

The Epistle to the Ephesians

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THE BIOGRAPHY OF A BELIEVER

Ephesians 2:1-10

INTRODUCTION

In Ephesians 1, we were overwhelmed with spiritual blessings. We reveled in the concept of “in the heavenlies, in Christ.” In Chapter 2 the Apostle abruptly changes the subject. Paul reminds us we were once “dead in trespasses and sins” but as believers we are heirs to a glorious inheritance, sealed by the Holy Spirit until that day.

Ephesians 2:1-10 presents a unique and accurate biography of every believer. In Ephesians 2:1-3, our past life is displayed. We were spiritually dead. We patterned our lives according to the ways of this wicked world. We were subject to the whims and will of Satan. Living among a rebellious Christ-rejecting people, we adopted their lifestyle. We yielded to the lusts and desires of our sinful flesh. We were by nature, abiding under, and destined to suffer the wrath of God.

Ephesians 2:4-6 refreshes our souls by relating what God, by His infinite love and matchless grace, has done for us. He has given us life – eternal life – even the life of Christ, and has saved us by His grace. We have been raised up and seated with Christ “in the heavenlies.”

Ephesians 2:7-10 reveals a glorious destiny for all believers and spells out the reasons for our assurance of such an amazing inheritance. We are saved, not by our works, but by God’s gifts of grace and faith. We have been newly created in Christ by God’s workmanship, not simply to do good works, but that we might enjoy, observe, and bask in the exceeding riches of His grace, which will take eternity to unfold.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS LESSON

- ❑ Ephesians 2:1-10 must be considered one of the greatest passages of scripture relating to the story of salvation.
- ❑ These 10 verses are of such importance that you should meditate on and memorize every verse.
- ❑ This passage will strengthen your faith, enlighten your mind, and cause you to rejoice in the grace that saves you and the hope that awaits you.

THE LESSON

- I. **Ephesians 2:1-2 “And you hath he quickened (made alive), who were dead in trespasses and sins: 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 his book, *In The Heavenlies* (Loizeaux Brothers, July 1939) an exposition of Ephesians, Dr. H. A. Ironside recalls an incident in his life which took place while he was traveling on an Interurban in California”

“A fortune teller wearing a shawl over her head and with hair dangling over the forehead came and sat down beside him. She put out her hand and told him she would tell him his past, present and future if he would cross her palm with a quarter. He told her that it was not really necessary because he already had his fortune told in a little book in his pocket. She was amazed that his fortune could be in a book. He then pulled a New Testament from his pocket and proceeded to expound Ephesians 2:1-10. She became increasingly agitated and finally fled down the aisle saying that she took the wrong man.”

II. OUR PAST

A. WHAT WE ONCE WERE

“And you hath he quickened (or made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins...”

1. “you” and “ye” – Paul uses these pronouns in Ephesians 2:1-2, undoubtedly referring to the Gentiles. In Ephesians 2:3, Paul quickly reverts to “we,” including both Jews and Gentiles as being “dead in trespasses and sins.”
2. “hath He quickened” – This phrase is not found in the earliest manuscript but inserted later by the editors. Most evangelical scholars believe that this phrase should remain because it clarifies Ephesians 2:5 and makes the English flow more smoothly. This is also my opinion. Ephesians 2:1 is actually a continuation of Ephesians 1:19-20 in which Paul refers to the exceeding greatness of God’s power toward us who believe, “according to the working of his mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead...” Paul is stating here that the same mighty power God used to raise Jesus from the dead is the same power he employs to raise us out of our spiritual death and give to us eternal life.
3. “dead in trespasses and sins” – In what sense were we dead before Christ came into our hearts?

We were dead spiritually and our trespasses and sins revealed just how dead in sin we were.

