose to save some. Others of the Sovereign Grace persuasion hold steadfastly to the premise that salvation is designed for and provided to the Elect Only. Yet nearly all of the above diverse proponents hold to the position that the exercise of ones faith is either the direct cause and/or means of the reception of salvation by its recipients. Because of this the general arguments among them usually center around what is the underlying cause of men’s faith or whether ones personal faith stems from ones own choice to exercise such. In all of these interpretations there are limitations and restrictions of the efficacy of God’s omnipotence, omniscience and perfect resolutions.

The Grace Gospel Church Ministry unequivocally rejects the structuring of all of the above doctrinal thinking and herein rely solely upon the proper and sound principles of scriptural exegesis in following the Holy Spirit’s intended thought conveyance of these verses. It is our conviction that all the decrees and workings of God consistently establish the unconditional and individual election of certain men to salvation and further that the exercise of ones personal faith plays no role in ones reception of salvation but it merely identifies such with the act itself. When this verse is properly exegeted, it exudes evidence that ones personal faith is not the underlying force of salvation as the reception of it cannot possibly be by any semblance of human acts. The grace of God eminently appears in contriving the way of ones salvation by Christ's righteousness, as this is an infallible fact. The inference implied in sending Him into the world to work out a righteousness for the elect, in which one stands complete in His sight; is consigned to the revelation of all things previously accomplished in eternity that are manifested in the sphere of time. Hence no other cause can be assigned why certain sinners are assessed as righteous in the sight of God other than His free favor and sovereign pleasure as the effects of that which He determined to do void of any human participation.

Salvation is conferred to its recipients exclusively on the basis of the obedience and sufferings of Christ and consequently not by ones personal faith but by the faithfulness of Jesus. The Apostle Paul expressly asserts that one is justified by His blood, thus he states that one is made righteous exclusively by Christ’s obedience (Roman 5:19). Therefore, no act other than Christ’s completed work in eternity could ever qualify as cause for receiving the righteousness of God nor its imputation in any manner. Ones expressed faith is not the means, for only the faithfulness of Christ (His propitiation) could be such an instrument for the removing of the curse of sin. Thus, it may be strongly concluded

that the act of believing in itself is not the actuation of imputation to one for righteousness, as the object of one's personal faith is confined to the identification aspect of salvation.

Accordingly, a more concise explanation that may be offered is that salvation is apprehended by the grace which belongs to His eternal doings, as it is viewed or discerned by the justifying righteousness of Christ, which is imputed solely because of His faithfulness. The proper exegesis of Ephesians 2:8 demonstrates this as first viewed from the King James Version, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God." And from the generally accepted rendering of the Greek Text, "For by the grace you have been saved through faith, and this not out of you, (it is) the gift of God." Here we focus on the nominative case of the Greek noun *to. dw/ron* (**to tho•ron**) rendered "the gift." This certifies that this is the subject of this verse, as it is linked with the genitive possession of the noun *qeou/(Theh•oo)* rendered "God" and thus the conveyance revolves around what "the gift of God" is. Moving in this vein, we follow the linkage of the coordinating conjunction *kai. (keh)* rendered "and", in that it functions as a connector of the demonstrative pronoun *tou/to* (**too•to**) rendered "this", as it agrees with *to. dw/ron* (**the gift**) in case, gender and number (nominative, neuter and singular). In this light the progression of the conveyance is, "**the gift of God and this.**"

The consignment of the Greek phrase *ouvk evx u`mw/n* (**ook ehx eemon**) rendered "not out of you", is the subject of much unnecessary debate by those to seek to either link it with grace or faith. It does not seem that neither side of those who contend this have a legitimate basis for their contention, due to the fact that neither (grace or faith) are consistent with the case and gender of the demonstrative pronoun "this", which obviously defines the noun that it agrees with in this regard and obviously replaces, i.e., *to. dw/ron* (**the gift**). Hence the structure of the progression is "**the gift of God and this (is) not out of you.**" Now in sequencing the order of the counterpart phrase in this verse, note the verb/participle arrangement *evste sesw|sme,noi* (**ehs•teh seh•sos•meh•no**) rendered "you are, having been saved." Here we observe that the verb *evste* (**ehs•teh**) rendered "you are," is depicted of one's condition of being, while the participle *sesw|sme,noi* (**seh•sos•meh•no**) rendered "having been saved," is a verbal adjective describing what the posture of the condition is. Thus what one is, is as a result of such one having been saved or it may be stated, "you are those who have been and are saved."

