

Ephesians Chapter 2

In the first ten verses Paul presents the past, present and future of the Christian: what he was (verses 1-3); what he is (verses 4-6, 8-9); and what he will be (verses 7, 10).

Within this framework he gives six aspects of salvation: it is from sin (verses 1-3); by love (verse 4); into life (verse 5); with a purpose (verses 6-7); through faith (verses 8-9); and unto good works (verse 10).

The first aspect is in the past, the next four aspects (except for the second part of “purpose,” (verse 7), pertain to the present, and the last aspect, (including verse 7), is in the future.

Ephesians 2:1 " And you [hath he quickened], who were dead in trespasses and sins;"

First, salvation is from sin, which characterizes life before Christ.

In the first three verses, there is perhaps no clearer statement in Scripture on the sinfulness of man apart from Christ.

“Quickened”:

This means “made alive.”

(In 1:19), Paul prays for his readers to recognize what God’s power has done in them.

As part of the answer to this prayer (verses 1-10), inform them of some of the effects divine might has accomplished in them.

“The wages of sin is death” (Romans 3:23).

Because man is born into sin he is born to death.

Man does not become spiritually dead because he sins, he is spiritually dead because by nature he is sinful.

When we are walking in our sin unforgiven, we are marking time to death.

Each day becomes a little more hopeless, because it is one day closer to death.

Trespasses and sin bring physical and spiritual death.

Man’s principal problem is that he has no right relationship to God, from whom he is alienated by sin.

It has nothing to do with the way he lives; it has to do with the fact that he is dead even while he is alive.

He is spiritually dead while being physically alive.

Because he is dead to God, he is dead to spiritual life, truth, righteousness, inner peace and happiness, and ultimately to every other good thing.

Jesus took the punishment of death on His body on the cross and marked their bill paid in full, for all who would turn from their sin and accept Him as their Savior.

Romans 8:2 "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

John 5:21 "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth [them]; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

Men apart from God are spiritual zombies, the walking dead who do not know they are dead.

They go through the motions of life, but they do not possess it.

“Dead in trespasses and sins”:

This is a sobering reminder of the total sinfulness and lostness from which all believers have been redeemed.

“In” indicates the realm or sphere in which unregenerate sinners exist.

They are not dead only because of sinful acts that they have committed but because of their sinful nature.

Committing sinful acts does not make us sinners; we commit sinful acts because we are sinners.

Jesus confirmed this when He said, “The evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil” (Matt. 12:35).

A sinner’s doing good is good, but it cannot change his nature or his basic sphere of existence, and it cannot reconcile him to God.

Jesus is the Spirit of Life.

Though I was dead, yet shall I live in Him.

Before we were saved we were like every other person who is apart from God.

“Dead in trespasses and sins”:

We were not dead because we had committed sin but because we were in sin.

In this context, trespasses and sins do not refer simply to acts but first of all, to the sphere of existence of the person apart from God.

Ephesians 2:2 "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"

In the state of spiritual death, the only walking, or living, a person can do is according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

“Ye walked”:

This means you lived.

“The course of this world”.

The word course signifies all the tendencies, thoughts, pursuits, deeds and so on, that characterize the present period of history.

“This world”:

(Kosmos) means “world system.”

That is, those philosophies, values, and life styles that are opposed to God and hostile to Him.

As Paul makes clear, the course of this world follows the leadership and design of Satan, the prince of the power of the air.

Sinful men have many different ideas and standards, but they are in total agreement that the network of things in this world is more important than the divine perspective of God.

They are of one mind because they have a common leader and lord, the prince of the power of the air.

Satan is now “the ruler of this world,” and until the Lord casts him out (John 12:31), he will continue to rule.

The power (or authority), of the air probably refers to Satan’s host of demons who exist in the heavenly sphere.

This world system is characterized by three elements, humanism, materialism and illicit sex.

Humanism places man above all else, materialism places high value in physical things.

Especially money and sexual perversion dominates modern western society as it has no other societies since the lowest periods of ancient Greece and Rome.

Before conversion, we see the Ephesians used to conduct themselves in accordance with such ungodly values.

The prince of the power of the air may be read “the ruler of the kingdom in the air.”

They also used to live by the dictates and wishes of Satan.

Paul refers to these ideologies that are like fortresses in which people are imprisoned, need to be set free and brought captive to Christ and obedience to the truth.

Before we come to Christ, we are living in sin.