- a) *trespasses* – Trespasses are overt acts of defiance or rebellion against a revealed law. God said to Adam, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Adam ate of that tree with full knowledge of what would happen. He transgressed a clear THOU SHALT NOT (1 Timothy 2:14). Though Adam continued to live physically, he died spiritually and his sinful, disobedient, fallen nature has been passed on to every person born since that time. Because of this first sin, God sees every member of mankind as spiritually dead.
Romans 5:12 – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

1 Corinthians 15:22 – “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

- b) *Sins* – The word sin means “missing the mark.” This mark is God’s righteousness and holiness. Sin is any thought, word, or deed that falls short of God’s righteousness.
4. What does it mean to be spiritually dead? It means that everyone outside of Christ cannot see, hear, understand the spiritual things of God. Daydreamers miss the point entirely when they convey the idea that 1 Corinthians 2:9 refers to Heaven: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Heaven is indeed a wonderful place being prepared for us (John 14:2).
 5. The context here, however, makes perfectly clear that Paul is referring to the new spiritual life we receive when we welcome Christ into our hearts.
1 Corinthians 2:11 – “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save (except) the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”
1 Corinthians 2:14 – “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him:...because they are spiritually discerned.”

B. HOW WE ONCE LIVED

While still without Christ and dead in trespasses and sins, we walked “according to the course of this world.”

1. *Walked* – Paul uses this word seven times in Ephesians. It means our manner of life. In this text, it means that before our acceptance of Christ we patterned our lives according to the ways of this world. We simply did what the rest of the world was doing, and accepted that as the standard way of living.
2. *the course of this world* – A clear definition of this phrase is given by the Apostle John in 1 John 2:15-16. He pleads with us not to love the world nor the things that are in it; because if we love the world, the love of God is not in us. He then describes “world” for us – “For all that is in

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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.”

3. Many sinners, without Christ, think they are free and living as they please in this world. Read carefully the rest of Ephesians 2:2. In our past life, we walked according to the world as well as according to the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”
 - a) Who is the prince of the power of the air? This is one of the titles given to Satan, God’s greatest enemy. While Satan has been deposed of his original status (Isaiah 14:12-15), he retains an enormous amount of power. He is not omnipresent, but his influence is exercised all over the world, through the great number of evil spirits under his control.
 - b) Satan is not only the prince of the power of the air, he is the prince of this world (John 12:31), and the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). In that capacity he deceives and blinds sinners to the glorious Gospel of Christ, tempting and appealing to them by the lusts mentioned in 1 John 2:16.

C. HOW WE ONCE WALKED

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.”

1. *Among whom* – Before we received Christ, we were a part of the “sons of disobedience,” the whole worldly crowd who rejected the Gospel of Christ.
2. *and were by nature the children of wrath* – In 1 John 4:8,16, we read that God is love. How wonderfully true that is! We must remember that the God of the Bible is infinitely holy. He surely loves all of mankind (John 3:16) but being a holy God He abhors sin. The unbelieving and unrepentant sinner not only has the wrath of God abiding on him (John 3:36), he is also destined to suffer the full fury of God’s wrath (Romans 2:5,8; Revelation 6:17).

I. OUR PRESENT

Ephesians 2:4-6 “**But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus**”

- A. *BUT GOD* – Could any two words provide us with greater joy? Our wonderful Lord has intervened on our behalf. We were lost, but He found us. We were sinking in sin but He pulled us out. We were blind, but He opened our eyes. We were bound, but He broke the chains. We were enslaved, by sin but He set us free. We were dead in sin, but He gave us life. The phrase “but God” occurs throughout Paul’s Epistles. Whenever you come to it in your reading, mark it well. They all speak of God’s love and faithfulness to sustain us, deliver us, and supply our every need. For examples, read Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 10:13; and Philippians 4:19.
- B. *WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, for his great love wherewith he loved us....* In Ephesians 2:7, Paul writes of the “riches of his grace.” Here, we are introduced to the “riches of his mercy.” Both grace and mercy originate in the love of God, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...” (John 3:16).
 1. Grace – provides our salvation (Ephesians 2:5,8; Titus 2:11).
 2. Mercy – reveals the loving kindness, the tenderheartedness, and mercies of God, by which the wrath of God and the penalty for sin is withheld. “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy” (Psalm 103:8).
- C. *EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN SINS, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved); And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*
 1. In Ephesians 2:8 Paul repeats the phrase, “by grace are ye saved”. His repeated emphasis should make us aware of the fact that our salvation is entirely by grace, apart from works or merit.

