

By Grace Through Faith to Faith
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

- I. Errors and lies about eternal life and God's favor are both old and common.
GEN 3:4-5; MAT 3:9; 1PE 1:18-19; JOH 5:39.
- II. **EPH 2:8-9** is one of the best known texts of Scripture but one of the most misunderstood. Observe what can be concluded from this text:
- A. There is a current salvation that the Ephesian saints have by grace.
 - B. This grace is channelled to them through faith.
 - C. This salvation is not of works.
 - D. This salvation excludes human boasting.
 - E. It is a gift, not an offer.
 - F. The preceding verses qualify the salvation as deliverance from *death in trespasses and sins*. **EPH 2:1-5.**
 - G. The Ephesian saints had *already* been quickened out of death in trespasses and sins; therefore **EPH 2:8-9** was not a formula for their *procuring* of such salvation. It was a *declaration* of their salvation out of death in trespasses and sins.
 - H. The context describes this salvation as the work of God by creation. **v. 10.**
- III. The pronouns "that" and "it" in **v. 8** deserve attention. These singular pronouns could refer to:
- A. grace.
 - B. faith.
 - C. a salvation scheme of grace through faith.
- IV. Some affirm that the pronouns could only refer to "grace" or "a salvation scheme of grace through faith," for if they referred to "faith," it would exclude the sinner's belief from the salvation process, since whatever "that" is, it is "...NOT OF YOURSELVES..."
- A. "That" as used here is a demonstrative pronoun, which "denotes a thing or person pointed out or present, or that has just been mentioned."
 - B. Generally a pronoun refers to its closest antecedent.
 - C. Arminians affirm that **EPH 2:8-9** is teaching that salvation is by grace that is only made effectual by the faith of the individual in response to the gospel.
 - 1. According to this, the sinner's faith is the means or channel through which the grace of salvation comes. This makes human faith into a sacrament, virtually no different than the "sacerdotal, sacramental salvation by grace" system of Catholicism.
 - 2. This position thus affirms that God is indebted to the sinner's faith to reward him with grace that saves eternally.
 - 3. Mind that a reward reckoned of debt is not grace but *work*. **ROM 4:4.**
 - 4. If "that" and "it" of **v. 8** could only refer to "grace" or "the salvation scheme of grace through faith," and the grace of salvation only comes through the faith of the sinner, how could this grace of salvation be properly described as "NOT OF YOURSELVES?"
 - D. Some Calvinists would argue that human faith is not the *cause* of salvation by grace, but rather the *instrument* of it.
 - 1. They affirm that God chooses only certain individuals unto eternal salvation, but He has also chosen to use the sinner's faith as the instrument of grace's activation.
 - 2. This salvation scheme still depends upon the gospel, for "...faith cometh by hearing

and hearing by the word of God” (**ROM 10:17**), and so automatically excludes any who have not heard the gospel.

3. Even in this scheme, human faith plays a crucial role in the grace of salvation, while affirming that “that” (grace or salvation) is “NOT OF YOURSELVES.”
- E. Protestantism commonly holds that eternal salvation is by *grace alone through faith alone*, making *only* the sinner’s faith the cause or instrument of salvation by grace.
 1. This position was to stand against the sacramentalism of Catholicism which makes the grace of eternal salvation dependent upon many acts of the sinner.
 2. But “faith alone” is dead (**JAM 2:20**); it is worthless without works. Protestantism, in making the sinner’s faith “the alone instrument of salvation” has essentially made something dead and worthless the one pure sacrament to procure grace!
 3. This position is akin to the Judaizers who made grace conditioned upon circumcision, which really meant indebtedness to ALL commandments! **GAL 5:3**.

V. The *grace which saves through faith* of v. 8 is set in contrast to the *works* of v. 9, to the end that *no man should boast*. Consider the definitions of *grace*, *work* and *boast*.