The life without Jesus is a life to please the flesh of man.

Satan appeals to the flesh of man.

All have sinned.

We are first of the flesh.

We live for pleasing our own self, before we come to Jesus.

These Ephesians were no different.

Not all unsaved people are necessarily indwelt at all time by Satan or are demon possessed.

But knowingly or unknowingly they are subject to Satan’s influence.

Because they share his nature of sinfulness and exist in the same sphere of rebellion against God, they respond naturally to his leading and to the influence of his demons.

They are on the same spiritual wavelength.

World and air would be almost synonymous, because both of them representing a realm or sphere of influence.

1 John 2:15-17 "Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Ephesians 2:3 "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Paul's primary purpose here is not to show how unsaved people now live, though the teaching is valuable for that purpose, but to remind believers how they themselves formerly walked and formerly lived.

All of us once lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

"We all had our conversation":

This means "we all conducted ourselves."

In contrast to "ye," (in 2:2), which refers to Gentiles.

Note the "we" of this verse, which refers to Jews.

In essence, Paul admits, "We Jews were no better than you Gentiles, because both ethnic groups were sinful."

"Children of wrath":

This refers to people subject to divine punishment.

Our body of flesh came from the earth and causes us to want to be of the earth.

We must crucify our flesh and put the Spirit of God in control of our life.

The carnal mind is an enemy of God.

The battle that has been raging since Adam and Eve, is the battle for the soul of man.

The flesh wants to control the soul of man.

If the flesh wins, then you are not a Christian.

The Spirit of God will come and dwell in you, if you become a spirit person.

The breath of life is the spirit of mankind.

The breath of life within us is of God.

He breathed the breath of life into us, and we became a living soul.

The soul is like the will of man.

God will not force you to follow Him.

We have a choice to choose whom we will follow.

The soul of man is the decision maker.

The flesh of man, connected with the earth, desires to sin.

The battle comes between the flesh and the spirit over the soul.

Which will rule in your life, the spirit or the flesh?

Flesh man brings death and hell.

Spirit man brings life and that more abundantly.

Is there really any choice?

Every believer was once totally lost in the system of the world, the flesh, and the devil, who is the prince over the demons, who are the power of the air.

Those are fallen man's three great arenas where he is in a losing battle with spiritual enemies, yet they are enemies with whom, by nature, he is not allied (1 John 2:16).

Rather than all men being children of God, as most of the world likes to think, those who have not received salvation through Jesus Christ are by nature children of wrath (John 3:18).

Apart from reconciliation through Christ, every person by nature (through human birth), is the object of God's wrath, his eternal judgment and condemnation.

They are characterized most accurately not only as sons of disobedience but consequently as children of wrath, objects of God's condemning judgment.

Verses 4-6

"But":

This begins to disclose God's response to man's sin of (verses 1-3).

This divine response is expressed in three main verbs:

(1) God ... hath quickened us. Because they were morally dead in sins, the Lord gave them spiritual life;

(2) And hath raised us up together, that is, God has not allowed these Christians to remain in the grave of their old life with its sinful ways and habits, but He brought them into a new life and demonstration of it; and

(3) God made us sit together in heavenly places, that is, He has brought us into His presence and into an intimate relationship with Himself.

Ephesians 2:4 "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,"

Salvation is from sin and by love.

“But God”:

This shows where the initiative was in providing the power of salvation.

His great desire is to be rejoined with the creatures He made in His own image and for His own glory.

The rebellion and rejection is on man’s side.

Salvation for God’s glory is by the motivation and power of God’s great love.

God is intrinsically kind, merciful and loving.

And in His love, He reaches out to vile, sinful, rebellious, depraved, destitute, and condemned human beings and offers them salvation and all the eternal blessings it brings.

Man’s rebellion is therefore not only against God’s lordship and law but against His love.

Though greatly offended and sinned against (as depicted in the parable of Matthew 18:23-35), because of God’s rich ... mercy and His great love He offered forgiveness and reconciliation to us as He does to every repentant sinner.

Though in their sin and rebellion all men participated in the wickedness of Jesus’ crucifixion.

God’s mercy and love thus has provided a way for all of them to participate in the righteousness of His crucifixion.

“I know what you are and what you have done,” He says; but because of My great love for you, your penalty has been paid.

My law’s judgment against you has been satisfied, through the work of My Son on your behalf.

For His sake, I offer you forgiveness.