2. Both Ephesians 2:5 and 6 are somewhat repetitious of Ephesians 2:1. All three verses continue Paul's expression in Ephesians 1:19-20, where he writes concerning "the working of his (God's) mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Just as God, by His infinite grace and incomparable power raised Jesus from the dead, brought Him back to Heaven, and seated Him at His own right hand, so God, by that same power has raised us up and given us new life in Christ. He then raised us up to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.
3. "the heavenly places" – In Ephesians 1:3, we said that this is the entire sphere of our spiritual experience we share with Christ. All that Christ is and has He shares with us. As we walk and talk with Him, we share His peace and joy, His sufferings and His power. What a great God and wonderful Savior we have!

IV. OUR FUTURE :

Ephesians 2:7-10 "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

- A. *in the ages to come* – This expression can only refer to eternity. God has so much for us to see and know it will take eternity to reveal it.
- B. *the exceeding riches of his grace* – This is the second such phrase in Ephesians. The first use is in Ephesians 1:7, where Paul writes that the forgiveness of our sins is according to the riches of His grace. Paul is saying here that in the ages to come, God is going to put those riches on display!
 - ◆ *Note carefully that the riches that will be displayed are all the kindnesses He has shown to us through Christ Jesus. All the riches, the blessing, and the glory we shall share will all be because of what Christ did for us at Calvary.*
- C. *For by grace are ye saved* – Since this phrase, or its equivalent is found numerous times in the New Testament, especially in the writings of the Apostle Paul, it is good to know what grace is. Here are some definitions of grace.
 1. Grace is the unhindered, wonderful and immeasurable love of God, poured out upon us in an infinite variety of ways without limit. Not according to what we deserve but according to His limitless heart of love.
 2. Grace is the free, unmerited favor of God in Christ Jesus.
 - a) FREE – it must be exercised or bestowed without the possibility of anything being offered in exchange. Otherwise, it would simply be a barter or an exchange (Romans 11:6).
 - b) UNMERITED – God's grace is poured out upon us in utter disregard of the extent of our sins. No one has any merit to offer God in payment for His grace. To recognize merit is to nullify grace.
- D. *through faith ; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God* – Here is an amazing fact. Even the faith we exercise when we open our hearts to Christ and cry , "Lord I believe!," is given to us as a gift from God. If you are not yet a Christian, do not let this fact hinder or frighten you. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 11:28 – "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Also, in Revelation 22:17 we read, "...And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." So remember, the fact that faith is a gift from God does not eliminate personal responsibility. We all must repent (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30). God will receive and grant faith to all who come to Him with an honest and hungry heart to be saved.
- E. *Not of works, lest any man should boast* – This clear statement shatters any possibility of earning your way to Heaven. Millions of people are living under the delusion that Heaven can be gained by good deeds. No one will ever strut around heaven saying, "I made it." We are saved and kept saved by God's grace alone. God does the saving and God does the keeping (1 Peter 1:4-9; Jude 24).

- F. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*
1. When you received Christ, something wonderful occurred in you. By the power and grace of God a whole new nature was formed in you. You became a new creation in Christ Jesus.
 2. We are to reckon ourselves to be dead to that old life of sin and “put on the new man (Christ), which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24; Romans 6:4).
 3. The proper attitude towards “good works” is that we do not work to be saved, we work because we have been saved. Here is the life God has ordained for us. We were created in Christ that we should walk in good works.

Ephesians
Exam – Lesson 5

Name _____

Address _____

Multiple Choice – Circle the letter in front of the correct answer. Only one answer is correct unless otherwise stated.

1. The concept found in Ephesians chapter 1 is that: (Value 4 points)
 - a. believers are dead in trespasses and sins.
 - b. believers are “in the heavenlies” with Christ.
 - c. believers are justified by faith.

2. Paul reminds us in Ephesians chapter 2 that: (Value 4 points)
 - a. we were dead in trespasses and sins.
 - b. we are “in the heavenlies” with Christ.
 - c. we are justified by faith.

3. The phrase “you hath he quickened” is not in the earliest manuscripts. It was kept in the translation because: (Value 4 points)
 - a. it makes verse 5 more clear.
 - b. it is true.
 - c. later manuscripts included it.

