

*THE BELIEVER'S
SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD*

The Epistle to the Ephesians

A Bible-Believing Study Guide

AV 1611 Bible Companion

“To the praise of the glory of His grace”
Ephesians 1:6

INSTRUCTOR'S EDITION

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From Sin's Grave to God's Grace

Our Position - The Believer's Resurrected Life **Ephesians 2**

I. Introduction (Key Verse: Ephesians 2:1)

- A. Ephesians chapter 1 described the believer's spiritual *possessions* in Christ, and we have a lot of them! In chapter 2, Paul describes the believer's spiritual *position* in Christ. Paul was a prisoner of Rome – not a very good “position” to be in. He was writing this book from jail. As a prisoner, he had no position, and no power and no authority – or so it seemed! Because of his new birth, Paul was spiritually FREE (freer than a KING, like Agrippa), he was joint-heir with Jesus Christ, he had spiritual power in prayer (more power than an army), and he was more than a conqueror over sin and temptation, and over Satanic attacks, and was able to influence 100 million people throughout the ages through his writings – all because of God's gift power and authority in spiritual realms because of his position in Christ.
- B. He first explains what God has done for all sinners in general, then he explains what God did for the Gentiles in particular. The sinner who trusts in Christ has been raised up and seated “*together in heavenly places*” (as will be explained in Ephesians 2:1-10), and the believing Jews and Gentiles have been reconciled together and are placed into the Body of Christ, the Church (Ephesians 2:11-22). It is all a miracle of God's grace! Sinners are taken out of the great graveyard of sin and are placed into the throne room of God's glory.
- C. In this lesson, Paul will review the believers' past history before salvation (it is the same for all of us). With this, he shows the greatness of God's salvation by reflecting it against the picture of the unregenerated man. It is a portrait of what every unsaved man is and what every saved person was before he trusted Christ as Saviour.
- D. This chapter is familiar to most Christians because it is the one we usually turn to, to show the relationship that works has to our salvation. The good news is that our works do not save and since we cannot be saved by our good works, then we cannot be lost by our bad works. Hence, we are eternally secure!

II. Message

A. Our Spiritual Resurrection (Ephesians 2:1-10).

1. **Sin's Work Against Us** (vs 1-3). Paul gives a full-length feature film of the terrible spiritual condition of the unsaved person. Christians will appreciate their salvation most when they get the clearest possible picture of the wickedness of their past! Notice the truth about our past:
 - a. *We Were Dead Spiritually* (vs 1). This means that we were unable to understand and appreciate spiritual things. Since we possessed no spiritual life, we can do nothing of ourselves to please God. Just as a person who is physically dead does not respond to physical stimulation, so a person who is spiritually dead does not respond to spiritual things. A corpse does not hear, has no appetite or thirst, feels no pain or anything because he is dead. Spiritual death separates us from the living God. Hence, because God is life, all unbelievers are separated from God. This means that the whole world is one vast graveyard, filled with people who are dead spiritually, even though they may be alive physically (Mt 8:22).
 - b. *We Were Disobedient* (vs 2,3a). It started with Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen 2:17; 3). Since that time, man has lived in natural disobedience to God. We do not naturally obey God! There are three forces that encourage him to be disobedient:
 - 1) The world or world system that puts pressure on him to conform to this world (Rom 12:2);
 - 2) The devil or his emissaries (Eph 6:11,12);
 - 3) And the flesh or the fallen nature of man. Just as a dog behaves like a dog because it is a dog, so a sinner behaves like a sinner because he has the nature of a sinner (Ps 51:5; 58:3). This is called “*the flesh*”. And the flesh cannot please God (Rom 8:6-8)!
 - c. *We Were Depraved* (vs 3b). It means, ruined! All we did was seek to satisfy “*the desires of the flesh and of the mind*”. Like a spoiled brat (a ruined child), we lived to satisfy only our lusts. Therefore, without the new birth, we are completely unable to do anything to earn salvation. A lost person may do some “good” things, but he cannot do anything spiritually good to please an all holy God.
 - d. *We Were Doomed* (vs 3c). We “*were by nature the children of [God's] wrath*”. Every person is condemned from their start (John 3:18). That's how we start off! We inherited not only sin, but God's wrath against sin from Adam (Rom 5:12)!
 - e. *Folks, sin is not your friend!* That cigarette is a slave owner! That bottle or pint is a robber! That pornographic picture is a chain about your neck! That angry and bitter attitude is a killer! That unsaved girlfriend, or that backslidden boyfriend is only a curse on your life! Nothing that is sinful is good for you in the end! Sin never blesses anybody – its pleasures are only for a season (Pr 23:29-32)

