



The Epistle to the Ephesians

CHAPTER TWO

EPH. 2:1-10 (NKJV)

¹ And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world,”

I. BROUGHT FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

- “*You*” may be strictly addressing Gentile Christians in Ephesus since v.11-22 is directed toward Gentiles. However, the facts presented in v.2-10 apply to all Christians, whether or Jew or Gentile (Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28). Therefore, I believe the “*you*” in v.1 is intended to address all the Christians in Ephesus.
- “*Trespasses*” and “*sins*” are used separately rather than synonymously.
 - The word rendered “trespass” signifies a “swerving aside and falling;” the word rendered “sins” is generally used to denote sin in the abstract and signifies an entire “missing of the mark” (Ellicott).
 - The glory of God must be the target upon which we aim our lives. When we miss the mark, we are guilty of sin.
- Those who are in sin are dead.
 - Sin always results in spiritual death (James 1:15; Rom. 6:23, 5:12; Gen. 2:17).
 - All who are capable of choosing between good and evil have been dead in sin, but all can be raised from death and be made alive in Christ (Rom. 3:9, 23-26).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world,”

I. BROUGHT FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

- The idea of being “*dead in sin*” is used by false teachers to perpetuate the doctrine of total depravity.
 - Those who cling to this doctrine assert that since man is “*dead*,” there is nothing a “*dead*” man can do to bring himself back to life; the Holy Spirit must directly intervene. This “death” is on all people – infant or adult – due to the sin of Adam.
- However, the word “*dead*” simply indicates a separation between man and God (Isa. 59:1-2), not an incapability of man bringing himself to God. Whereas physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body (James 2:26; Luke 8:49, 54-55), spiritual death is the separation of man from God.
- When a person is spiritually dead, it is the result of his own doing (“*your*”) and not the product of inherited sin (Col. 2:13; Eph. 2:1, NASB).
 - Sin is something we “*do*” – it is a choice we make (James 4:17; Isa. 7:16; Ecc. 7:29, 20).
 - Sin is not something imputed onto us (Rom. 9:11; Matt. 18:3; Deut. 1:39; Ecc. 7:29; Ezek. 18:20).
 - Each man bears responsibility for his sins (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 16:27; 1 Cor. 4:5; Job 34:10-13, ESV).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world,”

I. BROUGHT FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

- Rom. 5:12 (the go-to verse for those propping up total depravity) makes it abundantly clear that man is not a sinner due to inheriting the transgressions of Adam (Rom. 5:14); instead, man is guilty of sin because *“all have sinned.”*
- All are guilty of, at one point or another, walking in sin and disobedience (Rom. 3:23, 5:12; Ecc. 7:20; 1 John 1:8). Once we realize we are dead we can become alive through Christ (Rom. 6:23).
 - Just as God displayed His mighty power through the physical resurrection of His Son, His power is also evidenced through the spiritual resurrection of those who submit to Him in obedience (Rom. 6:1-12).
 - When we look upon a corpse, it gives an awful feeling. When we look upon the very acts which bring about our spiritual death, do we possess the same feeling? Sadly, rarely is this case!
- To walk *“according to”* this world means we are walking in harmony with what the world does. We must not be conformed to *“this world;”* instead, we must be transformed (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:8, 2:10; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,”

II. DEATH BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE “PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR.”

- There is little doubt that Satan is under consideration here and Paul is saying the Ephesians (and all sinners who have obeyed the gospel) were once under his control, with Satan being their leader & prince.
- The connection of the “*world*” with the Evil One as its “*prince*” or “*god*” is not uncommon in the scriptures.
 - John frequently made the connection of Satan being the prince of this world throughout his gospel account (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11).
 - Beelzebub is described as the “*prince of the devils*” in Matt. 12:24.
 - This may be a reference to Satan (Matt. 12:26-27), but I am not confident.
 - Paul also described Satan as “*the god of this age*” (2 Cor. 4:4).
- The description of Satan as the prince of the power “*of the air*” may be in reference to Eph. 6:12, but I think Paul is just referring to the earth via a synecdoche (“*air*” is representative of earth).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,”

II. DEATH BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE “PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR.”

