IS SAVING FAITH THE GIFT OF GOD?

By Brother Mike Sutherland

> [8] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast. *Ephesians 2:8-9*

Before I get into my intended subject, I want to state at the outset that this article is not an argument against biblical repentance. If you have not repented, then you are yet in your sins and you will die and burn for an eternity in the Devil's hell. If you have not repented, then you did not exercise biblical saving faith. I have written and taught in much depth on the absolute necessity of repentance in salvation. Many fundamentalist preachers and teachers rightly expound and pound on the absolute necessity of repentance as an element of biblical salvation, but they teach and preach the required repentance in an unscriptural manner. In doing so, many, if not most, Independent Baptist preachers make repentance a work of the flesh, or of the will of man (*John 1:13*). Because of that error, many Independent Baptist preachers are rightly accused of advocating a works based salvation, or the Calvinistic doctrine of "*Lordship Salvation*". They are right on the necessity of repentance in salvation, but they use theological error to advocate for a doctrine that is plainly taught in the King James Bible. Repentance is a gift from the Holy Ghost that is received through saving faith. Repentance is a work of the Holy Ghost. By the way, "Lordship Salvation" is a theological red herring. Repentance is God's proof to us that we have exercised bible believing, saving faith. In other words, it is proof to those that claim salvation that they have not received a false gospel that has deceived them about their salvation. The Holy Ghost is not going to give the gift of repentance to an individual that has not exercised saving faith. If an individual has not, and will not, repent(ed), it is evidence that they have not exercised saving faith. If you have not repented, it is God's red flag to you that you are not saved. You are still on your way to hell regardless of how many faithless sinner's prayers you have prayed. For a very in depth study on repentance click **HERE** .

Putting repentance before faith is akin to putting regeneration before faith. Neither can happen without the exercise of saving faith: no faith, no regeneration; no faith, no repentance. Both false constructs conspire to pervert the biblical order of salvation. Both are Calvinistic theological narratives that do not pass the test of rightly dividing the word of truth. It is a false theological narrative that receives much of its support from a gross misinterpretation of *Ephesians 2:8-9* (more on that later). Let me be clear, I am not accusing someone of being a Calvinist just because they mistakenly believe that (1) repentance comes before faith, or (2) that faith is a product of repentance based upon a misinterpretation of *Ephesians 2:8-9*. Some preachers want to break your theological neck if they even think that you are accusing them of being a Calvinist. However, if you believe that regeneration comes before faith, then you are a Calvinist and you rightly own that title. I have heard many Independent Baptist preachers strongly condemn the doctrines of Calvinism and in the same sermon embrace the Calvinistic interpretation of *Ephesians 2:8-9*. Many of them will get irate with you when you point out that inconsistency. With the commendable goal of wanting to give God all the glory, they will state in their sermons that salvation is all of God and then state that, "*even the faith that it takes to get saved is a gift from God*". It is time to throw the King James Bible yellow flag. That will be a 15 yard penalty and loss of down for using theological error in an attempt to correct the grammar of the King James Bible. Also, for you lovers of "*the Original Greek*" any

attempt to correct the grammar of the King James Bible with "*the Original Greek*" will be met with failure also: for shame, for shame, for shame! They have blasphemed the gods of modern scholarolatry! The most overworked men in the ministry are those so-called King James Bible advocates that go slithering around in "*the Original Greek*"looking for golden nuggets that turn out to be fool's gold. Many of them are incapable of expounding the meaning of "*the Original English*" because they are such poor students of English grammar and English punctuation. Many will be highly offended by that statement, but that is the crux of the problem that is before us. Furthermore, even the vaunted "*Original Greek*" of *Ephesians 2:8-9* destroys the doctrine that says saving faith is a gift of God. I make no real appeal to the non existent "*originals*" of the Greek. Any mention by me of "*the Original Greek*" is intended as pure sarcasm. The only time I appeal to "*the Original Greek*" is to show how utterly useless it is when you have a King James Bible. More is to come on the use of the "*Original Greek*" later.

I cannot count the number of times that I have heard it stated from an Independent Baptist pulpit that, "even the faith it takes to get saved is a gift from God". I totally reject that statement based upon the English grammar of the King James Bible. It is the objective of this article to refute the idea that saving faith is a gift of God. Before I proceed with that effort, I need to make several more comments about Calvinism.