To come to Me you need only to come to Him.”

Not only did He love enough to forgive but also enough to die for the very ones who had offended Him.

“Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friend” (John 15:13).

Compassionate love for those who do not deserve it makes salvation possible.

“Mercy ... love”:

Salvation is for God’s glory by putting on display His boundless mercy and love for those who are spiritually dead because of their sinfulness.

I want to cry, when I see this.

Why did He love us?

We did not deserve to be loved.

His mercy endures forever.

This love (agape), is that unconditional love.

It is above human love.

He loved us in spite of all the wrong in our life.

The following familiar verse is the greatest proclamation of love that I know of.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

While we were yet in sin, God loved us enough to save us.

We were headed for total destruction, and God blocked the way, and turned us to life everlasting in His precious Son.

God is love.

What this was that Jesus did for all of Christendom, is love in action.

Ephesians 2:5 "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)"

Above all else, a dead person needs to be made alive.

That is what salvation gives, spiritual life.

To encourage believers who doubt the power of Christ in their lives, Paul reminds them that if God was powerful and loving enough to give them spiritual life together with Christ, He is certainly able to sustain that life.

The power that raised us out of sin and death and “made us alive” (aorist tense), together with Christ (Romans 6:1-7), is the same power that continues to energize every part of our Christian living (Romans 6:11-13).

The “we” may emphasize the linking to the Jew with the Gentile “you” (in verse 1).

Both are in sin and may receive mercy to be made alive in Christ.

“We were dead in sins ... quickened”:

Quickened means to make alive.

Far more than anything else, a spiritually dead person needs to be made alive by God.

Salvation brings spiritual life to the dead.

The power that raises believers out of death and makes them alive (Romans 6:1-7), is the same power that energizes every aspect of Christian living (Romans 6:11-13).

In Adam all die, In Jesus Christ all live.

Jesus is the Quickening Spirit which brings life everlasting.

He is the Resurrection and the Life.

Because He lives, we live also.

Jesus took our sin upon His body on the cross.

Our sin died on the cross.

In the place of our sin, Jesus clothed us in His righteousness washed in His precious blood.

We are saved in Jesus, not because we deserve to be saved, but because He loved us.

Grace is unmerited favor.

Jesus offers this to everyone.

It is up to us to accept this free gift from Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:45 "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [was made] a quickening spirit."

When we became Christians, we were no longer alienated from the life of God.

We became spiritually alive through union with the death and resurrection of Christ and thereby for the first time became sensitive to God.

Paul calls it walking in "newness of life" (Romans 6:8).

For the first time, we could understand spiritual truth and desire spiritual things.

Because we now have God's nature, we now can seek godly things, "the things above" rather than "the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2).

That is what results from being alive together with Christ.

"We shall also live with Him (Romans 6:8), says the apostle, and our new life is indistinguishable from His life lived in us (Gal. 2:20).

In Christ, we cannot help but be pleasing to God.

Ephesians 2:6 "And hath raised [us] up together, and made [us] sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus:"

"Raised us up ... sit together in heavenly places":

The tense of "raised" and "sit" indicates that these are immediate and direct results of salvation.

Not only is the believer dead to sin and alive to righteousness through Christ's resurrection, but he also enjoys his Lord's exaltation and shares in His preeminent glory.

Salvation has a purpose, in regard to us and in regard to God.

The most immediate and direct result of salvation is to be raised up with Him, and (to be), seated with Him in the heavenly places.

Not only are we dead to sin and alive to righteousness through His resurrection in which we are raised, but we also enjoy His exaltation and share in His preeminent glory.

"In Heavenly Places":

The supernatural realm where God reigns.

In (3:10 and 6:12), however, it also refers to the supernatural sphere where Satan himself temporally rules.

This spiritual realm is where believers' blessings are (verse 1:3), their inheritance is (1 Peter 1:4), their affections should be (Col. 3:3), and where they enjoy fellowship with the Lord.

It is the realm from which all divine revelation has come and where all praise and petitions go.

We are no longer of this present world or in its sphere of sinfulness and rebellion.

We have been rescued from spiritual death and given spiritual life in order to be in Christ Jesus and to be with Him in the heavenly places.

Here, as (in 1:3), heavenly places refers to the supernatural sphere where God rules, though (in 6:12), it refers to the supernatural sphere where Satan rules.

The Greek verb behind seated is in the aorist tense and emphasizes the absoluteness of this promise by speaking of it as if it had already fully taken place.

