

12. The underlying principle is that only God can save. There is no way the young ruler can do that from his own power.
13. In fact, the process of salvation is clearly stated in Ephesians 2:8–9, a passage we noted back on October 4 in lesson 114. Because I inadvertently omitted one of the most important words in the expanded translation, we must check it out once again.

Ephesians 2:8 - For you see, by the efficacious grace [χάρις (*cháris*)] you have been permanently saved [σώζω (*sózo*)] through faith [πίστις (*pístis*)]; and that grace **salvation** [σώζω (*sózo*)] is not from the source of yourselves, this salvation is the gift [δῶρον (*dóron*): of salvation] from the source of God,

v. 9 - Not out from the source of works [ἔργον (*érgon*) human effort] that no one should boast [καυχάομαι (*kauchaómai*): boast; exult]. (EXT)

1. My omitted word is “salvation.” To emphasize how the act of **salvation** is made possible by the grace of God, I added the words “efficacious grace” a term defined in a footnote: “Efficacious grace is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in making the faith of the spiritually dead person effective for eternal salvation.”
2. This means that “by means of grace” the unbeliever is “permanently saved.”
3. Next comes the word indicating how a person is permanently saved: “by faith”: the preposition **διὰ** (*diá*) plus the noun **πίστις** (*pístis*): “through faith.”
4. There is no definite article here which places great emphasis on the qualitative aspect of the noun *pístis* which is nonmeritorious.
5. This faith is efficacious because the object of the unbeliever’s faith is placed in Jesus Christ who possesses the merit.

6. The word “saved” is in a grammatical structure called perfect periphrastic which indicates it is a perfect, completed, and permanent action.
7. What follows in the New American Standard reads “and that” which is incorrect. It is composed of the conjunction **καί (kaí)**: “even,” followed by the pronoun **οὗτος (hoútos)**: “this.”
8. The problem that arises is because the grammar must direct us to the antecedent of the pronoun “hoútos”: “this” which is singular neuter.
9. What words might be considered as the antecedent of the neuter *hoútos*: (1) grace (*cháris*, feminine), (2) saved (*sózo*, feminine), or (3) faith (*pístis*, feminine)?
10. To decipher which is intended, we consult three sources:

The word **For** looks back to verses 1–7 and summarizes what Paul has been saying. **By grace you have been saved** is a word-for-word repetition of verse 5. But then Paul adds much more. While it is by means of God’s grace that the Ephesian Gentiles were made alive with Christ, it was also **through faith**. This salvation is in the perfect tense, showing action that happened in the past with continuing results. When the Ephesians exercised faith they were saved and the results continue on.

Faith always has an object. It is not the amount of faith a person has or even the sincerity of his faith that saves a person. It is the object of one’s faith. Jesus Christ is a person’s Savior because he trusts in Him for eternal life.

Paul’s further elaboration of what he said in verse 5 has often been confused. **And that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. [KJV]**. The key to understanding Paul here is the demonstrative pronoun *that*. Some teach that *that* refers to faith since it is the nearest antecedent, with the idea that faith is a gift from God. However, the Greek word *that* is neuter and the Greek word for *faith* is feminine. Demonstrative pronouns normally match their antecedents in number and gender. It is better to see the pronoun *that* referring to the entire clause, stating that by grace a person is saved through faith. Salvation (eternal life) is not of oneself; it is the gift of God (cf. John 4:10), lest anyone should boast.

Many have thought that by their works or religious activities they are somehow earning a relationship with God. Paul makes it clear that salvation is not of one's own doings; it is a gift of God.¹

11. Proponents of Calvinist theology often assert that the faith of the individual sinner toward Christ is “Not of yourselves” in Ephesians 2:8 since the pronoun *hoútos* (“this”) has *pístis* (“faith”) as its antecedent.
12. As is pointed out in the above excerpt, this is impossible since *hoútos* is in the neuter gender and *pístis* is in the feminine.
13. An excellent discussion on this principle is provided by Daniel B. Wallace in his *Greek Grammar*:

This is the most debated text in terms of the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun, *hoútos* [this]. The standard interpretations include: (1) “grace” as antecedent, (2) “faith” as antecedent, (3) the concept of a grace-by-faith salvation as antecedent, and (4) *hoútos* having an adverbial force with no antecedent.

