

Main Idea: Only God can give what we need; the grace that leads to Salvation

Review:

- 2.1-3 The “Who” of Salvation = Who needs to be changed?
- 2.4-6 The “What” of Salvation = What exactly is it?
- 2.7 The “Why of Salvation = Why would God take action?
- 2.8-9 The “How” of Salvation = How do I actually get saved?
- 2.10 The “What Then” of Salvation = What do I do now?

I. God’s Purpose in Salvation – 2:7 *“SO THAT in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

ἵνα ἐνδείξηται ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις τὸ ὑπερβάλλον πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἐν χρηστότητι ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

EXPL: The “WHY” of Salvation – Verse 7 begins with a purpose clause. The purpose and reason for why God would save any of us is now explained.

Q# What is the purpose of God changing our lives? = To direct all the glory to Him and thus, bring balance to the moral order of the universe that has been upset by sin.

Q# What is so far beyond anything else? v.7 the wealth/riches of His grace

Q# What is grace? God’s Riches at Christ’s Expense

Q# Why would God do any of this when He would be totally “in the Right” to give us straight justice?

= Because of His own merciful character.¹

- 1) Mercy
- 2) Great love
- 3) Rich grace
- 4) Kindness

II. God’s Plan of Salvation – 2:8-9

A. Source of Salvation – 2:8 *“For by grace are you saved”*

τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι

σεσωσμένοι – perf, pass, part, masc, nom = Salvation is a completed act with continuing effects.

W. Curtis Vaughan comments, “The experience has been likened to that of a man in a shipwreck. From the moment he is taken out of the icy water into the lifeboat, he is a saved

¹ Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians: The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 164.

man. He may scarcely feel his safety or be relieved from his fears; indeed, there may pass man long hours before his feet touch the dry land and his rescue is complete. Nonetheless, from the moment he is in the boat he is safe.”²

Q# What is Grace?

- “Favor shown to the utterly undeserving.”³

*God was not obligated to save anybody. Nothing in the Gospel points to God being required to save *anyone*. It’s easy to think of God saving and forgiving just because He is God.

Q# Who provides Salvation? = God

Q# Why would He provide it for us when we are like we are? = Because He is full of loving-kindness!

Q# How can you be saved? Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us clearly. You cannot save yourself but doing better or turning over a new leaf. You are saved by grace.

B. Means of Salvation – 2:8 “through faith”

διὰ πίστεως is a ‘dative of means...that should not be taken as God’s or Christ’s ‘faithfulness’ ...but as man’s ‘faith.’”⁴

*Faith is the transfer of authority and trust from yourself to God.

“Faith, with an empty hand, and without any pretense to personal desert, receives the heavenly blessing.” – John Wesley⁵

Q# Is the faith or the grace not from us? = Obviously the grace is not from us but is the text saying that the faith is also a gift? Could it be that faith, in addition to grace is an undeserved gift of God?

Some theologians teach that this faith is something that God works in us. To say that one must exercise his or her own faith by repenting and believing in Christ as Savior and Lord, would be, in a sense, earning one’s Salvation (or so the argument goes). I do not see the text supporting this conclusion. The means of salvation is by one exercising their faith. How is this not a meritorious “work?” For the simple reason that the faith is exercised in receiving a gift. You cannot earn a gift. Humbly receiving an undeserved gift is the antitheses of not earning a wage. Moreover, receiving a gift (the gift of Salvation through faith), is an absolute acknowledgement of your total inability to earn Salvation.

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

*John Calvin says ‘Faith,’ ‘brings a man empty to God, that he may be filled with the blessings of Christ.’⁶

² W. Curtis Vaughan, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1963), 48.

³ Ibid, 49

⁴ William J. Larkin, *Ephesians: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 33.

⁵ John Wesley, *Commentary on Ephesians*, Alethia in Heart, digital file [CD-ROM].

John Wesley says, “Neither this faith nor this salvation is owing to any works you ever did, will, or can do.”⁷

C. Conditions of Salvation – 2:8 “and that not of yourselves”
καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν,

D. Offer of Salvation – 2:8 “it is the gift of God, not of works”
θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον·

Oswald Chambers writes, “The only sign that a man is saved is that he has received something from Jesus Christ.”⁸

Q# What will I have to give up? All the pride that makes you do silly things. You will have to give up your pride that is the same thing that got the devil kicked out of heaven and has a future date set for the lake of fire. You will have to give up your having to control everything in your life because you are the boss. That is the very thing why you have to be on all kinds of medication for your nerves. You worry all the time because your life is not in the hands of God who protects His children. You will have to give up your selfishness which quite frankly is the very reason why your mind and your life is the screwed up mess that it is today. = You know what you have to give up.

Q# So what do you get? Everlasting life, a cleared conscience, a resurrected spirit, a renewed mind and a changed will. I must also warn you that if you choose to follow Jesus today, there is something else that you are promised and it is called tribulation and persecution. Satan will try to throw everything he has at you but he can never harm your relationship with God. We don't come to Jesus for a better life; we come to Jesus because He is the only One that can save us from the lake of fire. One more truth about this great gift is this; love. When we look at the blood-stained cross where the Son of God died, and then turn our gaze to ourselves, we are nailed by the reality of how much He did not deserve the death He died. We see how much we deserve to go to hell because of all our wickedness. Our mind and heart race to find a logical answer as to why this seeming injustice took place. The answer is very simple = John 3:16 says, “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

E. Rationale of Salvation – 2:9 “so that no one can boast.”
Wycliffe Bible Commentary:

There will be no boasting in heaven because there will be no one there who has anything to boast about.⁹

⁶ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1948), 227. Cited in Vaughan, 49.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, 7.

⁹ C.F. Pfeiffer, and E.F. Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Eph 2:8) (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), in *Logos Library System* [CD-ROM].

I Cor. 4:7 “*For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*”

John Calvin:

In these three phrases, *--not of yourselves,--it is the gift of God,--not of works*, he [Paul] embraces the substance of his long argument in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians, that righteousness comes to us from the mercy of God alone, *--is offered to us in Christ by the gospel,--and is received by faith alone, without the merit of works.*”¹⁰

Q# What can happen once I get saved?

*Many people have irrational fears about getting saved. Here are any number of things that will happen once you get saved:

- (1) God will Take away your guilt
- (2) God will Give you a Clear/Clean Conscience
- (3) God will heal broken relationships with your spouse
- (4) God will fuse together fractured relationships with your children
- (5) God will give you a desire to learn about Him that you’ve never had before
- (6) God will instill in you an overwhelming love for other people
- (7) God will cause to spring up a passion for the Gospel and seeing other people saved
- (8) God will give you strength to handle people thinking that you are on a weird religious kick
- (9) God will be with you wherever you go and will never let you down
- (10) God will give you the strength to withstand persecution and torture and not renounce the name of Christ

Q# Why do I need it? Why is it so necessary?

Because without it we are:

- 1) Dead to God 2:1
- 2) Deceived by Satan 2:2
- 3) Slaves to Sin 2:2
- 4) Condemned by God because of our sin 2:3

In order for the Spirit of God to teach you, two things must happen:

1. He reaches down and touches you
2. You reach up in humility¹¹

Oswald Chambers, “God nowhere tells us to give up things for the sake of giving them up. He tells us to give them up for the sake of the only thing worth having—viz., life with Himself.”¹²

¹⁰ John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1948), 228.

¹¹ Dr. Malcolm Yarnell, CHAHT 4303, Fall 2005.

¹² Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Discovery House: Grand Rapids, 1963), 6.