- A. grace: Favour, favourable or benignant regard or its manifestation (now only on the part of a superior); favour or goodwill, in contradistinction to right or obligation, as the ground of a concession.
- B. work: Something that is or was done; what a person does or did.
- C. boast: To speak ostentatiously... glory in.
 1. ostentation: The action of showing or displaying; a show...
 2. Recall that faith is something *shown*. **JAM 2:18**.
- D. Grace is favour without condition. It is unmerited.
- E. Work is something that a person does or did, which would include the sinner's faith since belief is something that one *does*. **ACT 16:30-31**.
- F. Scripture confirms that *work* is anything that one *does*, good or evil. **ROM 9:11**.
- G. *Grace* and *works* are mutually exclusive. **ROM 11:6**.
- H. Mind that both Arminians and Calvinists are advocating an eternal grace which is tied to human works!
- I. If the faith through which the grace of salvation comes in v. 8 is the faith that the sinner exercises upon hearing the gospel, consider:
 1. Grace then has a condition or price attached to it, which makes it “...no more grace” (**ROM 11:6**), and not *free*, which flatly contradicts the plain wording of Scripture. **ROM 3:24**.
 2. Salvation ceases to be a gift and becomes only an offer--two entirely different concepts:
 - a. gift: Something, the possession of which is transferred to another without the expectation or receipt of an equivalent; a donation, present.
 - b. offer: An act of offering; a holding forth or presenting for acceptance; an expression of intention or willingness to give or do something conditionally on the assent of the person addressed; a proposal.
 3. Sinner's faith was a requirement of the law (**MAT 23:23**), but the grace of eternal salvation does not come from obeying the law. **ROM 3:20**.
 4. Righteousness is by the obedience of One, Jesus Christ. **ROM 5:19**.
 - a. If it is conditioned upon the individual's faith upon hearing the gospel, it would be by the obedience of at least three: Jesus Christ, the preacher (**ROM 10:14**), and the sinner.

- b. Scripture clearly affirms that Jesus Christ "...BY HIMSELF purged our sins..." (**HEB 1:3**).
 - 5. If the Arminian or Calvinist schemes are correct, men could still point to something that they had done which produced the grace of eternal salvation.
 - a. **EPH 2:8-9** precludes that by: "...lest any man should boast."
 - b. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded..." (**ROM 3:27**).

- VI. The grace that saves through faith of **EPH 2:8** is seen in context to be a quickening power that occurs when men *were DEAD in sins*. **vs. 4-5**.
 - A. The nature of man under sin is hardly descriptive of someone who is yearning for an opportunity to believe and trust in Jesus Christ so as to get close to God. **ROM 3:9-19**.
 - B. Believing in Jesus Christ is something that certainly pleases God, but man's nature under sin exempts him from any such thing. **1JO 3:22-23 c/w ROM 8:7-8**.
 - C. The individual's faith comes from the heart but in its natural, depraved state the heart is an unreliable instrument. **ACT 8:37 c/w JER 17:9**.
 - D. Until a change of man's sinful nature occurs, he has no *ability* to believe the gospel. It is hidden from him and he considers it ridiculous. **1CO 1:18; 2:14**.

- VII. Further investigation reveals that the sinner's faith does not procure or produce eternal life but just the opposite.
 - A. If a person truly believes in Jesus Christ upon hearing the gospel, we know:
 - 1. he HAS everlasting life. **JOH 6:47**.
 - 2. he had everlasting life *before* he believed. **JOH 5:24**.
 - 3. he does not need to become righteous; his righteous response to the gospel proves that he IS righteous. If righteous he *is born* of God and accepted with Him. **1JO 2:29; 3:7; ACT 10:35**.
 - 4. he IS born of God. **1JO 5:1**.
 - 5. he IS justified. **ACT 13:39**.
 - B. The sinner's faith is but a *token* or *evidence* of eternal salvation. **ROM 4:3; HEB 11:4**.
 - C. **ACT 18:27** shows that the sinner's faith comes through grace!
 - D. The sinner's faith is itself born of God! **1JO 5:4**.
 - E. The ability to believe on Jesus Christ is by a gracious instruction by God written in the heart. **MAT 16:16-17**.
 - F. The sinner's faith comes through Christ's righteousness! **2PE 1:1**.
 - G. Our faith is a GIFT of God! **PHIL 1:29**.

- VIII. The faith by which the grace of eternal salvation comes in **EPH 2:8-9** is obviously not the sinner's faith, for the sinner's faith is itself a product of eternal salvation and the new birth.
 - A. The faith that saves eternally is that of the FAITHFUL witness (**REV 1:5**), the Lord Jesus Christ. **PHIL 3:8-9; GAL 2:20**.
 - B. Have faith in Him because He faithfully saved all the Father had given to Him to save (**JOH 6:38-39 c/w JOH 17:2-4**) by faithfully submitting Himself to death (**PHIL 2:8**) in faith that God would raise Him again (**ACT 2:27-31**) to justify sinners (**ROM 4:25**).
 - C. Trust in Christ, not your own faith, "...lest any man should boast" (**EPH 2:9**).
 - D. Thus, the righteousness of God declared by the gospel is "...revealed from faith to faith..." (**ROM 1:16-17**), from the faith of Christ which produced it and applied it to the elect that they might believe in Him. This is salvation by grace.