- Satan is a spirit who “*now works in the sons of disobedience.*”
 - Satan has never ceased in his pursuit of drawing man away from God (Job 1:7, 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:8).
 - I do not know for certain if Satan is physically present on this earth as he once was in the form of a serpent in the Garden of Eden, or in some other physical form, but all can be certain that he “now” (still) works in this world.
- People are sons (children) of whoever they imitate.
 - One can be a son of disobedience (Eph. 5:3-7; Col. 3:5-7), and, therefore, a son of the Devil (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10) by walking in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind.
 - Or a person can be a son of light (1 Thess. 5:1-10), and, therefore, a child of God (John 1:12) by imitating Him and walking in the light (Eph. 5:8-14; 1 John 1:7).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,”

II. DEATH BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE “PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR.”

- “All” have conducted themselves according to the lusts of the flesh (James 1:14-15; Rom. 3:23).
- The Greek word translated “*lust*” can be used in a positive sense (Luke 22:15; Phil. 1:23), but it generally refers to sinful desires (consider Tit. 3:3; James 4:1). Such is the case in this passage.
- Sinful lusts comes from two sources, according to this text: the “*flesh*” and the “*mind*.”
 - “*Flesh*” indicates physical desires while “*mind*” indicates intellectual/emotional desires.
- Having fleshly or intellectual/emotional desires are not sinful in of themselves; the problem lies in the object of our fleshly and intellectual/emotional desires.
- We all lust, but our lust in the Spirit must overpower our lusts and desires that derive from Satan (Gal. 5:16-25).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”

III. A SINFUL NATURE?

- The phrase “*by nature children of wrath*” does not imply they were born into the world as sinners or with God’s wrath upon them. Instead, sinful conduct comprised their characters for so long that it had become their natural way of living.
- The Greek word translated here as “*nature*” can refer to:
 - Something innate or implanted (Gal. 2:15). However, this cannot be what the word means in this verse because man is not innately born with a sinful nature (Ecc. 7:29a); he develops a sinful nature by seeking out sinful and wicked schemes (Ecc. 7:29b).
 - The result of physical law (Rom. 2:27, 11:21-24). This meaning is not under consideration here because sin is not transmitted by physical law (Ezek. 18:20).
 - The physical differences between men and women (1 Cor. 11:14). This certainly is not under consideration here.
 - A habitual practice (Rom. 2:12-14), what we might refer to as something being done by “second nature.” This is how the word “*nature*” is used in this verse.

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together,”

IV. “BUT GOD.”

- This passage and its message describing the salvation of man is wholly dependent on what God has done and what He has provided. God stepped in to save man because he is unable to save himself.
 - It is astounding that God would still love mankind even though every human with the ability to discern good from evil has rebelled against Him. God loved us and offered to save us when we did not love Him (Rom. 5:6-11).
- God forgives, pardons, and saves by His grace.
 - It is solely by God (not man) that humans can be saved. God forgives and pardons but we do not earn this forgiveness or pardon from sin. It is impossible to earn something that occurs by grace.
 - The ground of man’s salvation is God (Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:8-9); His grace (driven by His loving mercy) is the cause for salvation.

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together,”

IV. “BUT GOD.”

- The phrase “*But God*” appears frequently in the Bible to show God stepping in and acting on behalf of man for his benefit.
 - Physical salvation (Gen. 8:1, ESV; 1 Sam. 23:14; Exod. 13:18, ESV).
 - God remaining with us during trials and persecutions and ensuring these things occur for our good (Acts 7:9; 2 Cor. 7:5-7, ESV; Gen. 50:15-20).
 - God working through man to further His cause (1 Cor. 3:6).
 - The salvation of man (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4-7).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together,”