2. **God's Work for Us** (vs 4-9). "*But God...*" the focus is on God, not sinful man. Here are four things that God performed on behalf of sinners to save them from the consequences of their own sins:
 - a. First, He Loved Us (vs 4). Note 1 John 4:8. Love is one of God's great attributes, but as it is related to sinners, it becomes *grace* (vs 7) and *mercy* (vs 4). Mercy is not getting what we deserve, and Grace is getting what we do not deserve. All of this came at Calvary when God demonstrated His love to mankind (John 3:16; Rom 5:8). This is a kind of love Christians need to show too!
 - b. He Quickenened Us (vs 5).
 - 1) This means He *made us alive*, even while we were dead in sins. It is recorded that Jesus raised three people from the dead:
 - a) A 12 year old girl in Luke 8:49;
 - b) A young man in Luke 7:11;
 - c) And an old man in John 11.
 - 2) Each was dead, the only difference was the state of decomposition. It doesn't matter what status a person has, whether well off in wealth and religion or bad off and laying in the sidewalk ditches, he is a sinner that is dead. He doesn't need resuscitation, he needs resurrection! These three physical resurrections are pictures of the spiritual resurrection that comes to a sinner when he hears the Word of God and believes (John 5:24).
 - 3) Something in us is dead (Gen 2:17) – not our flesh, or our soul, but our spirit. It is empty, like a black hole. Nothing can fill it or satisfy it other than Christ! At the moment of belief, that spirit becomes alive – just as if a BODY resurrected!
 - c. He Exalted Us (vs 6). We are not raised from the dead and left in the graveyard, but we are exalted to the heavenlies – to the regions of the heavens! Though our physical position may be on earth, our spiritual position is "*in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*". That's where God blesses us the most (1:3)!
 - d. He Keeps Us (vs 7-9). These verses show that we are saved by God's grace and not by our good works. Since we have not been saved by our good works, we cannot be lost by our bad works! Salvation, therefore, is "*the gift of God*" - not a reward! Salvation cannot be "*of works*" because the work of salvation was already completed on the cross (John 17:1-4; 19:30). We can add nothing to it (Heb 10:1-14).
3. **God's Work In Us** (vs 10a).
 - a. The moment any of us were saved, Christ equipped us to walk and work here on earth. He does this with three special tools:
 - 1) The Word of God (1Thes 2:13)
 - 2) Prayer (Eph 3:20,21)
 - 3) Suffering and Trials (1Pet 4:11-14)
 - 4) All three of these things mould us and shape our lives if we would let them!
 - b. God cannot work in us unless He has first worked for us, and we have first trusted in His Son.
 - 1) That's why belief obtains our soul's salvation
 - 2) But it also works for daily living and struggles! This is why it is important for Christians to spend time each day in the Bible and in prayer and to yield to Christ in times of suffering. This is why God used Moses, Joseph, David, Paul and others in the Bible. They were devoted to God and His Word, prayer and sufferings.
4. **God's Work Through Us** (vs 10b). We are "*created in Christ Jesus unto good works*".
 - a. We are not saved by faith plus good works, but by a faith that works. Note James 2. It is not enough to say we have faith, we must demonstrate this faith by our works.
 - b. Good works are actually "*spiritual sacrifices*" that we offer to God (Heb 13:16). It is important to know that we do not manufacture these good works. They are the results of the work of God in our hearts being worked out through our lives, our actions, our attitudes (Phil 2:13). Good works are a testimony to the lost that we are different (1Pet 2:12). They win us the right to be heard.
 - c. God works in us as He did through Jesus (2Cor 5:19-21)
5. In summary,
 - a. **Sin worked against us all our lives**
 - b. **God worked for us in sending His Son to die in our place and by Him calling us, constantly calling us to Himself**
 - c. **God works in us to bring about changes as we trust in Him and obey Him**
 - d. **God works through us as we serve Him, and yield to His will for our lives**