I know that it offends many of my Independent Baptist brethren, but it is the doctrines of Calvinism that have corrupted the interpretation of *Ephesians 2:8-9*. I have studied Calvinism in great depth and have learned much from that study. Many Independent Baptist preachers will tell you that they are a 2 or 3 point Calvinists without having any understanding of the monster they are embracing. There are five points of classical Calvinism that are euphemistically referred to as the TULIP. If Independent Baptist pastors would do a thorough study of all five points of Calvinism, they would learn that every point of it is unscriptural as taught by the Calvinists themselves. They take five totally orthodox biblical doctrines and pervert every one of them with the philosophies of Gnosticism, Roman Catholicism, and Islam. The Calvinist doctrine of predestination as taught by the Calvinists themselves would be applauded by the Imam of any Muslim mosque. Many Independent Baptist preachers latch onto the false doctrine of "*Preservation of the Saints*" because they mistake it for the biblical doctrine of eternal security. It is the opposite of eternal security being nothing more than a repackaging and rebranding of the ages old works based salvation delusion. Some Independent Baptists blindly claim some of the tenets of Calvinism, but they do not want the title. They call themselves Sovereign Grace, Primitive, or Reformed Baptists. What they are is Presbyterians masquerading as Baptists. One of the books that I recently read, likened the five points of Calvinism to a pentagram.

To the Calvinists, the very idea that an unsaved person could have their own faith with the free will to exercise it, is a violation of the sovereignty of God! The god of Calvinism sits in heaven wringing his hands and quaking in fear over what choices fallen man might make next. Let me give you a wake up call! **Had Adam and Eve not had free will, the fall of man would have never taken place.** That would make A. W. Pink turn over in his grave, but God is not the author of sin! Every if, if not, will, will not, should, and should not in the pages of the King James Bible that applies to mankind's directions from God is an argument against the Calvinistic rejection of the biblical doctrine of free will. If man does not have free will, the Ten Commandments are the most

useless commands ever written. If people do not have free will, they cannot be justly judged and sentenced to hell? My rejoinder to the Calvinists would be: "*Shall not the Judge of all earth do right?*". If the things the Calvinists accuse their god of were true, that god would be no less a monster than the god of Islam; that blood thirsty Allah that predestines people to hell! Islam is another doctrine of devils.

The whole false doctrine of Calvinism rests upon a foundation that depends on the total destruction of any idea that mankind has a free will. The logical consequence of that doctrine is that if there is no free will, then there cannot be any existence or exercise of faith. Several years back I wrote an extended article (17 typewritten pages) titled "*God's Will And Man's Will*" that totally destroys Martin Luther's, John Calvin's, and Augustine of Hippo's Satanic doctrine of total depravity. I call out those three "*doctors of the law*" because they are the most prominent. There are, and have been, many partakers in their evil deeds including Baptists. Among the Baptists we would include Charles Spurgeon, John Gill, and A.W. Pink. I do not use commentaries, men's books or "*the Original Greek*" to destroy their false doctrine. I use the pages of the King James Bible. For an in depth study on what the Bible has to say about free will click **HERE** .

As I exit these brief comments on Calvinism, I highly recommend two books that are probably the best books ever written refuting the false doctrine of Calvinism: one written by an Independent Baptist, Laurence Vance; and one written by Dave Hunt who was loosely associated with the Plymouth Brethren. These books are: (1) The Other Side Of Calvinism, Laurence M. Vance, Vance Publications, Copyright 1999, 788 pages (2)What Love Is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation Of God, Dave Hunt, The Berean Call, Copyright 2004, 573 pages.

> [8] For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: [9] Not of works, lest any man should boast. *Ephesians 2:8-9*

SAVING FAITH IS NOT THE GIFT OF GOD. The only time that "*faith*" and "*gift*" occur together in the same verse in the King James Bible is in *Ephesians 2:8*. In *Ephesians 2:8*, faith is not the gift; salvation is. As we progress through the next several pages, I want you to keep this question in the back of your mind: "*If saving faith is a gift of God, then what could God possibly require of a lost sinner as a condition to receive salvation*"?. Salvation is by grace through faith. It (salvation) is the gift of God. There is nothing that you can do to merit salvation; you cannot work for it, you cannot pay for it, and you cannot steal it because it is in an impenetrable vault covered by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. No matter how much grace God brings to the table, you are not going to benefit from it if you do not exercise faith. No matter how much faith you bring to the table you do not merit God's grace. The Bible tells us that faith is not a work of the human will or human labor. The Bible also tells us that the repentance that comes with salvation is not an act of the human will or human labor. Repentance is a gift (give or granted) of God the Holy Ghost. Repentance is God the Holy Ghost working in and through you to produce works meet for repentance. The King James Bible states the following in *Acts 5:31*, *Acts 11:18*, and *2 Timothy 2:25*:

> [31] Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. *Acts 5:31*

> [18] When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. *Acts 11:18*
>
> [25] In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; *2 Timothy 2:25*

Acts 5:31 and *Acts 11:18* are definitely given in the context of salvation. Some would debate whether *2 Timothy 2:25* is talking of salvation choosing rather to believe that it is discussing repentance from false doctrine. Verse 19 of *2 Timothy 2* would seem to caste some doubt on that interpretation because "*The Lord knoweth them that are his*" would seem to indicate that there are some there that the Lord does not acknowledge as his.

