

Biblical Notes – Ephesians 2:8-10

"The only point in the interpretation of these verses of any doubt, relates to the second clause. What is said to be the gift of God? Is it salvation, or faith? The words καὶ τοῦτο only serve to render more prominent the matter referred to. Compare Rom. 13, 11. 1 Cor. 6, 6. Phil. 1, 28. Heb. 11, 12. They may relate to faith (τὸ πιστεύειν), or to the salvation spoken of (σεσωσμένους εἶναι). Beza, following the fathers, prefers the former reference; Calvin, with most of the modern commentators, the latter. The reasons in favour of the former interpretation are, 1. It best suits the design of the passage. The object of the apostle is to show the gratuitous nature of salvation. This is most effectually done by saying, 'Ye are not only saved by faith in opposition to works, but your very faith is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' 2. The other interpretation makes the passage tautological. To say: 'Ye are saved by faith; not of yourselves; your salvation is the gift of God; it is not of works,' is saying the same thing over and over without any progress. Whereas to say: 'Ye are saved through faith (and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God), not of works,' is not repetitious; the parenthetical clause instead of being redundant does good service and greatly increases the force of the passage. 3. According to this interpretation the antithesis between faith and works, so common in Paul's writings, is preserved. 'Ye are saved by faith, not by works, lest any man should boast.' The middle clause of the verse is therefore parenthetical, and refers not to the main idea ye are saved, but to the subordinate one through faith, and is designed to show how entirely salvation is of grace, since even faith by which we apprehend the offered mercy, is the gift of God. 4. The analogy of Scripture is in favor of this view of the passage, in so far that elsewhere faith is represented as the gift of God. 1 Cor. 1, 26-31. Eph. 1, 19. Col. 2, 12, et passim."

— Charles Hodge, Commentary on Ephesians 2:8-10.