

For It Is by Free Grace That You are Saved, THROUGH FAITH

By Jan Lilleby

The known word from Paul's epistle to the Ephesians (2:8, 9) contains the most important exhorting suggestion we can imagine as Christians: We are saved by faith, and not by knowledge or our own efforts/performances. If we think this through, we will discover that the Bible – the epistles in particular – are written to us believers, and not as if they were Tracts or Pamphlets aimed at the world.

It is written to God's assembly and not to the world, it's a fact.

The Bible is set up so that the unbeliever or non-Christian in the world can read what God says to us who believes. And not that the believer can read what God says to the world. But the Bible mentions the world out there, yes, but as lost people since they have no faith in Christ.

If we look at that part of Christianity which specialize on Apologetics, that of basing arguments for the faith upon knowledge and common sense combined with the Bible, it still is at risk to slip in that matter. One could easily end up giving the impression before non-believers that if we only know enough, and have stored up much knowledge in the Bible, - then we can think that we are saved.



Often we can hear sceptics say, ‘..how can we know that the Bible is true and that this thing with God and Jesus is right?’ Is the Christian faith the only way to get saved? Why are there so many religions in the world, and yet – you are sure that only the Christian faith is the saving one?

Thus people saying this, shows us that they have missed the whole point: The Bible says clearly that we can only be saved BY FAITH, and thus not by knowledge or human wisdom or science and research.

But they want to know before they will believe. That is not the way God wants it. First faith, then knowledge. The point is not to know, but to believe – to trust God and lean confidently on Him.

Never in the Bible can we find any word from God telling us that if we only can gather a lot of knowledge, then we shall be saved.

Faith is on a higher level than knowledge (science) – that is for sure. Faith has to do with trusting God as I just wrote. You hold His word for entirely true and trustworthy,

and you bet your life on it. You do not feel the need to get lots of knowledge before you can believe on Him. If you trust God, then knowledge and evidence is quite secondary.

God experienced the opposite of faith/trust as He saw Adam and Eve when they fell in that Arch Sin in Eden. They displayed that all of a sudden they no longer had that full trust and confidence in the Lord. They wanted to eat of the Tree of Knowledge (Gen. 2:9). They were tempted by the devil who said, "Has God really said...?".

They should have talked back and said, "Yes, God has said it, so we believe on Him and not on you!" "We are not going to sin and eat of that tree."

Notice that the apostles did not go out and preached "the Word of Knowledge," - but the Word of Faith, and the Word of the Cross.

It is an entirely different matter that we, as believers, can get knowledge in the Bible - AFTER we have come to faith in Jesus. Paul recommends it as a matter of fact, and *blaming those who do not go for Bible knowledge*. But such knowledge is meant for us to be able to *grasp the glorious greatness of God's salvation for us*, and absolutely not so we should become independent of God and fixing salvation all by ourselves. That was what Adam and Eve was tempted by - the devil wanted them to think that they could fix it on their own.

Eph. 1:17-19 cannot be misunderstood,

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the KNOWLEDGE OF HIM. 18 By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can KNOW AND UNDERSTAND the hope to which He has called you, and how rich in His glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power in and for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength.

Knowledge is here recommended for us who already are believers - and not knowledge so that we, as in a 'step-2', can start believing.

If you are a seeker for Biblical truth - one who want to believe on Jesus - but you feel that you 'don't quite manage to enter into it' - what if you hereafter take the word of the Bible for true, and start believing first, and no longer try to get a lot of knowledge before you dare believe?

Think through this key-word of Paul, regarding our salvation by faith, Eph. 2:8, 9:

For it is by free grace that you are saved, through faith,. And this is not of yourselves, but it is the gift of God. - Not because of works, lest any man should boast.

