



Ephesians

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And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1

There is a lot going on in Chapter 2 of Ephesians. In one sense, the first verses match the Genesis creation account. Verses 1-3 reflect the chaos which occurred at the beginning. Verse 4 parallels the Spirit of God hovering over those waters of chaos. Verses 4-10 reflect the calling of creation into order. What occurred on a physical level in creation also occurs in a spiritual sense in the redemption of man.

There are also two streams of attention which are being addressed in this chapter. In verses 1, 8, & 11, Paul writes in the second person. However, in verses 3, 10, & 14, he writes in the first person. The two streams are united in verse 18 with the words, "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father." Together, Jew and Gentile are united as one as described by Paul in verses 19-22. It is a masterful use of writing to demonstrate the marvel of what Christ has done in and for His redeemed.

This first verse of the chapter begins with, "And you *He made alive*." The words "He made alive" are not in the original, but are inferred from verse 2:5. What Paul has done is jump back to his thought which ended in verse 1:14. From verses 1:15-23, Paul redirected his attention temporarily and now he continues with the process of what occurs in the believer. If we take 1:13, 14 and place 2:1 directly after them, we can see what Paul is relaying –

"In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of

promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. ... And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins..."

Our trusting in Christ (and not a moment before, Calvinists) led to being sealed with the Holy Spirit, who is our guarantee. At that moment our spirits were regenerated and we were made alive together with Christ. The rebirth is complete in the exercising of our faith and in what results from that.

The verse ends with, "who were dead in trespasses and sins." If the inserted words are removed, the thought follows naturally with Ephesians 1:13, 14 and which then is followed naturally with the subject (God) of verse 2:4 and the object (us) of verse 2:5 –

"^{1:13} In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. ... ^{2:1} And you, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ... ⁴ God ... ⁵ made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),"

Obviously the "us" of verse 2:5 speaks of both Jew and Gentile who Paul refers to in the interim verses, but the overall stream of thought is realized when the verses are placed in this order. The intent of Paul's words is to show that humanity is fallen. There is no spiritual life in us, but through faith in the work of Christ, the spiritual connection to God is reestablished.

What Adam lost for us, Christ has regained for us. The chaos of mankind is brought into harmony and order through the work of Christ.

Life application: As the human spirit can only be regenerated through faith in the work of Christ, then it follows logically that Jesus' claim of John 14:6 is true. He is the way the truth, and the life. No one can come to God except through Him.

...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,
Ephesians 2:2

This verse follows in one continued thought from verse 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...”

The words “in which” speak of “trespasses and sins.” Paul, writing to the Ephesians notes that they (and thus also we who follow after) “once walked according to the course of this world.” The word “course” simply means “age.” The current age of this world is one of trespasses and sins. People are conceived in sin, they are born in sin, they live in sin, and they die in sin. Without Christ, this would be the continued course of this world for all people and forever. Our walk would be a walk of death leading to death.

Paul further expands on the thought with the words, “according to the prince of the power of the air.” There can be no doubt that this is speaking of the devil; Satan. He is the ruler of this “course” or “age.” He deceived Adam and from that moment on, he has had the rule over all that has occurred here. The title given to him by Paul, “the prince of the power of the air,” is unique in the Bible and it has given scholars a great deal of debate as to what it exactly means.

However, it isn’t too difficult to determine by thinking about the way that the world has been structured. Man was created a temporal (physical) being. He was given dominion over the earth. The air surrounds the earth and it is the sphere in which we move. As angels and demons are spirit beings, they don’t move on the earth as we do. Rather, their movement can be equated to moving through the air. They rule over “the sons of disobedience” meaning fallen man, from this position.

