

## **Ephesians 2:8-9 (Salvation) (Grace)**

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

### **The Basic Bible Truth**

All mankind has a huge problem that we cannot solve for ourselves. It is called sin. In our frail humanity, we fail to see sin from God's perspective. His view of sin is clearly defined as He placed the death penalty upon all who are guilty of even the slightest wrong. But our God also loves us and shows us mercy and grace by offering to us, free of charge, salvation. It is the prime ingredient of our lives. Everything else that matters, hinges on one question and its answer. Have we come to the point in our lives that we recognize our sinful condition, and our absolute inability to help ourselves out of our precarious predicament, and accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior of our lives.

### **The Object**

#### **An Outline Handout**

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Over the years, I have discovered that sometimes it is the simplest of things that can keep an audience engaged. For example, arranging the chairs in the room in a completely different way will immediately invoke questions as to what is about to happen. This is a fill in the blank outline to use while discussing Salvation. The lesson does not follow the numerical order of the handout sheet. It skips around, in an attempt to keep the audience engaged and wondering what this is all about. At the end of the lesson, you

will be able to read down the list and have a reasonably phonetic representation of Ephesians 2:8-9.

### The Lesson

15. **Gift of God**—Salvation is a completely free gift offered to us. We cannot earn it, and we are not worthy of receiving it. God chose in His infinite knowledge to show the universe what true love looks like. He could have told us repeatedly what it should look like and we would have recognized when we saw it next. But instead, he demonstrated once and for all what love looks like in Himself and His gift we call salvation. He suffered unmercifully and died voluntarily on a cross for you and I. Had only one person throughout history ever taken advantage of the gift from Him, the Creator of the universe would have gladly gone through the entire process for just that one individual. That is what love looks like.

4. **Ewe**—All we like sheep have gone astray. God uses the example of sheep often, especially in the New Testament. It was a creature that nearly everyone in that day was familiar with. To put things quite bluntly, sheep are the dumbest farm animal on earth. They cannot care for themselves, and if left to themselves would most certainly die of something or other. They will follow each other blindly, with no thought for their own safety or where they might be going. If their leader is going somewhere, they are also. Sheep need a shepherd to care for them. They simply cannot survive without one. We, likewise need a shepherd and Jesus is the Great Shepherd. He loves us and cares for our needs.

7. **Fay**—Fay Ray was picked up and carried away by King Kong. We have a formidable enemy—Satan. Satan is described in the Bible as being wicked. Satan sets snares to catch the unsuspecting Christian. Snares are, by design, difficult to perceive if the intended target is not constantly vigilant. I have over the years had a few instances of nuisance wild animals around the house. Setting live traps to capture and relocate these creatures is a challenge. They are wary of everything that does not look normal and familiar to them. We likewise, should be so familiar with God's Word that we recognize immediately when something does not look quite right or normal and avoid being caught in the trap. I make my traps as enticing as I possibly can, adding food and placing them as conveniently as possible for the animal to consider. Satan uses the identical game plan. He knows what works and uses the perfect bait for his prey, placing it at a very handy location.

12. **Eat**—A horse loves to eat. It is the focus of his existence. Our desires lead us also. A horse will simply put its head down and eat continually, driven by the desire to have something to chew on and eat. If we are not careful as Christians, our physical desires will outweigh our ability to keep them in check and we will find ourselves following anything that looks appetizing. And sin can look very tasty and wonderful. Satan is the greatest showman on earth and can dress anything up nicely and sell it to the public.

2. **Graze**—For a horse, it is a lifestyle. For us, Salvation will be a lifestyle, not a one-day thing. Our every day existence should center around the fact that God has given us a very special gift called salvation. Becoming a Christian is not just a one day event. We can look at salvation in three tenses. I was saved. I can point to a day in my past when I was 8 years old, sitting in a Sunday School room in Newton Kansas, when I realized that I needed a Savior and I asked Jesus to come into my heart. I will be saved. There is coming a day someday when Jesus will return for His own and I will go to be with Him forever and live in Heaven. But I am also being saved. Every day, God is working in my life, cleaning out all of the stuff that doesn't need to be there—sin. We sometimes call it sanctification. Being made holy for His personal use.

