

Ephesians 2 pt. 1 v.1-10

*CONTEXTUALLY THIS FOLLOWS JESUS AS HEAD OVER THE CHURCH (1:22-23) AND CULMINATES IN 2:22 WITH GOD BUILDING HIS KINGDOM, HIS CHURCH, WITH JEWS AND GENTILES ALIKE.

THERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT DOCTRINES TO EXAMINE ALONG THE WAY, AS THEY RELATE TO HOW GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH AND WHAT THAT TEACHES US ABOUT WHO HE IS.

Chapter one concluded with the Apostle Paul detailing how God has demonstrated the immensity of His power (1:19) by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

Because God the Father has raised Christ from the dead we are certain that His word is true and that His promises are coming to pass.

Paul also relayed to the Ephesians that God has set Jesus Christ over all things authoritatively and that a special relationship exists

between Jesus and this divine institution we call the church, wherein He is the head of the church, and the church is His Body.

As one commentator succinctly writes: “She [the church] is the continued revelation of His divine life in human form...” Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 344). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Paul continues to lay out for the Ephesians the doctrinal and practical truths of Christ’s church as He serves as the Head of the Body.

Paul moves from a heart-felt prayer for the Ephesians: that they would come to a deeper understanding of God’s character for them; to a reminder of their former character apart from Christ.

Paul prays earnestly that they might understand God’s hope, God’s inheritance, God’s power; and then, in our current text, he reels them back in to examine their past.

This is needful because sometimes, especially after spending some time with the Lord, and being conformed to His image we can become sanctimonious - holier than thou - we forget where we came from.

Rather than adopting the humility of Christ, we consider ourselves to have fully attained His power and authority, all the while ignoring the fullness of His character characterized by love and grace.

V.1-3 Paul reminds the Ephesians of their previous state relative to God in order to further develop their understanding of who God is, how powerful He is, and how vastly His favor extends to them.

I would call this a portrait of an average human. This is man's natural state apart from Christ.

*Textual note: the phrase in v.1 "He made alive" is found italicized in the NKJV because it is not found this early in the Greek text but rather is inferred here from v.5. The reason for this is because: "He begins with an incomplete sentence; the participial clause with which verse 1 begins ("and you being dead") demands a

finite verb such as “he saved you” or “he brought you to life.” But the sentence is left incomplete as the writer expands not only on his readers’ previous condition of spiritual death (verses 1–2) but on the condition of all mankind (verse 3). In verse 4 he starts a new sentence in which the thought is completed (at the end of verse 7); in verse 5 he picks up the participial clause which appears in verse 1, but changes from the second person plural “you” to the first person plural “we” (“and we being dead in transgressions”).” Bratcher, R. G., & Nida, E. A. (1993). A handbook on Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (p. 40). New York: United Bible Societies.

Paul’s point here is all about the universality of spiritual death - “you all were dead in trespasses and sins...”

There is no one exempt from this condition. One is not required to be especially wicked or diabolical to fit into this category. Spiritual deadness is our common state.

There’s much conversation and controversy in the current culture about whether or not people are born a particular way. This

conversation is had in regards to the LGBTQ community. It may even be had for people who are predisposed to addiction.

Leaving that question aside for the moment, I promise you that you were born dead in sin and tresspasses.

As David writes: [Psa 51:5 NLT] 5 For I was born a sinner--yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.

[Psa 58:3 NLT] 3 These wicked people are born sinners; even from birth they have lied and gone their own way.

This message is a hard one to preach but it is the truth and deserves consideration.

We must be clear to state that God's holy word describes all of us as dead because of sin. No heartbeat, no consciousness, no will power, no ability to spark ourselves back to life...dead.

What is sin? Perhaps you've heard that word your whole life without considering it. The Biblical meaning for sin is failing to hit the mark.

ἁμαρτία, -ας, ἡ, - a failing to hit the mark...whether it occurs by omission or commission, in thought and feeling or in speech and action. Thayer, J. H. (1889). [*A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti*](#) (p. 30). New York: Harper & Brothers.

Can you land a helicopter anywhere? No. There's a mark to hit or you might die. That's sin.

What are trespasses? Entering into those areas which should not be entered into. Consider a "No Trespassing" sign. It is a willful violation of a stated boundary.

Illustration: Impact areas on military bases are the areas where ordinance is exploding or waiting to explode. These areas are off limits because they may kill a trespasser.

We have born in our souls the natural penalty of ignoring God's boundaries, and falling short of holiness - death.