However, God is above them, ruling from heaven. Thus, He is ultimately in control of all things, even within the sphere of “the air” where the devil exercises his power. This is evidenced in the book of Job. It is also seen in the gospels, Acts, and elsewhere. In 1 Thessalonians 4, we read these words –

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17

Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from the pit of the ground (the grave), demonstrating His authority over that realm. He will catch up those on the earth who are still alive, demonstrating His authority over that realm. And together, we will meet Him in the air, demonstrating His authority over that realm. It will be an “in your

face” demonstration to the devil, showing that he is utterly defeated by the authority of Christ.

Paul’s words show that we were once under the power of the devil. We dwelt in his sphere of influence and we walked according to his government. And this government, though defeated in Christ, continues on at this time. It is ruled by this same “spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.”

As we look at the world around us, we can see the evident truth of this. Those who are not redeemed certainly walk in the course of this world. They are under the rule of the devil and they are subject to his wicked direction. Unfortunately, far too many Christians still walk according to his rule, even though they have been freed from the power of the trespasses and sins which they once were subjugated to.

Life application: We have been freed from the devil’s power by the work of Christ, and yet how often do we allow ourselves to fall back into his sphere of wickedness! Let us consider that we have been bought with a price. We belong to a new Master, and our allegiance is to be to Him and to Him alone. Let us endeavor to live for Christ at all times.

...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. Ephesians 2:3

This verse is referring to “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” of the previous verse. Here, Paul makes an all-inclusive statement. He has been speaking to the Ephesians with the word “you.” Now he includes himself and all people, Jew and Gentile, with the words “we” and “all.”

This reveals a truth that is seen both implicitly and explicitly in Scripture. We are conceived in sin, born in sin, and live in sin. We are under the influence of the devil. Until we come to Christ, this is our “default” position. The world doesn’t like to hear this, and the common term, “He is a good person,” is used to show that humans can be inherently good. But this is not what the Bible teaches.

Rather, we may be good in relation to others, but we are far from “good” in the biblical sense. Instead, “we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh.” Here, Paul is referring to the physical lusts that we as humans pursue. Anything which is earthly and sensual, and which is not deemed as a holy pursuit, is considered in the words, “the lusts of our flesh.”

However, Paul has more which he includes in the overall depravity of man. He next states, “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” The soul of the man is inclusive of both the conduct of the flesh of the body as well as that of the mind. The “mind” speaks of our thoughts which we may act on, or which we may simply dwell on without taking any action. Either way, they are a part of that which is directed by the devil and which is cause for separation from God. As these things are instilled in our very nature, even from conception itself, it shows the complete and utter depravity of man. The devil has total power to work in “the sons of disobedience.”

Because of these things, all people are separated from God. Even those who have come to Christ were, at one time, “by nature children of wrath, just as the others.” The Greek word for “by nature” is *phusis*. It indicates “the underlying constitution or make-up of someone (something).” It is that which is fused into our very nature.

Two important truths must be considered in these words. The first is explicit; that without Christ, we would still be “children of wrath.” As this was our very nature, there is nothing we could do about changing it. It was tied into who we were, completely and entirely. Thus, as children of wrath, we were destined for destruction and complete separation from the holy God.

The second one is implicit; that we are now no longer considered “just as the others.” Instead, even though we may have these same lusts and desires because we are still in our fallen bodies, we have a new nature according to Christ. Our sin is not imputed to us because of Christ. Instead, we are “children of God” and no longer “children of wrath.” Our new nature is infused into us. We go from a state of anticipated destruction and separation, to a state of anticipated redemption and glorification.

Paul will continue to explain this in the verses ahead. We are now no longer directed by the devil, even though we still live in earthly, corruptible bodies. Instead, we are directed by Christ. Sin is dead in us because we died to sin through the work of Christ. The thought of this verse can be seen reflected in the words of John –

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12, 13

Life application: If you have received Christ, then you have been granted the right to be called a child of God. In Christ, we are granted freedom from the power of the devil. Some wondrous day, we will be taken out of these fallen bodies which continue to struggle with the trials of a fallen world. We will be granted new bodies, a completely

new nature, and an eternal existence which will be forever pleasing to our heavenly Father.