I say again, God does not give us saving faith. **If God gives us saving faith, then why is it that most people do not get saved?** If faith is the gift of God, then what are God's conditions to get saved? Faith is God's condition for receiving the gift of salvation. To deny man's free exercise of faith is to deny God's sovereign act of granting mankind free will. Our exercising faith, is not a violation of God's sovereignty: our faith is an affirmation of God's sovereignty. Only a truly sovereign God would, or could, grant his subjects free will. By our faith, we are acknowledging that God has the right, or the sovereignty, to set the conditions for our salvation. When a lost sinner rejects the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, they are rejecting God's will for their lives. In a very real sense, the lost sinner is denying God the sovereignty over their lives that he desires, but will not force them to believe. The Calvinistic doctrine of irresistible grace is blatantly unscriptural. The Holy Ghost had this to say concerning God's will for the lost sinner in *2 Peter 3:9*:

> [9] The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. *2 Peter 3:9*

It is not God's will that you burn in hell (perish) for eternity. The choice is yours. If you do not exercise faith, then you will go to hell. If you do not make the choice to choose the Lord Jesus Christ, then God makes the choice to cast you into hell and then the lake of fire. God builds into the conscious of every human being the ability to exercise faith. **There is not a verse in the Bible that says God gives faith to an unsaved man. It is not saving faith that is the gift of God. Being saved is the gift of God.** I intend to prove those last two statements when we look at the grammar of *Ephesians 2:8-9***.** Here is God's equation for salvation: God's Grace PLUS Man's Faith = Man's Salvation. God supplies his grace and YOU must supply YOUR faith to claim the gift of salvation.

There are those who argue that you can never believe unless you have repented. In my estimation, that makes faith a work of repentance. The Bible says: "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." *Acts 20:21.* You cannot use the order of a words in one verse to establish a doctrine that contradicts other verses on that doctrine. *Acts 20:21* is not a "*first this*" and a "*then this*" statement. It is a "*this*" AND "*that*"

statement. God's requirement is repentance AND faith; neither of which is a work of man. **In short, there is no bible verse that says you have to repent before you can exercise faith.** If there is, I have never seen it and would love to see it.

There are also those who contend that faith is a product of repentance. I would argue for the opposite conclusion. Repentance is a product of faith. Put another way, repentance is a gift given by the Holy Ghost that must be received through the hands of a person's faith. The all important distinction is in who works the repentance that is acceptable unto God. It is not me. It is the Holy Ghost in me. The Holy Ghost is not in me until I exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If faith is a product of man's repentance, independent of the work of the Holy Ghost, then faith becomes a filthy work of the flesh, or of the will of man. How is it that a man has the power to repent if the Holy Ghost is not in him. I personally tried that and it did not work because it was faithless repentance. I tried over and over to repent of my filthy works in the power of my flesh; even shedding many tears over it in cries of desperation to no avail. I was much like Esau of whom the Holy Ghost said: "For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." *Hebrews 12:17*. I did not find a place of repentance until I gave up on myself and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. He CHANGED that which I was unable to change. I came out of the reformatory of works into the hall of faith. Hallelujah! I gave my testimony to Pastor and Evangelist Sammy Allen a number of years ago. His response to me was that I was repenting **BEFORE** I got saved. That repentance was my faithless dead works given in response to Holy Ghost conviction. That is the reaction of many unsaved folks to the conviction and calling of the Holy Ghost. It was a cycle that I went through over, and over, and over again until I gave up on myself and found myself at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a sweet day that was when I ceased from my own works and rested in the works of the Lord Jesus Christ. No! No! No! I do not believe that we will find anyone in heaven that can say, "*because I repented, God gave me faith*". That would make faith a work.

Faith, by scriptural definition, is not a work. Put another way, if a man cannot be saved by works, then faith cannot be a work. If, as the Calvinists claim, faith is a work, then faith would not be acceptable unto God as a condition for salvation. Neither is man's faith a payment for salvation. God's condition for salvation is codified in the law of faith. *Romans 3:23-31* says:

> [23] For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [24] Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: [25] Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; [26] To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. [27] Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? **Nay: but by the law of faith**. [28] Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. [29] *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: [30] Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. [31] Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. *Romans 3:23-31*

IS SAVING FAITH THE GIFT OF GOD?