All of us in our previous lives before Christ were doing our own thing, according to our own conscience, whatever we felt was right and good, whatever we felt was satisfying irrespective of God's holiness.

Perhaps we did so without even giving a second thought to God's holiness and how much He desires for us to be like He is, to be with Him.

Here is a loving reminder for the proud soul still in that life of doing whatever is right in their own eyes, making snap judgments on morality and goodness that fit within their own desire for personal gratification - please know that you are not a pioneer or unique or clever. You are predictably living out your life as mankind has done for centuries.

Over three thousand years ago it was written: [Jdg 21:25 NKJV]
25 In those days [there was] no king in Israel; everyone did [what was] right in his own eyes.

[Pro 14:12 NKJV] 12 There is a way [that seems] right to a man,
But its end [is] the way of death.

Let's not get cocky though loved ones. We all walked according to the course of this world! Whatever the prevailing wisdom of the age was when we were separated from God, we all lived that life.

And then Paul gets real, and he writes something that should terrify us down to our bones. He says that in the Ephesians' former state, and universally, we all followed somebody who he refers to as, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who works in children of disobedience."

Who is that?! This term is a Biblical euphemism referring to Satan.

Satan is also referred to as, "the god of this age," (2 Cor 4:4) and "the ruler of the darkness of this age," (Eph 6:12) the father of lies (John 8:44) accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10).

Sound unbelievable? Believe it! Not all of Satan's devices come packaged in red tights with horns and a pitchfork.

Now, not all of our sin is because of Satan, a good bit of it is because we are naturally dead in our sins - we don't know anything different except darkness and sin and disobedience because we were born that way!

Paul's point here is that we all once lived apart from Christ, according to, in subjection to, in agreement with, under the influence of...Satan.

That may seem like a hard pill to swallow! Good people who are otherwise uninterested in Christ, or holiness, or the church, or God may balk at the suggestion. They may not support or even believe in an almighty God but certainly they would reject the idea that they are in league with Satan!

They may claim to be indifferent to the whole conversation. I would suggest that might make Satan quite pleased indeed.

The truth is that one cannot be apathetic to the "prince of the power of the air," we live in his realm!

AND we WERE part of his tribe. We can easily look back and catalog our disobedience toward God, our rebellious hearts or our apathy.

That is the Spirit of Satan: opposed to holiness, opposed to God the Father, Son and Spirit.

How does this manifest itself practically?

We conducted ourselves in the lust of the flesh - we lived for those things that brought temporary, bodily pleasure. Paul also points out that we lived for those things that, while they are evil and destructive, fulfilled the base desires of our MINDS TOO!

Some people like to deal with sin by technicality by saying that they can indulge in sin mentally but if they don't physically put their body to the task then they haven't really sinned. Not so! Our minds play an equal role in wickedness.

And because of that, because we were in an alliance with Satan, because we were disobedient, because we lived solely to please the base desires of our bodies or to get our neurons firing in a

way that hurt us spiritually and denies the holiness of God we were, by nature, children deserving of wrath - with no substantial redeeming qualities.

This is hard to preach, loved one! I wish I could say that God's word tells us that "everything is awesome, everything is cool when you're part of a team..." but it's just not so.

We were rotting on the inside, putrefying before Christ. This is our previous state apart from Christ and it's so important to recognize that.

For those who have not come to know that they are dead - separated from God - hear me, you are rotten, decaying on the inside, your soul has been wounded mortally, there is no way out...

This was our former state - this is where we all came from...just like everyone else.

But there is hope because God raises the dead! We who are Christ's have experienced a resurrection!

This is remarkable because these beat up old souls are the building materials that God chooses to build His church with!

You and I, like old refurbished barn wood, or more like an old rotten pine tree limb swelling with water that falls apart in our hands. God made us new in order to demonstrate to the universe His vast power.

V.4-5 BUT GOD!...

Knowing full well that we are the walking dead - falling apart at the seams in our sin and unwillingness to obey Him - God does a miracle, He makes us alive...just like He made Christ alive! And how has He made Christ alive? All the way!

We say - how can I know this is true? As sure as Christ's resurrection is the evidence, we too are the evidence! Look around! The church is the evidence.

God took a pile of stinking corpses and made them alive, more alive than they've ever been, so alive that we shall never die.

Why? Because of who He is. We are characterized by death, sin, desire for the flesh and mind. God is characterized by an overwhelming wealth of mercy and love.

