

#### **4. Salvation by Grace through Faith—Ephesians 2:1-10**

Paul has previously shown that God’s eternal purpose was in Christ (Eph 1:1-10) and in the church (Eph 1:11-23). The first chapter ended with a declarative statement of how God summed up all things in Christ and his church. Speaking of the power of God in fulfilling his eternal purpose, Paul concluded chapter one in Eph 1:19-23:

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

In chapter 2, Paul turns to the specifics of God’s eternal plan for redemption of all people in Christ and in the church.

##### ***Mankind’s Condition before God’s Plan***

Eph 2:1-3

*2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 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 those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*

Eph 2:1-3 outlines the depraved condition of all people outside Christ and his church. Although he begins with the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun, *you*, speaking to the Ephesians, most of whom would be Gentiles, he switches to the 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun, *we*, in verse 3, thus including all Jews and Gentiles alike. “You were dead in your transgressions and sins,” describes the fate of those in the depraved state leading to spiritual death. What follows characterizes all those in this state of spiritual death, brought on by their transgressions and sins:

- They followed the ways of the world.
- They followed the ruler of the kingdom of the air.
- They followed the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.
- They gratified the cravings of our sinful nature.
- They followed the desires and thoughts of their sinful nature.
- They were by nature objects of wrath.

##### ***God’s Great Love Extended to the Lost***

Eph 2:4-7

*4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 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.*

In the face of man’s depravity, God extended his great love to us, bringing us out of this depraved state. In addition to his great love, God endowed us with all the spiritual blessings in Christ:

- God is rich in mercy.

- God made us alive even when we were dead in our trespasses and sins.
- God saved us by grace (undeserved favor).
- God raised us up with Christ.
- God seated us with him in heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.
- God will show us the remarkable riches of his grace in ages to come.
- God expressed his kindness to us in Jesus Christ.

### **God's Part: Grace**

Eph 2:8

*8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God –*

When we were dead in sins and trespasses, undeserving and lost, God gave us His gift through his son by His infinite grace. That gift given freely by the Father is his son, according to John 3:16-17: "16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The choice is still ours: we choose spiritual death or eternal life. Paul wrote in Rom 6:23: "3 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In 1 Peter 1:18-21, Peter explained that gift of god and how it fits into God's eternal plan for our redemption:

18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Therefore, the Lord redeemed us with his own blood, making the forgiveness of our sins possible. Jesus taught in Matt 26:28-29: "28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Without the shedding of the blood of Christ, there is no forgiveness, according to Heb 9:22: "22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

### **Man's Part: Obedient Faith**

Eph 2:9-10

*9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Man's part in Eph 8 quoted above is faith—an obedient faith as asserted in verse 10 above: "10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Paul explains the transition from death to life, by grace through faith, in Rom 6:3-11:

3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. 6 For we know that our old self was crucified with

him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

Baptism takes us from spiritual death to life with Christ. According to the next verses, Eph 2:8-11, we are dead to sin but alive to God in Christ.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

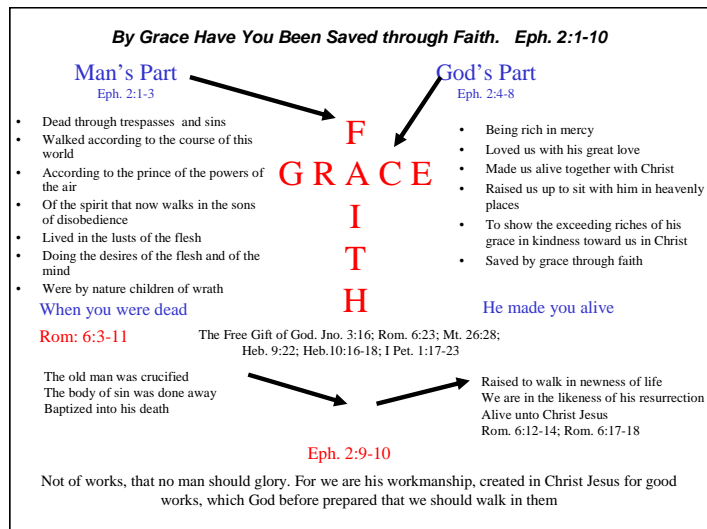
Understanding how blessed we are as spiritual beings, we must not let sin reign once again in our mortal bodies, as Paul taught in Rom 6:12-14:

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

In Rom 6:17-18, Paul reviews the way from sin to righteousness and the obedience that it requires:

17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. 18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

This passage so thoroughly agrees with Eph 2:10 that one cannot miss the point—we must obey God, since He created us for good works: “10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” God prepared the works for us in advance. No one can alter them, pervert them, or change them, substituting human wisdom and theology. God's plan *is* God's plan.



**Study Questions from the Scriptures**

1. Eph 1:1-10: In whom did God sum up all things?
2. Eph 1:11-23: What is the extent of Christ's power and authority? What is the fullness of Christ?
3. Eph 2:1-3: In what were we dead? What ways do non-Christians follow? What do sinners gratify?
4. Eph 2:4-7: Who has great love for us? Who is rich in mercy? Who made us alive? Where are we seated? In whom did God express his kindness?
5. Eph 2:8: By what are we saved? Through what are we saved? What is God's gift?

6. John 3:16-17: Why did God give his one and only son?
7. Rom 6:23: What is the wages of sin? What is the gift of God?
8. 1 Peter 1:18-21: With what were we redeemed? What is Christ called? When was Christ chosen?
9. Matt 26:28-29: For what was the blood of Christ poured out?
10. Heb 9:22: What is necessary for repentance?
11. Eph 2:9-10: Can you reconcile *not by works* with *created to do good works*?
12. Rom 6:3-11: To what are we raised from baptism? What was done away with in baptism?
13. Eph 2:8-11: In what were we dead? To what were we alive? Rom 6:12-14:
14. Eph 2:12-14: To whom do we offer our bodies? What must we not let reign in our mortal bodies?
15. Rom 6:17-18: What is the way from sin to righteousness?