

## THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

### "Gratuitous Salvation"

Ephesians 2:8-10

#### Introduction

1. The great need of men for salvation is patent (vv. 1-3). This destitution before God has been met by God (vv. 4-7). Salvation is a reality for the Ephesians (v. 5).
2. So marvelous is God's method to save that an eternity will display it (v. 7). This is God's plan for exhibition throughout the ages, hence the future will never tire to magnify God's grace in salvation.
3. That grace is the dominant note in salvation is further emphasized (vv. 8, 9). The means of salvation must not be forgotten. Therefore the reason for future show of grace (v. 7) is now given with a further witness to grace.

#### 1. THE CONDITION OF SALVATION v. 8.

The verb "ye are saved" is the translation of the perfect tense. It points to a decisive experience in the past, but it also emphasizes the present condition rising out of that past act. The three tenses of salvation are clearly noted in Philippians 1:6: a. Past (He has begun a good work), b. Present (He will perform it), c. Future (until the day of Jesus Christ). That salvation is God's process is also taught by the present tense "are being saved" (1 Cor. 1:18).

#### 2. THE PROVISION OF SALVATION vv. 8, 9.

##### a. Negatively.

1) Not of yourself. The unaided human will cannot provide salvation (cf. John 1:12,13). While the will of man must be activated (John 7:17), it is never the single factor to save. The "that" is a reference to the whole process of salvation including faith.

2) Not of works. Here is a corollary to the previous item. Personal effort is not adequate to save. The Greek preposition used shows that moral fitness or efforts are not the source of salvation. This would lead to the belief that personal strength and insight were responsible to save. That would bring pride. This cannot be tolerated.

b. Positively.

1) By grace. Sovereign grace is the key to salvation. Its basic meaning is that of favor shown to the utterly undeserving. It asserts that God was under no obligation to save anyone, but rises from God's bounty and not as a reward for merit. The word is used more than 150 times in the New Testament and almost 100 times by Paul alone.

2) Through faith. Faith must not be assumed as the meritorious ground or procuring cause of salvation. Rather, faith is the appropriating means. Faith brings an empty man to God that God may save him.

NOTE. These negative and positive items enforce salvation as a "gift of God." This is truly the summary. Salvation is God's gift and that excludes all human credit. Man has nothing (vv. 1-3). God has done everything (vv. 4-7). Salvation is totally gratuitous. Oh, to bow in adoration for such a blessing.

3. THE INTENTION OF SALVATION v. 10.

a. Production.

The word "workmanship" means masterpiece. Transliterated it is poem. Salvation evidences God's highest, finest, and most beautiful expression of God's thought. "His" is emphatic. The idea confirms that salvation is of God and not ourselves.

b. Creation.

The masterpiece is a new creation of God. The first defected (vv. 2, 3). He has made a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Education, training, culture, etc. are no substitute for this new creation (John 3:3). Oh, to see that God has done something new and not patched up the old.

c. Occupation.

This is the stress point of the verse. Good works are not the ground of salvation, but they are its fruit and proof. We are most assuredly saved for good works. These good works were prepared beforehand by God in anticipation of our restored ability and readiness to engage in them. The new creation has good works (Tit. 2:14).

Conclusion. World religions speak about religious acts to perform or taboos to avoid. The Bible advances a salvation entirely gratuitously. It cries "it is finished" (John 19:30). Faith accepts that verdict.