B. Rising Out Of Darkness (Ephesians 2:11-22).

1. In the first ten verses Paul told what God had done for sinners in general, now he speaks of Jews and Gentiles in particular. God had made no Messianic covenants with the Gentiles, but He did promise the Jews a kingdom.
2. What the Gentiles were (vs 11,12).
 - a. God always makes a distinction between Jews and Gentiles racially (1Cor 10:32), but not individually (Rom 10:11-13).
 - b. Paul said these saved Christians in time past, were called, "*Gentiles,...Uncircumcision,...without Christ, ...aliens,...strangers,...having no hope, and without God in the world*". It is worth noting that the reason Gentiles were in such a plight was not God's fault, but their's because they deliberately refused to honour Him (Rom 1:18-23).
 - 1)
 - c. Genesis 1 - 11 gives the sad story of the decline of the Gentiles away from God. Then Genesis 12 presents God's call to Abraham with God's desire to use the Jewish people to bring Gentiles back to God (Gen 12:3).
 - 1) Not part of the seed of Abraham (Genesis 22:16,17)
 - 2) Uncircumcised (1Sam 17:26)
 - 3) Without a Messiah (without Christ)
 - 4) Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel – Had no access to the spiritual wealth of knowing God
 - 5) Strangers from the Covenants of Promise (Gen 17:7-9; Acts 3:5)
 - 6) No hope (John 4:22; 1Thes 4:13)
 - 7) Without God – final conclusion – they have all the gods of this world, but no God!
3. What God did (vs 13-17).
 - a. While the problem of the Eph 2:1-10 was death, the problem of the Gentiles in this half was "distance". They were "*far off*". Then God changed things at Calvary through the shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ (vs 13). When Christ died on the cross, He broke down every barrier that stood between Jews and Gentiles.
 - b. In the Jewish temple, there was a wall that separated the "Court of the Gentiles" from the rest of the structure. On that wall was a sign warning any Gentile who passed beyond it would be killed. Jesus Christ broke down that wall.
 - c. By dying, He tore down the physical wall, for in Christ we are one (vs 15; Gal 3:28,29).
 - d. He tore down the spiritual wall, and brought the "*afar off*" Gentiles "*nigh*" (vs 13,17).
 - e. He tore down the legal wall, for He fulfilled the Law in Himself and ended the Mosaic Law at the cross (vs 14,15).
 - f. Christ not only made peace between God and man (Rom 5:1), but also between Jew and Gentile (see Peter and Cornelius).
4. What the Gentiles and Jews are Now (vs 18-22). Both have access to the Father in the Spirit.
 - a. Under the Law, only the high priest could go into the presence of God once a year.
 - b. Under the New Testament, every believer has the privilege of coming into the holy of holies of the presence of God (Heb 10:19-25).
 - c. Now, both belong to the "*household of God*" (vs 19) and the Jew can no longer claim "better blood." Both are justified through Christ's blood.
 - d. Paul closes with Jews and Gentiles, as one family, pictured as a temple being built up. Christ is the "*foundation*" (1Cor 3:11) and "*the chief corner stone*" (vs 20). The apostles and prophets ***laid the foundation*** since they were the first to proclaim the message. It is in us that God dwells as "*an habitation of God through the Spirit.*" (Vs 22).
 - 1) The **guide and final authority** of a church is always the _____ (Acts 20:32; John 17:17). In Christ's church, the final authority is not placed in people, pastors, or princes, but in the living and pure words of God! As disciples, we must follow the Bible's design for Christianity, and not try and improve on it, or adjust it – just live it!!!
 - 2) A church has five positions of authority under the Word of God (Eph 4:11):
 - a) **Apostles:** It means "*someone specially chosen and sent out by Jesus.*" Twelve apostles were chosen by Jesus personally (Mt 10:1,2) who would be the first ***to establish Christianity throughout the world - they laid the foundation*** by writing and preaching God's word. The twelve were made apostles by the supernatural empowerment of Jesus Christ. Their powers were specific only to themselves (2Cor 12:12), and not to all of Christianity. Once the apostles died, their powers died with them!

