

Passage: **Ephesians 2:8-9:**

**1. King James Version (KJV)**

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

**2. New American Standard Bible (NASB)**

For by grace **you have been saved** through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; **not as a result of works**, so that no one **may** boast.

**3. New International Version (NIV)**

For it is by grace **you have been saved**, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**not by works**, so that no one **can** boast.

**4. New Living Translation (NLT)**

**God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this;** it is a gift from God. **Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done,** so **none of us** can boast about it.

**5. Contemporary English Version (CEV)**

**You were saved by faith in God, who treats us much better than we deserve. You are not saved by the things you have done, so there is nothing to boast about.**

These translations all emphasize the same key concepts: salvation is a gift from God, received by grace through faith, and not something that can be earned by works, so none may boast. But each Bible translation renders this passage differently to varying degrees. When comparing the five different translations of Ephesians 2:8-9, one would notice that **the translators have chosen different words, phrases, or structures to express the same original meaning in the text. Each translation maintains the meaning and intent of the original while progressively making it understandable, clear and simpler as the translations move from being true to the form to staying true to the function.**

For instance, although the first three translations display a high degree of fidelity to the original text (and thus are very similar to each other), KJV uses archaic forms of pronouns (“ye”) and superlative adjective (“lest”), and passive verbs (“are saved”); NABS and NIV use modern language and active verbs (“you have been saved”), with NIV even using editorial punctuation (dashes and additional commas) to ensure consistency and clarity in the text.

In contrast, the last two translations exemplified in the table above are totally different from each other and from KJV, NABS and NIV, keeping in common only the key words “saved,” “grace,” “gift,” “God,” “boast” (NLT) and “saved,” “faith,” “God,” “boast” (CEV).

Regarding what I've highlighted above, I read real but subtle differences between some of these five translations. The tense is different in the KJV in verse 8, compared with the other four “For by grace **are ye saved** through faith” is present continuous. The rest have it past tense – which is not strictly in line with the Greek text. I don't see much difference in verse 9 apart from the NLT where it uses the word “reward” – which is not in the text, and rather than clarifying could confuse – especially when one reads Rev 22:12 “And behold, I am

coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

The past tense in Eph 2:8 could be used to try to support a teaching that denies the need for works (addressed by James 2:14-26)

The three Scriptures below show that our salvation is a work in progress – and the fourth also when correctly translated.

Acts 2 <sup>46</sup> So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added  $\alpha$ to the church daily those **who were being saved**.

**1 Cor 1 <sup>18</sup>** For the  $\alpha$ message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who **are being saved** it is the power of God.

**2 Cor 2 <sup>15</sup>** For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those **who are being saved** and among those who are perishing.

The Greek here in v 9 below should be translated "saving us" - "has saved us" is the wrong tense, and not true to the text.

**2 Timothy 1 <sup>8</sup>** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, <sup>9</sup> **who has saved us** and called *us* with a holy calling, **not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace** which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

However, it is not a matter of being anxious, or making our salvation uncertain, but we are "to take heed" as we are admonished in 1 Cor 10:12 (ref. also 2 Peter 1:10).

**Philippians 2 <sup>12</sup>** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for **it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure**.

## **2. Do you agree that the Bible is a divine-human book? Why or why not?**

I agree that the Bible has divine origin (inspired by God) and a human component (written by human authors). I understand how the human authors, picked by God for their unique personalities, experiences, and perspectives have shaped how the divine truths were expressed. However, I do not agree that this human participation makes the Bible a divine-human book, but rather divine only. I do not think that the idiom "divine-human book" captures with fidelity the nature of the Bible.

Verse 21 in 2 Peter 1 - "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." emphasises that the human authors were moved by the Holy Spirit and were not acting on their own, indicating that the Bible's content is solely divine in origin, even though humans physically wrote it. The only place where we have a human author is 1 Corinthians 7:16 and Paul diligently highlights that he is introducing his own words in the letter: "To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her." God allowed still to be an authoritative teaching in line with His principles as the book was canonised, **but this teaching is clearly marked as not from God.**

I see exactly as you do regarding the Bible being a divine book only – but with one caveat – that it has been copied multiple times over the years by humans – which is why we need honest textual criticism to discern and sift out the errors that have been introduced by man.

Concerning your last comment, I would not put it the way you do regarding Rom 7:12 – I read it as advice from Paul, but based on the wisdom he had from God's Spirit (as he reminded them in v 40 But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment—and I think I also have the Spirit of God.)

I think Paul was behaving according to what he wrote here -

**2 Cor 1** <sup>23</sup> Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. <sup>24</sup> **Not that we <sup>[h]</sup>have dominion over your faith**, but are fellow workers for your joy; **for by faith you stand.** (Romans 14)

I think it worth the time to study how Moses dealt with problems around marriage (Matt 19:3-10) with how Paul judged them (1 Cor 7).

### **3. What is a Bible translation? Why is translation not a simple exercise?**

#### **Describe the two main approaches to translation as discussed.**

The different components of the Bible were originally written in ancient languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) and translation is necessary for making the scriptures accessible to a broader audience who does not speak or read those original languages. A *Bible translation* is the process of rendering the original texts of the Bible into another language so that the masses would have easy access and understand the meaning of the biblical message in their own language.

Translations are not an easy exercise because languages are different in structures, idioms, and word meanings; vocabularies may differ in size; or the language of origin may have different stylistic preferences. Many words in the Bible have multiple layers of meaning or can be understood in different ways depending on the context. Translating such terms involves interpreting the intended meaning, which can be subjective.

The translators must balance being faithful to the original text and making the translation clear and readable for modern audiences. This dictates two approaches to bible translations: the *formal approach* (word-by-word) and *functional approach* (thought-forthought).

The *formal approach* attempts to translate the Bible literally, staying as close as possible to the structure and wording of the original languages. The goal is to preserve the exact form and syntax of the source text (eg. KJV, NAB, ESV). But, even with making

adjustments for the grammar of the target language, this type of translation may be clunky and harder to understand.

This *functional approach* focuses on conveying the meaning or ideas of the original text rather than sticking closely to the words or grammatical structures (eg. NIV, NLT). This makes the translation sound natural and understandable in the target language, but it may lose nuances or exact meanings of the source text.

Some translation like HCSB lessens the tension between staying as close as possible to the original language and making the translation accessible to readers, by using the formal approach for most of the translation and employing the functional approach for passages where clarity and readability would be compromised if the word-by-word approach is used.

I think you explain this well, Denise. I had not come across the HCSB before – although it is available on Bible Gateway – I must have a read of it more often.