This is corroborated by the fact that *sesw|sme,noi* (**seh•sos•meh•no**) is nominative; linking its case to the subject *to. dw/ron* (**to tho•ron**) in case, thus "the gift" is salvation, the essence of having been saved. Here it is ultra-important to glean the implications of the perfect tense and passive voice, which respectively connote that salvation is a past completed action (in eternity) with continuous results (in time), and is that which is received (void of any action) by its recipient(s). Note, the present tense verb *evste* (**ehs•teh**) rendered "are", states the fact that one is currently saved and the perfect participle *sesw|sme,noi* (**seh•sos•meh•no**) rendered "having been saved," implies that the salvation God previously gave to such ones is a continuous possession (Ephesians 2:5). In this regard, the progression of the rendering is "**the gift of God and not out of you, you are; having been saved.**"

The final phrasing in Ephesians 2:8 engenders how the act of salvation is accomplished, i.e., *th/ca,riti, dia. pi,stewj* (**tee khar•ee•tee thee•ah pees•teh•os**) rendered "by the grace through faith (faithfulness)." Here we note the definite article *th/* (**tee**), "the", before the word *ca,riti,* (**khar•ee•tee**) rendered "grace", as the article may be interspersed to emphasize that the grace of God or the particular grace of God, is the underlying basis of how He has saved us, i.e., God's motive for saving is by grace. Hence, "grace" *ca,riti,* (**khar•ee•tee**), is in the instrumental case, which connotes that the means God utilized to save the elect was by His grace. Grammatically, this is corroborated in that *ca,riti,* (**khar•ee•tee**) is in the dative case, which defines its role as an indirect object or object of a preposition, thus it can be stated that the only plausible stimulus that moved God to save, is of Grace. In this light, this rendering is "**by the grace.**"

Finally, it is imperative that we accurately assess the meaning of the Greek noun *pi,stewj* (**pees•teh•os**) rendered "faith", as it is used in this context. Note, the emphasis must be placed upon the genitive of possession as it defines the agency through which grace is transferred to the sinner. Here, it is totally necessary to document that no semblance of human activity has any

effectuation, i.e., works nor even the passive participation of those who are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Romans 9:11-16). In this sense, “faith” is focused on the One who accomplished salvation and thus indicates that the source, which makes it possible for God to impart grace, is the **faithfulness of Jesus Christ**. Now it is clear that purely grammatically speaking, the Greek translation is literally “faith” but rendering it “**faithfulness**”, more accurately conveys the intended thought, as it is impossible that any other than Christ, could be “faithful” in respect of being the possessor of this grace. This is further certified by the usage of the preposition *dia*. (**thee•ah**) rendered “through”, with it’s genitive of possession expressing the conveyance of saving grace. So the absolute faithfulness of Jesus Christ entails His faithful propitiatory work in eternity, including His life and death as manifested in time, as this is the essence of imputing unto sinners **His** righteousness, which is the reason why God is able to save by His grace (II Timothy 1:9). Note, it is absolutely out of context in this verse to consider the enactment of the salvation of sinners apart from the faithfulness of Christ as the only means of imparting His righteousness to such depraved ones. Thus, this progressive rendering is, “**by the grace through faithfulness.**”

Observe that the elect’s “faithfulness” would not be of grace but of works if ones personal faith in any manner is utilized as the transitional means of the transaction; as the exercise of it thereof could then be construed as a work or at least as ones participation (either actively or passively) in precipitating ones actual conversion. Further, the act of salvation was accomplished in its actuation by decree in eternity and expressed in time by the manifestation of His death on the cross, which all effectively eliminate any human actions or motions. Accordingly, a more concise yet awkward English translation of Ephesians 2:8 is **“for the gift of God and this (is) not out of you, you are, having been saved by the grace through faithfulness.”**

This grace is of a soul-humbling and Christ-exalting nature, as enlightened ones might observe that ones personal faith is the most emptying and accordingly is indigent to Christ. In this sense, saving faith brings nothing to Christ but a naked depraved nature. In this light, we properly view Ephesians 2:9 from the King James Version, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” And from the Greek Text, “not out of works, that no one might boast.” In this verse, it becomes apparent why it is so necessary for it to be clearly understood that God’s conveyance of salvation entails zero input from mankind and as such are totally eliminated from any of its transactions. In Ephesians 2:8, it is emphatically stated “not out of you,” which is synonymously conveyed in this verse’s phrasing, *ouvk evx e;rgwn* (**ook ehx ehr•gon**) rendered “not out of works.” Thus the Greek adverb *ouvk* (**ook**) “not,” is a definite negative, as it leaves no room for works in God’s enactment of salvation. Note, the preposition *evx*(**ehx**) rendered “out” or “out of”, as used with the ablative case, affirms that the essentials for salvation are not derived nor acquired from actions or motions of mankind. Here the Greek noun *e;rgwn* (**ehr•gon**) rendered “works,” as used in this context, refers to any mental or physical exertion or action that may be construed as an influential mechanism in the placement of one into the Body of Christ.