The first and second options suffer from the fact that *hoútos* is neuter while *cháris* [grace] and *pístis* [faith] are feminine. Some have argued that the gender shift causes no problem.

While it is true that on rare occasions there is a gender shift between antecedent and pronoun, the pronoun is almost always caught between two nouns of different gender. One is the antecedent; the other is the predicate nominative.

More plausible is the third view, that *hoútos* refers to the concept of a grace-by-faith salvation. As we have seen, *hoútos* regularly takes a conceptual antecedent.

On an exegetical level, I am inclined to agree with [Andrew T.] Lincoln that “in Paul’s thinking faith can never be viewed as a meritorious work because in connection with justification he always contrasts faith with works of the law.” If faith is not meritorious, but is instead the *reception* of the gift of salvation, then it is not a gift per se. Such a view does not preclude the notion that for faith to save, the Spirit of God must initiate the conversion process.²

¹ J. B. Bond, “Ephesians,” in *The Grace New Testament Commentary*, ed. Robert N. Wilkin (Denton: Grace Evangelical Society, 2010), 2:868–69.

² Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 334–35.

14. The summation of this verse and its context is provided by our last two excerpts. First by Harold W. Hoehner:

And this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Much debate has centered around the demonstrative pronoun “this” (*hoútos*). Though some think it refers back to “grace” and others to “faith,” neither of these suggestions is really valid because the demonstrative pronoun is neuter whereas “grace” and “faith” are feminine. Rather the neuter *hoútos*, as is common, refers to the preceding phrase or clause. Thus it refers back to the *concept* of salvation (2:4–8a), whose basis is grace and means is faith. This salvation does not have its source in man (it is “not from yourselves”), but rather, its source is God’s grace for “it is the gift of God.”³

15. The final summary is by R. B. Thieme, Jr., from his study of the Book of Ephesians where he agrees with the above theologians. He refers to the antecedent as being the overall context, primarily Ephesians 2:4–8:

“And that,” is not correct. It should be translated “even this.” It is the neuter, demonstrative pronoun of *hoútos* which presents a problem since the words “faith” and “grace” are in the feminine gender. The demonstrative pronoun calls attention with special emphasis on the designated object and is used for something relatively near in context. But the neuter gender excludes the possibility of anything in the close context because they are feminine gender. So here is a hanging demonstrative pronoun to indicate the entire plan of God. It emphasizes the importance of the Planner rather than the mechanics of the plan.⁴

16. These resources all complement each other and confirm the exegetical and grammatical point that our faith is not the antecedent to the demonstrative pronoun “this.”
17. Taking this position allows the heretical conclusion that God provides us with the power to have faith in order to believe which leads to the conclusion that God chooses those whom He will elect.

³ Harold W. Hoehner, “Ephesians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition*, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983), 624.

⁴ R. B. Thieme, Jr., “Ephesians,” (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1985), 412: Eph. 2:8.

18. "And this is not of yourselves" indicates that the system of salvation does not find its source in the unbeliever.
19. This is followed by the phrase "it is the gift of God." The preposition "it" does not appear in the Greek text, but is understood and refers back to *hoútos*: "this" which refers to the entire system of salvation.
20. The word "gift," **δῶρον (dōron)**, is also in the neuter gender, used here of God's gift to men with emphasis on the system of salvation.
21. The unbeliever has the ability to make free-will decisions which is in play at gospel hearing.
22. The mentality of the person's soul is enabled to comprehend the content of the gospel by means of the Holy Spirit serving as a human spirit in order to communicate this supernatural information to him.
23. Comprehension of the gospel message in the soul of the unbeliever is referred to as "common grace."
24. At this point, the unbeliever has all the information he needs to make a decision. If he rejects the "gift of God," then he remains in unbelief.
25. However, if he responds positively to the grace offer of salvation through faith, then the Holy Spirit saves that person's soul. This is called efficacious grace.
26. The expanded translation of this verse reads:
Ephesians 2:8 - For you see, by the means of efficacious grace you have been permanently saved through faith; and this salvation is not from the source of yourselves, it is the gift from the source of God; (EXT)
27. Ideas of some that salvation is the result of works is dispelled in the next verse:

Ephesians 2:9 - not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (NASB)