

Faith and Believing

A Short Examination of Eph 2:8-9

- Eph 2:8-9; “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”
- there seems to be a bit of confusion in Christendom today regarding what is the “. gift of God”
- is the “. gift of God grace (or) faith” in Eph 2:8-9 ???
- now, the key in understanding Eph 2:8-9 is to apply sound hermeneutical principles of interpretation
- hermeneutics in its simplest form is the art and science of Biblical interpretation
- hermeneutics includes applying the process of exegesis which is extracting the meaning out of the text
- and one of the ways we do this is by a critical analysis of key words and phrases found in the text we are examining
- now, for those of us who cannot speak Hebrew or Greek, which are the languages in which the O.T. and N.T. were written in the original manuscripts, we have resources available to assist us in understanding these languages
- resources developed by Hebrew and Greek scholars for the sole purpose in assisting us in determining the meaning of the text
- respected and proven resources like; Word Studies of the O.T., Word Studies of the N.T., Lexicons, Expository Dictionaries, Exhaustive Concordances, Word Picture Studies, Commentaries, etc.
- resources given to the church by men gifted by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the church Eph 4:12
- thus, in Eph 2:8-9, we begin with the phrase “For by” which simply means; ‘because of or due to’

- the next word or phrase we want to look at is the word “grace”
- the word “grace” comes from the Greek word “charis” (khar-ece) which literally means; ‘that which bestows favorable regard or divine favor’
- the next word is “saved”
- the word “saved” comes from the Greek word “sozo” (sode-zo) which literally means; ‘deliverance from danger or in a spiritual sense eternal salvation granted’
- next, the word “faith”
- the word “faith” comes from the Greek word “pistis” (pis-tis) which literally means; ‘a firm persuasion or a firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgement’
- thus, combining these four words we can accurately render the first phrase in vs. 8; ‘Because of divine favor (grace) you have been granted a firm persuasion (faith)’
- now, the **most important** word in our text, is the word “that”
- the word “that” is a demonstrative pronoun, the Greek word “touto” (tou-to)
- according to the principles of hermeneutics, a demonstrative pronoun refers back to its immediate noun “faith” but also back to “faith’s” predecessor “grace”
- notice the second phrase in vs. 8; “. that (referring to faith and grace) not of yourselves”
- did you catch that, the word “that” which is referring to “faith and grace” is not of you
- in other words, you did not muster up the “faith or grace” to believe
- now, to reinforce the statement “. that faith and grace are not of (you)” the N.T. writer tells you who (faith and grace) come from – they are “. the gift of God”
- beloved, when we accept the finished work of Christ on our behalf, we respond by the “faith” supplied by God’s “grace”
- thus, “faith” is the final “gift” in God’s sovereign chain of salvation
- therefore, vs. 9; “not of works (human will), lest anyone should boast.”

- now, at this point I believe our exegesis is accurate and clear
- but, one of the rules for interpreting God's Word is to prove Scripture with Scripture
- thus, I'd like to support our understanding with further evidence
- and the key words were looking to are; "grace, faith, believed"
- turn with me please to Acts 3:16, Acts 13:48, Phil 1:29, Titus 3:5-7, II Pet 1:1
- Acts 3:16; ". through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the *faith which comes through Him* has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." Emphasis Added
- Acts 13:48; "Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as *had been appointed to eternal life believed.*" Emphasis Added
- Phil 1:29; "For to you *it has been granted* on behalf of Christ, *not only to believe* in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Emphasis Added
- Titus 3:5-7; "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been *justified by His grace* we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Emphasis Added
- II Pet 1:1; "To those who have obtained like precious *faith* with us *by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ*" Emphasis Added

In Closing:

- loved ones, to clear up the confusion regarding what is the “. gift of God” in Eph 2:8-9, we honored sound interpretation principles for Biblical fidelity
- what we did here was allow the Word of God to instruct us to the meaning of passage
- now, the opposite of what we just did is to torture the text
- and if you torture the text long enough it will confess to anything
- but, honest students of God’s Word will always allow the text to instruct its true meaning
- and as lovers of God’s Word that’s what we must do every time we approach Scripture to understand its meaning
- if God’s meaning is what we are truly after
- shall we pray

The Doctrines of Grace Bibliography

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II. Commentaries:

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- “I Peter Commentary” by D. Edmond Hiebert
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III. Resources and Study Guides:

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