The problem that is inherent with any aspect of ones personal faith precipitating the salvation process, is that instead of such one being imbued with an absolute sense of unworthiness; there is developed either an attitude of sectarianism, confusion or pride. Thus this is the thrush and reason for the expression of the phrase *ifna mh, tij kauch,shta* (**een•ah mee tees kahf•khees•ee•teh**) rendered “that no one might boast.” Here the Greek conjunction *ifna* (**een•ah**) rendered “that or “in order that”, when it is used with the subjunctive mood, expresses what the purpose is. Hence, the Greek word *kauch,shta*(**kahf•khees•ee•teh**) rendered “boasting” implies that there is no arena for glorying and lauding of ones function in any capacity., as salvation is totally and exclusively the work of God. And so it is eminently suited to the design of God in the justification of sinners: "because of this it is out of faith, that it may be according to grace -----" (Romans 4:16). Paul’s writings as explicated in Romans chapter four concerning Abraham, are focus on the testimonial and identification aspect of the manifestation of justification in the sphere of time. Under no circumstances should it be construed in any of the verses that Abraham’s belief in itself, is just cause for God’s accounting of righteousness to him. Justification can only be conferred on the basis of one being made righteous as a result of the

curse and penalty of sin being amply provided for. This is accomplishable solely through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, i.e., His efficacious propitiatory sacrifice in eternity.

Thus it is proper to assert that justification is by the faithfulness (of Jesus) in its habitual performance and its employment is independent of any participation of mankind. In this sense no “act” or “exercise” of faith by the recipient of justification, could ever qualify as just cause for such employment, though such act may be linked to its identification. If this is true (and it is), it follows that God justifies all His elect in one and the same way; not some by habitation and others by their “act” of faith. In this view, the principle of habitation alone apprehends and bestows the object of justification. In the traditional doctrinal teaching, if Christ's righteousness is only imputed through one's own belief, then it cannot be realized until one actually receives it by ones exercise of faith. Thus it cannot be any combination of an interaction of both God and man, for if such was the case, then all infants who die in infancy, are automatically ruled out as being elect, in that such could never actually comprehend righteousness, granting that they cannot exercise the act of faith and consequently are incapable of receiving Christ's righteousness under this scenario. Under such a system, an individual's “acceptance” of the gospel's appeal becomes an operational component of the deployment of salvation, thus rendering ones mental adherence to it a vital function of the process.

Therefore it must of necessarily be concluded that the gift of Christ's righteousness becomes actually conferred without any receiving action from it's recipients. Otherwise, one must adopt the premise that God justifies His elect in different manners, i.e., some by habituation and others by their act of faith, which in effect systematically excludes all who do not specifically express acceptance of their salvation. Hence the same principle of justification must be granted concerning those of the elect who live to riper years as to those who die in infancy or are mentally incapacitated. Farther, from this it can be concluded that no “act of expression” of ones personal faith is necessary to the being of justification; for if so, those of the elect who do not “verbally confess” or “exercise their faith”, cannot be justified. But how an act of the exercise of ones personal faith could be required to the actual justification of some of the elect and not to the justification of others, is inconceivable.

The grace of faith, by which one apprehends ones justification is of the operation of God, as it is an effect of powerful and efficacious grace and not the product of human power, skill or industry. It is not gotten but given (Ephesians 2:8-9). The grace of God is abundantly manifested in working faith in ones soul; over which dead sinners as such are void of spiritual life and cannot act spiritually. Therefore it is not in ones power to get faith, as no one has the ability to believe nor have any inclination to it, for men's hearts are full of enmity against God. Besides, if faith is gotten or acquired by the elect through their participation in the process by their testimony, such have rendered themselves to differ and thus have whereof to boast; for then they have something which they did not receive as a gift of free grace, which is constantly denied in the Scriptures and could never be owned by the saints. It may as well be required of sinners to form divine and supernatural principles in their souls or to create spiritual life in themselves.

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