

What Does Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV Mean?

By Moshe Schwab

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:8-10 NKJV

Explanation

We have been rescued by God's undeserved favor (we can't work for it). Because we trusted in God's Messiah Yeshua, we received the gift of the Holy Spirit. God is at work in us through the Holy Spirit to help us keep His commandments; we are created to keep God's good commandments; He chose us to be His people and live by His commandments.

- * We received God's favor; no one can work for God's favor; He has given mankind His favor since creation. He gives His favor as He chooses.
- * We have been rescued because of our trust in the Messiah; our trust pleases God.
- * God gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit to work in us and help us (workmanship).
- * God helps us to keep His good commandments. The Holy Spirit also helps us in matters of life that are not addressed by God's commandments.
- * We were created to keep God's commandments in a life of pilgrimage with God.

Further Study

Understanding the Context of Ephesians 2:8-10

- All scripture must be understood in context.
- All scripture was written by Jews who kept the Old Testament commandments.
- The scriptures cannot be understood by plainly reading them as some say; they are reading their own thoughts and ideas into them instead of the proper biblical context.

The word grace means favor

- * Anytime God does something for anyone, it is His favor being extended.
- * God has given grace (favor) to mankind since His creation of mankind and not just when the Messiah came as some say. For example, it says God gave grace to Noah (Genesis 6:8).
- * God also gave grace when the Messiah Yeshua came.
- * We received God's favor as a gift from God. Ephesians 2:8 must be referring to the gift of the Holy Spirit that all believers in Messiah are to receive (Acts 2:38-39).
- * The Holy Spirit is a gift from God that is at work in us (John 14:26) – we are His workmanship through the work of the Holy Spirit. No one deserves God's favor, but He gives it to those who believe.

The word saved means rescued. "Saved" is quoted in Romans 10:13 from Joel 2:32 and is the Hebrew word "malat." The Old Testament Hebrew word "malat"¹ always means rescue.

- * We have been rescued so we can live right.
- * Saved (rescued) does not mean we automatically have eternal life.

1 "h4422□□□ mālat; a primitive root; properly, to be smooth, i.e. (by implication) to escape (as if by slipperiness); causatively, to release or rescue" – Strong's Enhanced Dictionary

Faith means trust; it is an active word. Ya'akov says he will show faith by his works (James 2:18).

We receive God's favor by our trust. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6 NKJV.

Good works, doing good, or doing right and good; they always mean keeping God's commands.

* There was no New Testament at the time so they kept the Old Testament commandments and were supposed to appropriately apply understandings of these commandments.

* "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. ¹⁸ And **you shall do what is right and good** in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you." Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV

* We were created to keep God's commandments. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil;" Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Walk refers to our life's pilgrimage, how we live.

* "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;" Hebrews 11:13 NKJV

* We are to walk with God in the present by keeping God's commandments and listening to the Holy Spirit.

* Our walk will culminate at our arrival in the future kingdom.

Ephesians 2:8-10 in Context

* We received God's favor; no one can work for God's favor; He has given mankind His favor since creation. He gives His favor as He chooses.

* We have been rescued because of our trust in the Messiah; our trust pleases God.

* God gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit to work in us and help us (workmanship).

* God helps us to keep His good commandments. The Holy Spirit also helps us in matters of life that are not addressed by God's commandments.

* We were created to keep God's commandments in a life of pilgrimage with God.

Final summary

Because we trusted in God's Messiah Yeshua, we received the gift of the Holy Spirit. God is at work in us through the Holy Spirit to help us keep His commandments; we are created to keep God's good commandments; He chose us to be His people and live by His commandments.

More thoughts

Since the people of that time were trying to keep God's commandments, this was a huge encouragement. If it was in any way saying we don't have to keep God's commandments, no one would have listened to Shaul. Some say nowadays that we are to only follow the Holy Spirit, but as we can see, the people back then understood that it was their lifelong duty to keep God's commands. God's favor through the Holy Spirit was working in them (workmanship) to help them do what is right and good.