If saving faith is a gift that is not of ourselves, then we have a problem. According to the New Testament faith is a personal possession. It uses the possessive pronouns "*thy*" and "*your*". It uses the term "*thy faith*" eleven different times and the term "*your faith*" is used twenty-four different times. In no case is there any indication that that faith had to be sovereignly bestowed before it could be exercised. In eight of the eleven uses of the phrase "*thy faith*" the Lord Jesus Christ is performing miracle healings. In six of those eight passages, the Lord Jesus Christ made the statement (or similar), "*thy faith hath made thee whole*". In two of the passages that use the phrase "*thy faith*", it is stated by the Lord Jesus Christ, "*thy faith hath saved thee*". *Luke 7:49-50* and *Luke 18:41-42* state the following::

> [49] And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? [50] And he said to the woman, **Thy faith** hath **saved** thee; go in peace. *Luke 7:49-50*

> [41] Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. [42] And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: **thy faith** hath **saved** thee. *Luke 18:41-42*

Nowhere in those passages is it indicated, or insinuated, that the faith that healed them or SAVED them was a gift. It was "*thy faith*" that saved thee. Of the twenty-four occurrences of the phrase "*your faith*", at least five of those are used in verses where salvation is in the immediate context. These five verses are *1 Corinthians 15:14*, *1 Corinthians 15:17*, *Ephesians 1:15*, *Colossians 1:4*, and *1 Peter 1:9* which state the following:

> [14] And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and **your faith** *is* also vain. *1 Corinthians 15:14*

> [17] And if Christ be not raised, **your faith** *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. *1 Corinthians 15:17*

> [15] Wherefore I also, after I heard of **your faith** in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, *Ephesians 1:15*

> [4] Since we heard of **your faith** in Christ Jesus, and of the love *which ye have* to all the saints, *Colossians 1:4*

> [9] Receiving the end of **your faith**, *even* the salvation of *your* souls. *1 Peter 1:9*

The immediate context of *1 Corinthians 15:1-18* is the resurrection that is brought to you through **your faith**. The other three passages in *Ephesians 1:15*, *Colossians 1:4*, and *1 Peter 1:9* speak directly for themselves. There are numerous verses in the King James Bible that say salvation comes

through faith or by faith, but none of them say that faith is a gift. However, *Romans 6:23* does say that eternal life is the gift of God. Some try to use *Romans 12:3* as an argument that saving faith is a gift. Looking at that passage in context we see:

> [1] I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. [2] And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. [3] For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. *Romans 12:1-3*

Verse 1 tells us that the passage is written to brethren; in other words, it is written to those who have already exercised saving faith. They are saved sinners. From the context of *Romans 12:1-8*, it is obvious that what is in view is serving faith. It is the faith that is dealt to saved folk to exercise the differing gifts that the Holy Ghost has given to the church and the believer (verse 6).

Some years ago, I attempted to have a web site that specialized in English grammar to diagram *2 Thessalonians 2:3-7* and to give a strict grammatical interpretation of who or what was the antecedent of the "*he*" in verse 7. Mind you that I was not asking for a theological opinion. I never received a response to any of my questions. I was, and still am, convinced that the theology of some folks has led them to violate the rules of English grammar and punctuation in *2 Thessalonians 2*. We Independent Baptists rightly demand that the scriptures be interpreted literally and in their normal grammatical sense, but when it comes to *Ephesians 2:8-9* we violate that rule because we let Calvinistic theology force us to violate the rules of English Grammar. Again, I am not interested in a theological interpretation; I just want to know what does the English grammar and punctuation say. The same issue of "what is the antecedent" in *2 Thessalonians 2:3-7* exists with the interpretation of *Ephesians 2:8*. What is the antecedent of the pronoun "it" in the phrase "*it is a gift of God*".

I have seen all the contorted Greek arguments on *Ephesians 2:8* that appeal to the masculine, feminine, and neuter of "*the Greek*". I do not need to appeal to those arguments if I will make a concerted effort to understand the English grammar and punctuation of my King James Bible. If I believe that my King James Bible is perfect, and I do, then I must believe that the English grammar and punctuation in it are perfect too.