Even though we are not yet inheritors of all that God has for us in Christ, to be in the heavenly places is to be in God's domain instead of Satan's.

To be in the sphere of spiritual life instead of the sphere of spiritual death.

That is where our blessing are, and where we have fellowship with the Father, the Son, the Holy spirit, and with all the saints who have gone before us and will go after us.

It is finished.

Jesus did it all for all who believe in Him.

He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

If I am in Him, I am seated there too.

My spirit soars to heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

I can easily relate to John, when he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

The door to heaven (Jesus), is open to all who will enter in.

Colossians 3:1-3 "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

Ephesians 2:7 "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in [his] kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

It is not only for our benefit and glory, but it is for God's greater purpose in salvation and is for His own sake.

In order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

That too, is obviously for our benefit, but it is first of all, for God's, because it displays for all eternity the surpassing riches of His grace (3:10).

Through His endless kindness toward us in Christ Jesus the Father glorifies Himself even as He blesses us.

From the moment of salvation throughout the ages to come we never stop receiving the grace and kindness of God.

That he might show (or demonstrate): This denotes the ultimate purpose for all that God did for the Ephesians (in verses 4-6).

It is that throughout eternity He might make us understand more and more His goodness to us.

Salvation of course, is very much for the believer's blessing, although it is even more for the purpose of eternally glorifying God for bestowing on believers His endless and limitless grace and kindness.

The whole of heaven glorifies Him for what He has done in saving sinners (3:10; Rev. 7:10-12).

Jesus Christ is the mediator.

1 Timothy 2:5 "For [there is] one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"

Notice in the next verse, that the covenant He mediates is not of the law, but of grace.

Hebrews 8:6-7 "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." "For if that first [covenant] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second."

Our covenant with God (Christians), is one that Jesus sealed with His own blood.

It is the free gift of grace.

Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:"

Our response in salvation is faith, but even that is not of ourselves (but is), the gift of God.

Faith is nothing that we do in our power or by our own resources.

In the first place, we do not have adequate power or resources.

More than that, God would not want us to rely on them even if we had them.

Otherwise salvation would be in part by our own works, and we would have some ground to boast in ourselves.

Paul intends to emphasize that even faith is not from us apart from God's giving it.

Some people have objected to this interpretation, saying that faith is feminine, while the word "that" is neuter.

That poses no problem, as long as it is understood that, "that" does not refer precisely to the noun faith but to the act of believing.

Every person lives by faith.

When we open a can of food or drink a glass of water we trust that it is not contaminated.

When we go across a bridge we trust it to support us.

Life is a constant series of acts of faith.

No human being, no matter how skeptical and self-reliant they are, could live a day without the exercising of faith.

When we accept the finished work of Christ on our behalf, we act by the faith that is supplied by God's grace.

That is the supreme act of human faith, the act which, though it is ours, is primarily God's, His gift to us out of His grace.

"For":

This gives the reason for this future demonstration of divine grace.

It is because man owes his salvation to this grace or undeserved divine favor.

The force of the Greek perfect tense:

"Are ye saved":

This indicates that the Ephesians were spiritually saved at some point in the past.

And at the present time of writing they remain in this state of salvation.

The grammatical gender of the word “that,” occurring in the expression “that not of yourselves”, is neuter, hence, “that” cannot refer to the preceding “grace” or “faith,” both of which are feminine nouns.

Nor can it refer to “are ye saved” which is a masculine participle.

Instead the neuter “that” refers back and embraces the entire foregoing “grace, are ye saved,” and “faith.”

This means that no part of salvation is “of yourselves” or due to what we do, the whole of salvation is the gift of God.

Man, is saved “by grace”, that is by the kindness of God in having Jesus die for our sins.

But this grace is appropriated through faith.

That is, man believes what God has done for him and relies upon Christ’s atonement to blot out his sins and bring him into a proper relationship with God.

“That not of yourselves”:

“That” refers to the entire previous statement of salvation, not only the grace but the faith.

Although men are required to believe for salvation, even that faith is part of the gift of God which saves and cannot be exercised by one’s own power.

God’s grace is preeminent in every aspect of salvation (Romans 3:20; Gal. 2:16).

You cannot earn your way to heaven.

Just as any gift, to have it, you must reach out and receive it unto yourself.

Faith was counted unto Abraham as righteousness.

Our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is what gives us our righteousness in God’s sight.