- b) **Prophets:** A special class of people used by God to declare His word until the completion of the Bible (1Cor 13:8-10). The Apostles were also prophets, but there were some prophets who were not apostles, like _____ (Acts 11:27,28; 21:10).
- (i) The Old Testament was written by _____ (Rom 16:25,26)
 - (ii) The New Testament was written by prophets *and apostles*.
 - (iii) Now that the Bible is completed, the role of prophets and apostles has ceased (see again 1 Cor 13:8-10).
- c) **Evangelists:** These are Church-starters (like the Apostle Paul), who *evangelize* the lost to a surrendered faith in Jesus Christ, and then group those believers into a local church fellowship (a flock), that is dedicated as a group to obeying and living by all the commands of the Lord under their own pastor (Mt 28:19,20). The evangelist moves on and starts more churches as each church obtains its own permanent pastor.
- d) **Pastors:** These are Shepherds, the Bishops, the Overseers of the “flock” of Christians that seek to serve Christ. They have the primary job of leading the flock of Christians to serve God, and of protecting that flock from spiritual danger. They are “coaches” training Christians to shine as lights in this dark world!
- e) **Teachers:** These labour in teaching the word along-side pastors. No pastor can do all the work to keep a church going, so God gives people a heart to minister *with* the pastor, so that the Gospel can go further!

Of the five groups listed, only *the last three* are in operation today (Eph 2:19-22). The first two groups laid the foundation (until the Bible was finished), with Christ being the cornerstone of everything. The rest of us build upon that finished foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10,11).

III. Conclusion to Chapter 2

- A. **Salvation is a Spiritual Resurrection from spiritual death – our spirits are born dead**
- B. **Salvation is based on Christ's work, not ours**
- C. **Believers are perfectly saved, and perfectly kept!**
- D. **All Christians are saved TO work – not just sit**
- E. **Our work is actually Christ working through us, and we yielding to His will**
- F. **This applies to absolutely every believer now, no matter who or what they are!**

Ephesians Chapter Two Quiz

For Credit in the *Cork Bible Institute* Study Programme

STUDENT NAME: _____

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SCORE: _____

1. Ephesians Chapter 1 explains the believer's possessions in Christ. Chapter 2 describes the believer's what?

2. Where has a believer been raised to by their new birth? _____
3. The body of Christ is made up of what two different groups? 1) _____, 2) _____
4. There not only is a physical resurrection, but also a _____ one (what other kind?)
5. When does that resurrection happen? _____
6. Before salvation, every person was *what* spiritually towards God? _____
7. Define the word, "depravity": _____

8. What is the Bible word for *being made alive*? _____
9. No one is saved by their good works, but once saved, what should a believer be doing all the time?
10. Write out word perfect, Ephesians 2:8-10 _____

11. Define what a Gentile is: _____
12. The authority of a church is always what? _____
13. A church has five positions of authority under the word of God: Name them and briefly describe what they are:
1) _____ - _____
2) _____ - _____
3) _____ - _____
4) _____ - _____
5) _____ - _____
14. Which ones are no longer in operation? _____
15. Why aren't they in operation today? _____

