

Paul's Letter to the *EPHESIANS*

CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3: *God's Plan for Everyone Who is In Christ* (CONTINUED)

Benefits of Being "In Christ" (1:3 – 3:21) (continued)

New Life (2:1-10)

2:1-2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions¹ and sins², in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those³ who are disobedient. [¹*paraptoma*: sin as a moral failure, ²*harmartia*: any act contrary to the will and law of God, ³*huios*: sons] Being "dead in... transgressions and sins" Colossians 2:13 is a grave reminder of the position of unregenerate sinners Romans 8:1-8, Colossians 3:5-8. Unsaved people are dead, as a result of their inherent sinful nature Matthew 12:34-37, Romans 7:14-25. The "ways of this world" are earthly values apart from God Romans 12:2. The "spirit" working in the disobedient is the spirit of the antichrist 1 John 4:1-3.

Biblically speaking, the word "dead" is always associated with the concept of separation. Physical death separates the body and soul Luke 16:19-31; spiritual death separates the soul and God Ephesians 4:18, Revelation 20:14. Oddly, salvation is also associated with separation. Psalm 103:11-12

Satan is referred to as "the prince of this world" John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, because his formidable power is on the earth, and "the god of this age" 2 Corinthians 4:4, because his power is limited to the time leading up to the ultimate judgements at the end of time. Here, Paul calls Satan "the ruler of the kingdom of the air", because the air is an apt metaphor for the spirit realm.

2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings⁴ of our (sinful nature)⁵ and following its desires⁶ and thoughts⁷. Like the rest, we were by nature objects⁸ of wrath⁹. [⁴*epithumia*: depending on context can be good (longing) or bad (lusting), ⁵*sarx*: flesh, ⁶*thelema*: the result of the will producing pleasure/joy, ⁷*dianoia*: mind, ⁸*teknon*: children ⁹*orge*: anger as a state of mind] All humans start life "under [the power of] sin" Romans 3:9. All godless and wicked people "clearly [see]" God Psalm 19:1-6, but they choose to reject Him and His "eternal power and divine nature" Romans 1:18-20, and yield to their sinful nature, resulting in their inevitable experiencing the wrath of God. Daniel 11:36, John 3:36

From birth, man is not a sinner since he sins; he sins because he is a sinner. Psalm 51:5, James 1:13-15

In these three verses 2:1-3, Paul's discussion of sin emphasizes the three enemies of mankind that entices him into sinning: the world^{v.2}, the flesh^{v.3} and the devil^{v.2} (Satan) James 4:4-7.

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2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy¹⁰, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved.

[¹⁰*e/eos*: the moral quality of feeling compassion] Completely free of man's accomplishments, God's grace is the only path to salvation^{v.8-9, Acts 15:11, Romans 3:22-24}. However, God's gift of salvation^{John 3:16} is divinely expressed by His love^{1 John 4:7-12} and mercy^{Matthew 5:7, 1 Peter 1:3-5}.

The only power that can bring man back from the dead is the same power that raised-up Jesus^{2 Corinthians 13:4}. And, the Godly power that raises believers out of the grave^{Romans 6:1-7} is the same power that promotes a passionate, righteous Christian life^{Romans 6:11-14, 2 Timothy 1:7-10}.

2:6-7 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ¹¹ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. [¹¹*Christos*: Anointed One, Messiah]

The Greek tense of the words "raised" and "seated" indicate immediate results of salvation. Christians share in the preeminent glory of Jesus Christ^{Romans 8:17, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14} in the supernatural realm, not only in the future, but also in the present. Salvation not only blesses the believer, but greatly glorifies God, as expressed in John's glimpse of heaven^{Revelation 4:9-11}.

The spiritual realm is the place where the believers' blessings are^{Ephesians 1:3}, their "inheritance is kept"^{1 Peter 1:3-5} and their primary focus should be^{2 Corinthians 4:18, Colossians 3:1-2}.

God's Criteria for Salvation

2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Both grace and faith are "[gifts] of God", because God is preeminent in every aspect of salvation^{Romans 8:28-30, 2 Timothy 1:9-10, 1 John 4:19}.

The only responsibility man has is to "believe"^{John 3:16} in and receive the righteousness of "our God and Savior Jesus Christ"^{2 Peter 1:1} through the "faith"^{Hebrews 11:1} God freely provides. Works (i.e., adherence to the law) have no part in the salvation process^{Romans 3:21-28}, because "if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing"^{Galatians 2:21}.

The purposes for the law was and is (1) to be "put in charge to lead us to Christ"^{Galatians 3:24}; (2) to help mankind to "become conscious of sin"^{Romans 3:20}; and (3) to provide His followers guidance to live a Godly life^{Matthew 5:17-20, Mark 12:28-31, 2 Corinthians 5:10}.

If anyone could claim to deserve heaven (by birth or works), it would be Paul.^{Philippians 3:3-6}

God's Plan for Post-Salvation

2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good¹² works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. [¹²*agathos*: benevolent, profitable, useful] While good works cannot produce salvation, they are subsequent God-empowered fruit^{John 15:8, Galatians 5:22-23} and evidences^{Philippians 2:12-13, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Titus 2:11-14} of the believer's salvation^{James 2:14-26}.

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