13. **Ease**—Salvation is truly the easier lifestyle, when compared to the life of sin. Even with all of the "Thou shalt not's", Christianity is by far the easier choice for life. If we are not a child of God, we are a child of Satan, and he is a horrible father figure. He is bent on our destruction and will do anything to an individual to achieve that goal.

6. **True**—Jesus said I am the way. What a true statement. There is one and only one way. Jesus

20. **Won**—Jesus already has won the war for us. I have read the end of the book and God wins. We are in a spiritual battle, whether we want to admit it or not. The fact remains that there are things going on around us that cannot be explained any other way. In Ephesians we find the armor of a Christian warrior described in detail. Most of the items are of a defensive nature, but there is one piece of equipment that we can use offensively and that is prayer.

10. and 16. **Knot**—When we are saved, we are in His grip. He will “knot” let go. I have a very dear friend who is an elderly lady, and quite familiar with the art of writing letters. In our day of email and social media, that art is dying quickly. She finishes each of her letters with the same ending, “In His Grip”, and then signs her name. God holds our salvation, we do not. Our ability to hang on is negligible. But His grip is infinite and none can take us out of His hand.

22. **Bow**—Humility is required. God places a premium for the Christian on humility. Humility is not the lack of personality or character. Humility is power under control. Some of the greatest heroes in the Bible were very interesting characters in their own right. God did not erase who they were, he gladly used their personalities for His advantage.

21. **Shod**—Horses wear shoes for protection, God protects his own. Without the protection of a shoe, a horse’s hooves can crack and break and they will then risk going lame. And a lame horse is worthless. God has promised that everything that happens to us is for our ultimate good. That is the ultimate protection package.

1. **4x**—A 4x4 is a heavy piece of wood. God has already done all of the heavy work. I used to work with an man who had a unique sense of humor. His odd and funny sayings always amused me. When we had to carry anything larger than a 2 by 4, his term for the wood was that it was a 2 by heavy. God’s work in salvation was extremely heavy and involved.

8. **Ant**—Ants are not significant creatures, but we are priceless to God. I hate ants. We have a serious problem where we live with fire ants. They have shown up in the last 10 years or so, and we spend a significant effort trying to keep them at bay. We throw out boric acid everywhere and spray occasionally and still are losing the battle. I think nothing of killing thousands of ants. They mean nothing to me. I sleep better at night knowing that I have made life miserable for millions of ants over the years. We are nothing compared to God. As far as I am above an ant in intellect and understanding, God is farther above me, and yet he loves you and I. Wow!

5. **Shaved**—A man when he cleans up and gets nicely dressed, will often shave as well. God’s plan of salvation for us is that we clean up our lives after we become His children. I once had a friend who surrendered his life to God, and I talked to him 3 weeks later and he told me of how he had gotten into a bar room fight the day before. He did not have a clue that a Christian no longer frequents establishments like that. After showing him the truth in Scripture regarding this concept, he promptly changed his habits and cleaned that area of his life up.

3. **R**—Redemption. Jesus paid for us, and now owns us. In our culture, any connotation involving slavery is a taboo subject. But the Bible address slavery and even condones it if is practiced in the Biblical fashion, and that would be very similar to what we might term an employer/employee relationship. We belong to God, and He has given us a job to work in the furtherance of His kingdom here on earth. That means sharing the Gospel, loving others and serving others.

18. **Less**—He didn’t do less, He didn’t do just the bare minimum to get by—He did everything. The

natural inclination of human beings is to try to determine just how little can we do and still get by. We don't want to expend any more time or effort than necessary to accomplish the goals we have before us. But the example of Christ is to give everything. That is a worthwhile goal for us to strive for.

14, **Duh**—How much more elementary and straightforward can this really be? Salvation is very, very simple for us. We simply ask God to come into our lives and it is done. It cannot be any more transparent and plain than that.

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