One of the cardinal rules of English grammar is that "*a prepositional phrase will never contain the subject of a sentence*". The phrase "*through faith*" is a prepositional phrase. Therefore, faith cannot be the subject of the sentence. For the same reason "grace" cannot be the subject of the sentence. The phrase "*through faith*" tells us HOW we come to salvation. Grace is God's side of the salvation equation and faith is man's side of the salvation equation. Personal faith is the hand through which the gift of salvation passes. I also think that the prepositional phrase "through faith" is being used as an adverb to modify or qualify the verb phrase "*are ye saved*". I also think that the phrase "*For by grace*" is yet another prepositional phrase that is being used as an adverb to modify or qualify the verb phrase "*are ye saved*". What that all means to me is that the phrase "*are ye saved*" is the subject of the sentence. That means that salvation is the subject of the sentence. That being

said, I think that the phrase "*it is a gift of God*" refers to the subject of the independent clause that preceded it. That subject is salvation (i.e. are ye saved). So, that makes the gift of God salvation and not faith. In other words the phrase "are ye saved" is the antecedent of the pronoun "*it*". That is my English grammatical interpretation of *Ephesians 2:8*. If my grammatical interpretation is wrong, I want someone to tell me so that I can correct my error. Saying that you know that I am wrong based upon your theology or the theology of your favorite teacher or preacher will not be acceptable. You will have to convince me from the text of the King James Bible. Throughout this document, that has been the basis of my argument rejecting the idea that "*saving faith is a gift of God*". What this paragraph should have done is alert us to the absolute necessity to know and APPLY the rules of English grammar and punctuation in our interpretation of the King James Bible.

Some time ago in a Sunday School I ask the Sunday School Class if there was anyone in the class who was well versed in English grammar. Two ladies volunteered that they were. So, after Sunday School, I asked them to do an analysis of the English grammar in *Ephesians 2:8*. Little did I know that one of those ladies has been an English grammar teacher for years. Her husband came up to me after the morning service and handed me a piece of paper where she had diagramed all of *Ephesians 2:8*. It brought back all of my English grammar nightmares, but it confirmed my understanding of *Ephesians 2:8*. Later that evening the other lady also confirmed my understanding of the grammar in *Ephesians 2:8*. I told both of them that I was not looking for a theological or doctrinal interpretation of the verse. My request was simply, what does the grammar say?. Both of them confirmed that salvation, and not faith was the gift of God being discussed in *Ephesians 2:8-9*. Take the following sentence and diagram it using the rules of English Grammar:"*For by penicillin are you saved through antibiotic action; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of modern medicine: Not of your body's efforts, lest any person should boast*." What is the subject of that sentence? I challenge you to give it to any individual who has taught English at the high school or university level and ask them to diagram it for you and tell you what the gift of the sentence is. The English Grammar will not allow anything but the phrase "*are you saved*" to be the gift of modern medicine. We walked penicillin in for grace and antibiotic action for faith, but the grammatical construction of the sentence is exactly the same as *Ephesians 2:8-9* . The phrase "*through antibiotic action*" is a prepositional phrase that tells you how you are saved. That should settle the issue. We should NEVER let our theology preempt the literal interpretation and English Grammar of our King James Bibles. The translators of the King James Bible were the experts of experts in English Grammar. At the very end of this study I have included an image of that sentence that was diagramed by that lady in the Sunday School class.

I also have a Biblical reservation to making the "*faith*" of *Ephesians 2:8* the gift of God. I believe that to do so gives an opening to the Calvinists to exploit their perverted doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace. It begs the question that if faith is the gift of God, then why is it that everyone does not come to salvation? The Calvinist would say its because saving faith is only a gift given to the elect after regeneration. To the Calvinist, if an individual must exercise faith to claim the gift of salvation, then that robs God of his sovereignty. What an insecure god the god of Calvinism is! The Calvinists err here because they make faith a work in clear violation of numerous scriptures. In the Calvinistic system, the sovereignty of God trumps every exercise of faith in the New Testament whether it be for salvation or service. John Calvin's erroneous viewpoint of

Ephesians 2:8 was that the grace, the salvation, and the faith were ALL the gift of God.

God gives individuals the ability, and the option, to exercise faith. God does not exercise that faith for them. True saving faith in the lost sinner combines with the grace of God, wrought through the Holy Ghost, to produce saving faith and repentance in the lost sinner (2 Corinthians 7:9-10). Salvation is God's gift to all those who respond to his word through faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (*Romans 10:17*). Faith in one sense is an act of obedience to the word of God (*Romans 10:6*), but that does not make it a work. **If faith is the gift of God to the unbeliever, then what obligation is there upon the unbeliever to "believe" the gospel? Put another way, if faith is the gift, then what is God's condition that is placed upon the unbeliever in order to receive salvation**? Making faith the gift of God in *Ephesians 2:8* also opens the door for the Universalists to claim that everyone will be saved and for the Calvinists to claim that faith is only given to the elect.