Jesus put us in right standing with God, when He paid our debt in full with His blood at Calvary.

We must say, thank you Jesus for dying for me.

That is why we are saved.

Jesus is our Savior.

The gift of God, to all mankind who will accept it, is eternal life in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The grace of God is the expression of His goodness toward the undeserving.

Grace means “unmerited favor”, and can be expressed by the acrostic.

“God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.”

This grace is the basis of our salvation.

Ephesians 2:9: "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Obviously, if it is true that salvation is all by God’s grace, it is therefore not as a result of works.

Human effort has nothing to do with it (Romans 3:20; Gal 2:16).

And thus, no one should boast, as if he had any part.

All boasting is eliminated in salvation.

Nevertheless, good works have an important place, as Paul is quick to affirm.

The reason, in part that salvation is not achieved by works is to prevent men from bragging of having earned a place in heaven by themselves.

There is no room for boasting.

The only thing we might consider boasting of is the greatness of God and His plan of salvation.

Works will not get you to heaven.

If we love God, and appreciate what He has done for us, we probably will work for Him, but our work does not save us.

It just tells Him we love Him.

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

“For”:

This verifies the assertion of man’s good works having no part in obtaining salvation.

Workmanship refers not to our original or physical birth, but to our spiritual birth: what we are spiritually in the good sense is due to God, not ourselves.

Before we can do any good work for the Lord, He has to do His good work in us.

By God's grace, made effective through our faith, we become His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

God has ordained that we then live lives of good works, all of those works are done in His power and for His glory.

Although they have no part in gaining salvation, good works have a great deal to do with living out salvation.

No good works can produce salvation, but many good works are produced by salvation.

"By this is My father glorified," Jesus said, "that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (John 15:8; read John 15:1-8).

These good works are expected because God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them, and that is why James says faith is illegitimate if works are not present (James 2:17-26).

Created in Christ Jesus unto good works means "having been (morally), recreated by Christ Jesus for good works".

That is, Jesus remade our spiritual lives so that we could then do good works.

The same power that created us in Christ Jesus empowers us to do the good works for which He has redeemed us.

These are the verifiers of true salvation.

The apostle's thinking is this: since the Christian has been given spiritual life for the purpose of doing good works, there could have been no good works by him prior to conversion that would merit salvation.

Good works follow, do not precede, salvation.

Good works do not bring discipleship, but they prove it is genuine.

When God's people do good deeds they bear fruit for His kingdom and bring glory to His name.

Good works cannot produce salvation but are subsequent and resultant God-empowered fruits and evidences of it.

This is the picture then.

We are saved by grace and grace alone.

The fruit of our salvation shows in our actions after we are saved.

As I have said so many times, we must walk in the salvation Jesus provided for us.

These works are in Christ Jesus.

In the works that you do, the world should be able to see Jesus.

Even Jesus Himself said (in John 14):

John 14:11-12 "Believe me that I [am] in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater [works] than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

Are you fulfilling this Scripture in His own Words?

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Titus 3:8 "[This is] a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

There are many more Scriptures on this.

Look up good works in your Strong's Concordance.

"Which God hath before ordained":

Like his salvation, a believer's sanctification and good works were ordained before time began (Romans 8:29-30).

Salvation does not come from knowing about the truth of Jesus Christ but from intimately knowing Christ Himself.

This coming alive can be accomplished by the power of God because of His love and mercy.

Ephesians Chapter 2 Questions

1. The wages of sin is _____.
2. Why does each day become a little more hopeless, before we are saved?
3. In time past ye walked according to the course of this _____.

4. This spirit now works in the children of _____.
5. Satan appeals to the _____ of man.
6. Who is "the prince of the power of the air"?
7. What must we do to be saved?
8. He that doeth the will of God abideth _____.
9. We were by nature the _____ of _____.
10. Why does our flesh want to sin?
11. The _____ mind is an enemy of God.
12. What must we become for the Spirit of God to dwell in us?
13. What is the spirit of mankind?
14. Which is the decision maker, the body, spirit, or soul?
15. Love in verse 4 is what kind of love?
16. The author thinks what Scripture is the greatest proclamation of love in the Bible?
17. How do we sit in heavenly places?
18. Who is the door to heaven?
19. What are we to set our affections on?
20. Who is the mediator?
21. The Christian's covenant of God is sealed with what?
22. What causes the Christian to be righteous before the Father?