IV. “BUT GOD.”

- The reminder of God’s richness in grace, love, and mercy is especially frequent in this epistle (Eph. 1:7, 1:18, 2:7, 3:8, 3:16). God’s mercy is overflowing and abundant.
- The richness of God’s mercy is made abundant in the “*great love which He loved us.*”
 - Extending mercy is how God shows His love for all mankind (“*us*”) (Isa. 63:7).
 - God hates sin, but He offers mercy because he loves all of mankind, even sinners (Psalm 145:8-9).
 - God is capable of hating sin while still lovingly extending his mercy and remaining longsuffering toward the sinner in hopes that they will repent and take advantage of His love, mercy, and patience (Mal. 1:3; Rev. 2:1-6; 2 Pet. 3:9).
- Jesus is the manifestation of God’s love (Tit. 3:4).
 - The death of Christ is the ultimate proof of God’s love (John 15:13).
- As in Eph. 1:4, stress is laid on the love of God as the moving cause for salvation (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; Rom. 5:8).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

IV. “BUT GOD.”

- God, just as He physically brought Christ from death to life and seated Him in Heaven (Eph. 1:20), also brings mankind from spiritual death to life and figuratively seats us with Christ.
 - We recognize that baptism is the point at which those who are spiritually dead become alive (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:11-13), but this verse is not speaking about how man can become alive. It simply refers to (in a general sense) the fact that man can be made alive again after once being spiritually dead.
 - This rebirth (John 3:3-5) is impossible without God’s mercy, love, grace, and kindness offered through Christ.
- Saints “*sit together*” with Christ, indicating a “sharing” is taking place (Rom. 8:17).
- The conversion and salvation of sinners serves as evidence, or proof, of the mercy and goodness of God.
 - God’s purpose in making saints alive are to bestow His love and live as a monument to His goodness.
 - What an incredible responsibility saved people carry, to live as an embodiment of God’s mercy to the world (1 Tim. 1:12-17).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

V. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH.

- Salvation from sin comes by God’s “*grace*” and man’s “*faith*.”
- Salvation (not man’s faith) is “*the gift of God*” (John 4:10; Rom. 6:23).
- Some say the “*gift of God*” is the gift of faith. They say God opens the hearts of sinners through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit and grants sinners faith.
 - It is certainly true that God and the Holy Spirit operate in the salvation of sinners, but this indirectly occurs through the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Neither God nor the Holy Spirit gift mankind faith to believe the scriptures.
 - God does not give man “*faith*,” He gives man the gift of salvation. However, God’s gift of salvation is conditioned upon man’s obedient faith.

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

V. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH.

- “*Grace*” is God’s part; “*faith*” is man’s part.
 - Mankind is not saved by grace alone, nor is mankind saved by faith alone.
 - Mankind is saved by God’s grace and his own obedient faith (James 2:22-26).
- Sinners avail themselves to the benefits of God’s “*grace*” through “*faith*” (Rom. 5:1-2).
- “*Faith*” is the sinner’s response to God’s “*grace*,” and saving “*faith*” obeys God’s word (John 3:36; Heb. 5:9; 11:8; James 2:14, 17, 24).
 - Obedience is not earning or meriting salvation. Obedience is man’s way of receiving the blessings of salvation given by God.
 - When a person acts “*through faith*” to obtain the “*gift*” of God, he has not cheapened or earned in any way the unmerited “*gift*” of God granted by His grace. Instead, the person has simply “*done*” what God says in order to obtain the “*gift*” (Luke 17:10; Acts 2:37, 9:6, 22:10).

A New Spiritual Position (2:1-10)

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

VI. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH FOR A PURPOSE (TO WORK!).

- Although we saved by faith through God’s grace, retaining our salvation is dependent on our willingness to abound in good works.
 - “For” at the beginning of v.10 directly continues the thought of v.8-9, showing why people are saved (to be Christ’s “workmanship” created for “good works”).
 - Christians are “His workmanship,” not our own workmanship. We were not created (saved) to fulfill our own desires but Christ’s desires
- Saved people are specifically created “for good works” (Tit. 2:14, 3:8).
 - Our works determine whether we know God and belong to Him or deny Him and stand separated from (Tit. 1:16, 2:7, 3:14; Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12).
 - Saved people were brought from death to life specifically to do God’s work!

¹¹ Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

EPH. 2:11-22 (NKJV)

Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—”

I. SAVED.

- Although