The word "*faith*" is used 247 times in our King James Bible. I have looked at every one of those in context. All of those except two are in the New Testament. The operative words in the Old Testament are "*faithful*" and "*faithfulness*". There is a message in that also. When discussing salvation, "*being faithful*" and "*having faithfulness*" are a product of our works. *2 Thessalonians 3:2* says that "*all men have not faith*". If faith is the gift of God, then why is it that "*all men have not faith*"? Is God a respecter of persons? No! God has given every person the **ability** to exercise faith. In the King James Bible, saving faith is NEVER said to be the gift of God except through a misinterpretation of *Ephesians 2:8*. Faith is the condition of God for salvation. Faith is an act of the human will in response to God's plea for them to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. If you have not exercised **FAITH AND** evidenced **REPENTANCE,** then you are still on your way to hell. If you have exercised saving faith, there is going to be at least some evidence of repentance. That evidence of repentance is going to manifest itself much stronger in individuals who have lived particularly wicked lifestyles. For the church member that gets saved, that evidence is going to be a little more difficult to detect because many of them have had their outsides thoroughly scrubbed by religion. Many Independent Baptists have used 2 Corinthians 5:7 to scrub the outside of the vessel squeaky clean without the Holy Ghost having cleansed the inside of the vessel. They have produced whited sepulchres that are full of dead men's bones, uncleanness, and iniquity. Now let us take an in depth look at the English grammar of *Ephesians 2:8-9*.

The sentence structure, the grammar, and the punctuation of the book of Ephesians is probably among the most complex in the New Testament. As you read the book of Ephesians, you can sense the breathless excitement of the apostle Paul as he explains the great doctrines of salvation. The coordinating conjunction "*for*" in *Ephesians 2:8* joins a long list of coordinating conjunctions that go all the way back to the start of verse 19 in chapter 1. The coordinating conjunction "*for*" at the start of verse 8 links you all the way back through a single sentence that starts in verse 3 that covers five verses before you see a period. Chapters one through three from the book of Ephesians constitute an extended anthem of praise that culminates in the glory of Christ Jesus in *Ephesians 3:21*, Amen!

At the outset of the following discussion, I make this disclaimer. If you read or hear anything that I have written or spoken in my teaching or preaching over my many years of ministry, you will find grammatical and punctuation errors. You will probably find errors in the document that I prepared

for this presentation. However, that is not from wilful neglect. It comes from a lack of attention to detail caused by mental and physical strain. One of the things I have struggled with over the years is when to use a colon versus a semicolon. With all that said, let us proceed with our discussion.

What follows is a bulleted list that outlines the grammatical meat of the argument I have put forth in this article concerning *Ephesians 2:8-9*:

- The object of the preposition **"*by*"** in the prepositional phrase **"*by grace*"** is **"*grace*".**
- The object of the preposition **"*through*"** in the prepositional phrase **"*through faith*"** is **"*faith*".**
- Since both **"*grace*"** and **"*faith*"** are objects of prepositions, by grammatical rule they cannot be the subject of the sentence that is made up of the independent clause, **"*For by grace are ye saved through faith;*".**
- Since **"*grace*"** and **"*faith*"** cannot be the subject of the independent clause, then what is the subject? The subject is contained in the verb phrase **"*are ye saved*". "*Are*"** is the verb. **"*Ye*"** is an indefinite pronoun that is also the subject pronoun. **"*Saved*"** is the adjective that completes the subject clause. We would remind the reader that although "saved" is usually used as either an adjective or a verb, it can be used as a noun. In the phrase **"*are ye saved*",** is contained both the theological and the biblical definition of salvation. Therefore, the subject of the independent clause is salvation.
- The semicolon following the word **"*faith*"** mitigates against the phrase **"*and that not of yourselves*"** being a descriptor or modifier of the word **"*faith*".** The same caveat applies to the phrase (sentence) **"*It is a gift of God*"**. (To the student of English grammar, those statements may seem to be unnecessary.) However,,, comma.....I put this bullet in at this point because I knew there would be some who would try to tie the phrase **"*through faith*"** to the phrase **"*and that not of yourselves*"**
- **"*Ye*"** in the verb phrase **"*are ye saved*"** is both the subject of that phrase and the antecedent for two pronouns. Those two pronouns are "that" in the phrase **"*and <u>that</u> not of yourselves*"** and **"*it*"** in the phrase **"*<u>it</u> is the gift of God*".** Note also the connection and agreement between the plural pronoun **"yourselves"** in the phrase **"*and <u>that</u> not of yourselves*"** and the plural pronoun **"ye"** in the subject clause **"*are ye saved*".** That is not an accident. Let us hear the conclusion of the matter:

Since the pronoun **"*it*"** has as its antecedent the pronoun **"ye",** then the gift referred to in *Ephesians 2:8* is the salvation derived from the interpretation of the phrase **"*are ye saved*".** Therefore, the Calvinistic argument that "faith is the gift" of *Ephesians 2:8-9* does **<u>NOT</u>** fit the grammar and punctuation of *Ephesians 2:8-9*. SAVING FAITH IS NOT THE GIFT OF GOD. After having written this article some years ago, on December 29, 2025 in response to an article on colons by Brother Paul Scott on **purecambridgetext.com** , I wrote the following in response to that post:

> *Then what of the pronoun "it" in the phrase "it is the gift of God". What is the antecedent of the pronoun "it". By grammatical rule, the antecedent of a singular*

pronoun must be a singular noun/noun phrase. What that means is that neither grace or faith can be antecedents of the pronoun "it" because to do so makes the singular "it" refer to TWO nouns. This is my opinion. If the King James translators intended for either "faith" or grace" or "faith and grace" to be antecedents of the pronoun, they would have used the pronoun "both" instead of the pronoun "it". The proper interpretation of both the grammar and the punctuation is critical to the interpretation and application of Ephesians 2:8-9. Therefore, the antecedent of the singular pronoun "it" in the phrase "it is a gift of God"has to be the singular noun phrase "[are] ye saved". Am I wrong?

Going a little further, what is the antecedent of the pronoun "that" in the phrase "and that not of yourselves"?. Practically the same discussion applies as that for the singular pronoun "it". Again, in my opinion, had the King James translators intended for the phrase "and that not of yourselves" to refer to both "grace" and "faith" they would have used the plural pronoun "those" instead of "that" in the phrase "an that not of yourselves".

To go even further, both the colons and the semicolon in Ephesians 2:8-9 are critical to the proper interpretation of those verses. The punctuation in the book of Ephesians is among the most complex in the New Testament.

So, what is the gift of God in Ephesians 2:8-9? Is it faith? Is it grace? Or, is it salvation? Do not let your theology or what you have been taught override the plain words, grammar, and punctuation of the King James Bible.

I am convinced that the "*faith is the gift*" argument is a wresting of the scriptures that results in the destruction of many of its hearers. Calvinism is Satan's subterfuge to subvert and mock the grace and love of God. The unloving and despotic god of the Calvinists would be welcomed into any Muslim mosque. It is the grotesque and ungodly doctrines of Calvinism that motivated me to write this article.

They say it is okay to be a Calvinist just so you are not a hyper-Calvinist. NO! NO! NO! Every point of Calvinism as they are taught by the Calvinists themselves is a doctrine of devils: damnable heresies. To be clear, Calvinism is a misnomer for the Roman Catholic salvation heresy of Augustinianism. The name was changed to Calvinism so that the deceived Protestants would receive it. When it comes to the doctrine of salvation, you would be hard pressed to discern any differences between Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the vaunted (or is that haunted?), unsaintly "Saint" Augustine. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin were anti-Semites. Martin Luther was a rabid Jew hater who went so far as to advocate violence against them and burning down their homes (See Luther's Satanic diatribe "*On The Jews And Their Lies*"). Many of the "*great*" Baptist theologians such as Charles Spurgeon, John Gill, A. W. Pink have been Calvinists who were prolific authors. I do not quote or use their works except as a means to refute their Calvinism. It is tragic that in Baptist churches most of the corrupt theological doctrine especially as it relates to salvation has

come through the pens of Baptist Calvinists. For a more in depth study on Calvinism, click **HERE.** Follow all the links to the linked articles you find on this page until you have completed the study.

It should be noted that one of the greatest English Greek and Hebrew scholars of all time, the King James translator John Bois, refused to use Greek or Hebrew in his pulpit because he feared its use would cast doubt or aspersion upon the King James Bible. For the purpose of defending the King James Bible, I am not opposed to Baptist scholars being more knowledgeable than anyone on the face of the earth in Greek and Hebrew, but Greek and Hebrew have no place behind the lecterns and pulpits in our Baptist congregations. Would to God that our great Greek pretenders in our Baptist pulpits would latch on to the example of John Bois and forever refuse to use Greek in the pulpit or behind the lectern (that includes any would be teachers). I have seen preachers and teachers who could not preach or teach in English for stuttering in "*the Original Greek*". It sounded like a jack hammer in the middle of a migraine headache. If you cannot trust your King James Bible, then by what vast stretch of the imagination do you think you can trust "the Original Greek". Are you going to trust some unsaved, God hating, Christ denying, Christ rejecting, Jew hating (anti-Semitic), Greek and Hebrew scholars to give you an accurate written document that is actually the undefiled word of God?!? Do you want to know why they cannot give you a Bible that you can trust? Let the Holy Ghost tell you from *Titus 1:15-16*::

> [15] Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. [16] They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. *Titus 1:15-16*