Where we deserve to be torched, buried eternally, God displays forgiveness, resurrection, and affection for us.

God favors us more than we can imagine, even when we are spiritually dead, and He wants to be with us forever! He wants us to be like Him!

He desires this so much that...

V.6-7 HE RAISED US UP TOGETHER - same language used to reference the resurrection.

Just as God raised up Christ from the dead. So too God has raised us up in Christ. We have a seat reserved for us with Christ in eternity.

Paul's language is quite remarkable. He writes as if the thing has happened, and yet it is still coming to pass. This type of writing is not very common in NT writing but when it is used it is used intentionally to "stress the certainty of the event."

This is the tension of Biblical literature referring to future events yet to be, that are secured by Christ in the past, while we are prepared by the Holy Spirit in the present.

Proleptic (Futuristic) Aorist

A. Definition

The aorist *indicative* can be used to describe an event that is not yet past as though it were already completed. This usage is not at all common, though several exegetically significant texts involve possible proleptic aorists.

B. Clarification

An author sometimes uses the aorist for the future to stress the certainty of the event. It involves a "rhetorical transfer" of a future event as though it were past. Wallace, D. B. (1996). [*Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*](#) (pp. 563–564). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

The purpose of this mirrored resurrection, Christ's and ours, is because God desires to clearly demonstrate His favor towards us through kindness for all eternity. Not because of who we are, but because of who He is! We admittedly don't deserve grace or kindness and yet God is building a kingdom that is characterized by His spirit and His attributes, including grace and kindness.

V.8-10 The whole of the matter condensed. We are saved, brought to life, brought into God's kingdom because He favors us irrespective of our own merit.

How do we grasp ahold of this saving grace or let it grasp us?
Faith. Belief.

On one side, we must look at God; and, on the other, at man. God declares, that he owes us nothing; so that salvation is not a reward or recompense, but unmixed grace. The next question is, in what way do men receive that salvation which is offered to them by the hand of God? The answer is, *by faith*; and hence he concludes that nothing connected with it is our own. If, on the part of God, it is grace alone, and if we bring nothing but faith, which strips us of all commendation, it follows that salvation does not

come from us...When, on the part of man, the act of receiving salvation is made to consist in faith alone, all other means, on which men are accustomed to rely, are discarded. Faith, then, brings a man empty to God, that he may be filled with the blessings of Christ. Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010).

[*Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*](#) (p. 227). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

This belief is believing God down to our core. Just as Abraham, [Gen 15:6 NKJV] "...believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

Where does this faith come from? Can I muster it up? Can I use clever questioning techniques to get somebody to pay lip service to belief? No. Faith, belief is a gift from God. Since our natural state of being is spiritual death we have no ability to conjure faith within ourselves - we must be quickened to life by the Holy Spirit. The very faith we have is a gift of God.

In this we see our true form - beggars for God's grace, devoid of even our own faith - much like a desperate man who cried out to Jesus: [Mar 9:24 NKJV] ..."Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

But God - demonstrating His grace in kindness raised us up by His grace as we believe.

BUT WAIT, there's more!

Some people get hung up here, pausing too long at verse 9 and argue that what we do in our lives doesn't matter since we are saved by grace through faith.

Paul clarifies this sentiment in verse 10.

V.10 - We ARE THE WORK OF GOD! HE IS SHOWING OFF TO ALL CREATION HIS NATURE BY HIS HANDIWORK - US!

What were we created for? What were we resurrected for? Why did God shower His grace upon us? FOR GOOD WORKS, TO REPRESENT HIM.

Even as our old nature was characterized by death and the fruit we brought forth of that life stunk of death and decay now our new lives are marked by life!

You are a good work of God, you have a new nature - one of holiness. The fruit that we now bring forth is good and it is a testament to the might power of our God who resurrects the dead.

What's more is that God has prepared these works for us beforehand. He has predestined good works for us that we should walk in them and bear witness to His goodness.

Since you are a new creation, since you are alive, then you will bear good fruit. Since we have received grace through faith we can't help but walk in good works - it's who we are in Christ because that is His nature and He is making us like Him.

All of that to demonstrate His power. He takes the useless, discarded, damaged, decaying, wounded, skeptical, hurt, abused, downcast, impoverished and He raises us up to holiness and new life. Who else can do such a thing!? No one but our God.

You have been made new loved one. Be new.

As Jesus taught: [Mat 5:16 NKJV] 16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.