4. Ephesians 2:1 is a continuation of what other section in Ephesians? (Open Bible) (Value 4 points)
 - a. Ephesians 1:4-5
 - b. Ephesians 1:19-20
 - c. Ephesians 1:1

5. In what sense is the unbeliever dead? (Value 4 points)
 - a. In a spiritual sense.
 - b. In a physical sense.
 - c. In a psychological sense.

6. Trespasses are: (Value 4 points)
 - a. open denial that Christ is God.
 - b. open acts of rebellion against the law of God.
 - c. committing secret sins.

7. Every member of the human race is born dead in sin because: (Value 4 points)
 - a. he or she has sinned against God.
 - b. he or she has sinned from the beginning.
 - c. Adam’s fallen nature has been passed on to every human being.

8. A good definition of sin is: (Value 4 points)
 - a. failure to read the Bible.
 - b. missing the mark.

- c. not helping other people.
9. To be spiritually dead means: (Value 4 points)
- a. not being able to see, hear or understand the spiritual things of God.
 - b. the same as being physically dead.
 - c. to have new life in Christ.
10. In 1 Corinthians 2:9 Paul is referring to: (Open Bible) (Value 4 points)
- a. heaven.
 - b. the new spiritual life of the believer.
 - c. the new body we receive at the rapture.
11. The meaning of “walked” in Ephesians 2:2 is: (Open Bible) (Value 4 points)
- a. the way a person walks down a street.
 - b. the way a person lives or behaves.
 - c. the way a person talks to others.
12. According to Paul, who controls the lives of the unbelievers? (Value 4 points)
- a. Satan
 - b. Jesus Christ
 - c. The Holy Spirit
13. Satan can exercise such enormous power throughout the world because: (Value 4 points)
- a. he is omnipresent.
 - b. he had this power when he was an angel.
 - c. he has his evil spirits working everywhere for him.
14. The words “But God” mean that: (Value 4 points)
- a. God intervened on our behalf and saved us.
 - b. God sent His Son to die on the cross.
 - c. the Holy Spirit came to dwell in us.
15. The meaning of “mercy” is that: (Value 4 points)
- a. God has provided our salvation.
 - b. God has shown us His loving kindness.
 - c. God showed us His justice.
16. “In the ages to come” refers to: (Value 4 points)
- a. each year as it follows the other.
 - b. the next millennium.
 - c. all of eternity.
17. The word “grace” means: (Value 4 points)
- a. the goodness of God.
 - b. the free and unmerited favor of God.
 - c. God’s mercy on a sinner.
18. Salvation is through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. (Value 4 points)
- a. This removes personal responsibility to repent.
 - b. This means that in order to be saved you must repent.
 - c. This does not remove personal responsibility for a person to repent and receive Christ as Savior.

19. The believer is unable to boast of his salvation because: (Value 4 points)
- a. salvation is by faith.
 - b. salvation is by grace and a gift of God.
 - c. a person who believes is justified before God.
20. Which of the following two statements is true? (Value 4 points)
- a. We do good works so that we may be saved by them.
 - b. We do good works because we are saved.
21. Why were we created in Christ Jesus according to Ephesians 2:10? (Open Bible)
(Value 4 points)
-
22. According to 1 John 2:15-16, what is meant by “the world”? (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
-
23. According to John 12:31 and 2 Corinthians 4:4, what are two other names in the Bible for Satan?
(Open Bible) (Value 10 points)
- c. _____
 - b. _____

Decision Time

In this section of Ephesians Paul told the people in Ephesus that at one time they were dead in sin, but God made them alive. God gave them a new life in Jesus Christ because they received Him as their Lord and Savior. In what class of people do you belong? Are you still dead in sin? You have never received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? I invite you to do so today.

You can say something like this to God, (this is not a magical formula it is only a suggested wording) “Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and you died for my sins on the cross. You rose from the dead and are living in heaven right now. I am sorry for my sins and ask you to forgive them. With your help I will turn away from my sin. Today I invite you to become Lord of my life.”

Signed _____ Date _____