It is the utmost in ludicrousness and the utmost height of conceit to think that you could go to "*the Original Greek*" and find a better translation than what was given to you by the King James translators in the pages of the King James Bible. Pastor John M. Asquith had this to say about reference books such as foreign language lexicons:

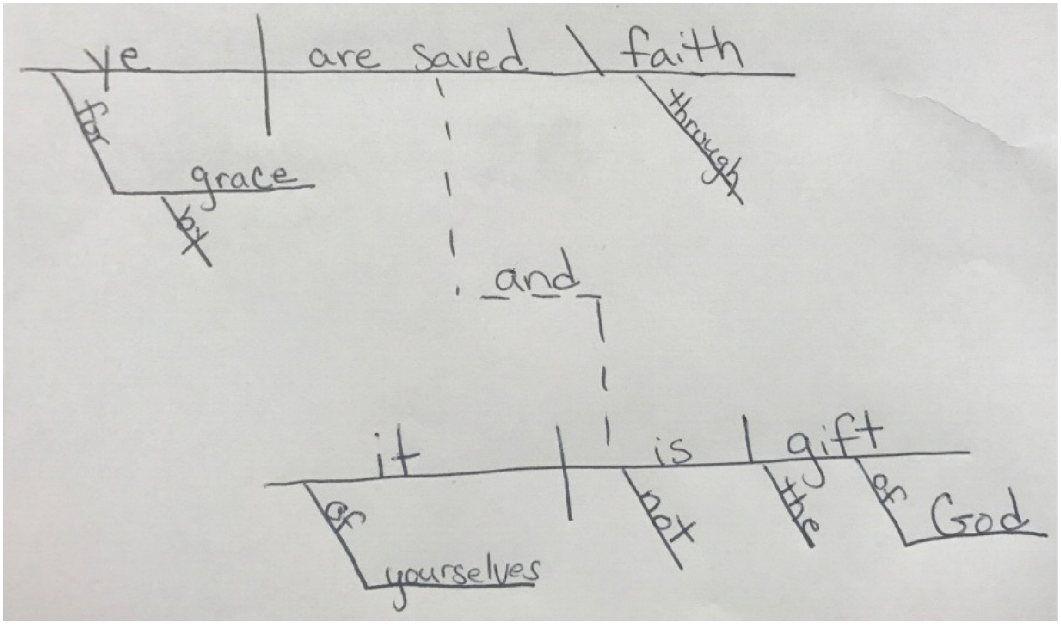
> *I once told a gathering of preachers that I had discovered a reference book in which over 40 of the top Greek and Hebrew scholars of the 17th century had defined every word of the original Greek and Hebrew texts in English. By using that book a person could always know exactly how a particular word should be translated into English for each and every context in which it could be found. It was no longer necessary for a preacher to learn the original languages, he could merely reference that book and know that those same scholars had unanimously agreed on every translation for each context. Those preachers were excited and asked me what the name of the book was. I told them it's a King James Bible.*

What a powerful statement! Brother John Asquith was being kind. At the beginning of the King James Bible translation project, there were 54 translators which eventually fell to 48-49 translators near the end of the project. There is not a translator on the face of the earth today that could compare to the least of the King James translators (and there were 48-49 of them!!). I do not need to appeal

to "the Original Greek"to get the best translation of *Ephesians 2:8-9*. In fact, I do not have to appeal to "*the Original Greek*" or "*the Original Hebrew*" to get the best translation for any passage of scripture in my Bible. I have a King James Bible. In conclusion my Bible is:

THE MIRACULOUSLY MAGNIFICENT AND MAJESTIC KING JAMES BIBLE
(The Crown Jewel of All Bible Translations)

The following diagram of the English Grammar of *Ephesians 2:8-9* was provided to me by Sister Melissa Richmond who teaches English in a Christian School.



Sister Melissa is one of the ladies in the Sunday School class I referred to earlier. Early on, she was one of the sources that I relied upon to help me to interpret the grammar of *Ephesians 2:8-9*. Much of the above bulleted list outlining the grammar of *Ephesians 2:8-9* was reviewed by her before I included it in this document. I added some comments to the list after her review. For her efforts, I am very grateful. It motivated me to conduct a days long and much needed review of the rules of English grammar that I had my first introduction to 63 years ago in the fourth grade. Outside of an eternal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and a King James Bible, the most important asset of an English speaking Christian is a thorough knowledge of English grammar and punctuation. It is almost totally lacking in ALL of our schools regardless of type or association. It is an insidious form of child abuse that is a major contributor to Bible illiteracy in American churches. It forces pastors who do not understand the grammar themselves to bottle and spoon feed their flocks (*Hebrews 5:11-14*).