

Meditation #19: New CREATION Standard

What does it say?

STUDY: Ephesians 2:1-10

GOLDEN TEXT: Ephesians 2:8 through 10 = *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.*

What does it mean?

In one of the clearest affirmations of good works, the Apostle Paul declares that we are not saved as a result of good works, but for the very purpose of doing good works. This high role of good works is made possible both (1) because of the loving, grace-filled birth and ministry of our Lord Christ Jesus, and (2) because of the loving behavior Creator-God had prepared for us all along. God is love, and he filled his creation with love.

1. Did the first Christmas happen because of human planning for good works? Not really. Still, how many good works have come as the result of the miracle of Christmas? How does this help demonstrate the truth of Ephesians 2:8-10?
2. What does the gift of God include? Is faith itself “*not of your own doing*” (v.8), but a gift of God? From where else could divine faith come? How did that faith come to you?
3. Are the divine commands for stewardship included in the “*our way of life*” (v.10) that the Savior has prepared for us? Does he still care about his creation? Does he still want us to improve and protect it (Genesis 2:15)?
4. What does “*created in Christ Jesus for good works*” mean? Is this the original creation or a new creation? Or does the Creator continue to create? Is creating a new life in Virgin Mary’s womb a special example of his continuing radical creativity?

What are we going to do about it?

5. In your experience, do verses 8 and 9 seem to be quoted much more than verse 10? Could anyone believe that we could have real dealings with God without being affected? Could we receive God’s grace without experiencing Godly change?
6. Why is salvation “*not of your own doing*”? Could we achieve salvation if we tried hard enough, perhaps over several lifetimes, like some world religions teach? Or are we hopeless apart from Creator’s grace? How grateful to God are we? Does it show?
7. What does it mean if we say we are “saved,” but do not show gratitude to the Creator? What if we still fail to improve and protect his creation? Are you saved? To what evidence can you point?

Truth To Celebrate: *When we truly receive God’s saving grace, we will try to honor and please the Creator in everything we think, say and do.*

Advent-Action: *Have a car tuned up. A well-tuned car uses less fuel, creates less pollution, and gets people transported more dependably—and helps make the rest of the world work better, too!*

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