

Ephesians 2

Introduction:

1. The first chapter detailed our election and predestination in Jesus Christ as the adopted sons of God.
2. The second chapter details regeneration by the Spirit of God and our inclusion in the church of God.

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

- A. Those under consideration are the believing Gentile, Ephesian saints in a church (1:1,13-14).
- B. This chapter opens by going back to a comparison with Christ's resurrection in 1:19-20, because the same exceeding great and mighty power of God was used in their regeneration.
- C. While the words "hath he quickened" are in italics, they are assumed and implied from 2:5; and they are also repeated in Colossians 2:13, which is the fraternal twin to this book.
- D. The word "quickened" is the past tense of the verb quicken, which means to make alive.
 1. **Quicken.** To give or restore life to; to make alive; to vivify or revive; to animate. (OED).
 2. The immediate context defines it as giving spiritual life to a person spiritually dead.
 3. Other Spirit uses of this word confirm its meaning (Lev 13:10; Num 16:10; Ps 55:15; 71:20; 119:25; Acts 10:42; Rom 8:11; I Cor 15:45; II Tim 4:1; Heb 4:12; I Pet 4:5).
 4. You can cut your fingernail without pain, but the "quick" under your fingernail is alive!
 5. Some have said it means "convicted," but you cannot convict a dead man of anything!
 6. The operation of God under consideration is nothing less than spiritual life from the dead.
 7. Satan lied that Adam would not die; he did die; but men still lie about it (Gen 2:17; 3:4).
 8. Your first birth merely gave you a flesh (sinful) nature; you need a new nature (John 3:6).
 9. Your flesh nature, which is dead in trespasses and sins, has no ability or desire toward God or His things (Gen 3:7-13; Ps 14:1-3; 51:5; 53:1-3; 58:3; Isaiah 26:10; Luke 16:31; John 3:3; 6:44-45; 8:43,47; Rom 3:9-18; 8:7-8; I Cor 2:14; 15:49; II Cor 4:3-4; Gal 5:17; Eph 2:2-3; 4:17-19; II Tim 2:25-26; Titus 3:3).
 10. Faith or any good work is evidence of having been quickened, or brought from spiritual death to spiritual life; it cannot be the means for it (John 5:24; I John 3:14; 4:7; 5:1).
 11. The will causing regeneration is God's will, not yours of any sort (John 1:13; 3:8; 5:21).
 12. Quickening is also being born again ... brought to life again (John 1:13; 3:3; I Pet 1:23).
 13. Quickening is being begotten ... brought to life by God (I Pet 1:3; I Jn 5:1,18; Jas 1:18).
 14. Quickening is also called regeneration ... to be generated again (Titus 3:5 cp Matt 19:28).
 15. Quickening is a creation by the power of God (Eph 2:10; 4:24; Prov 20:12; Phil 2:13).
- E. We fully reject the heresy of decisional regeneration right along with baptismal regeneration.

2 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:

- A. The context describes pre-quickened death in trespasses and sins of these Ephesians (2:1).
- B. Before they were quickened or born again, they walked according to the course of this world – they had the same lifestyle and mentality as the wicked pagans around them (Rom 12:1-2).
- C. Before they were quickened or born again, they walked according to the prince of the power of the air – they lived obedient lives to the seductions and temptations of the devil himself.
- D. He is the prince of the power of the air, because he has been cast out of heaven into this earth and its atmosphere; and he is a prince of angels, who has great power (II Tim 2:25-26).

- E. This Spirit works his rebellion and sinfulness in the reprobate men of the world, who have sold their souls to disobedience (Matt 13:38; Luke 11:20-22; John 8:44; II Cor 4:3-4).
- F. Remember, these Ephesians had been using witchcraft before conversion (Acts 19:18-20).

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.*

- A. Paul includes himself with all others as once having had the lifestyle of wicked reprobates in living for the lusts of their flesh without regard for God or godliness in the earth (Titus 3:3).
- B. There was no restraint for holy ends in our beings, but we pursued bodily and mental sins.
- C. Our nature, the animating and controlling apparatus of our lives, the source of our choices and affections, was the same as those who are reprobate vessels of wrath (Rom 9:21-24).
- D. What does this mean? Review the desires of your flesh and mind in light of God's holy word, and you will realize with utmost clarity how depraved, profane, and wicked you are.

4 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*

- A. But God! ... the one and only difference maker was the blessed God Himself, not any man!
- B. He is rich in mercy. Paul, the Ephesians, nor you deserved to be born again from death in sin.
- C. God's love for His elect, defined in 1:4 and flowing from election, is based in pure mercy.
- D. God's great love causes things to happen, which in this context (2:5) is our regeneration.

5 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

- A. **Even.** Intimating that the sentence expresses an extreme case of a more general proposition.
- B. The riches of God's mercy and his great love for us moved him to regenerate us while in the terrible condition of death in sins, which had been described in appropriate detail (2:2-3).
- C. How are we quickened "together with Christ"? Rather than the same time, place, or means, we understand our new vital union with Him by virtue of our new man being of His nature.
 1. Paul continued a comparison to Christ's resurrection (1:19-20), as these two verses show.
 2. Some think it speaks of His bodily resurrection, but we were not quickened at that time.
 3. Some think it speaks of our legal position in His resurrection, but it is vital salvation here.
 4. Some think it speaks of the legal precedent of His resurrection, but it is a vital union here.
 5. Some think it speaks of the same means being used, but the next verse indicates more.
 6. Consider the following verse and the comments there for more fully grasping the thought.
- D. What salvation is of grace? The salvation in the context – regeneration from spiritual death.
 1. Regeneration is the first phase of salvation that affects us personally – it is a salvation.
 2. After regeneration comes conversion and then glorification. Regeneration is by grace.

6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

- A. This verse must be understood as a comparison to the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1:19-20).
- B. How are we raised up together with Christ? There are many explanations that appear to fit.
 1. Is this simply a further stage in our sanctification by lifting us up from this world of sin?
 2. Is this simply our legal connection to Jesus Christ as the covenant head of His people?
 3. Is this simply God calling those things which be not as if they were (Rom 4:17; 8:30)?

4. Is this simply God bringing us into the church and under the gospel as a sign of heaven?
5. Is this simply Jesus Christ being the firstfruits of them that slept and so we will follow?
6. Let us understand it by context – a vital connection to Jesus Christ as members of Him.
- C. How are we made to sit together with Jesus Christ in heavenly places? Consider options.
 1. Are these heavenly places a degree of sanctification that occurs in the regenerate elect?
 2. Are these heavenly places being in heaven in Christ legally and positionally as our head?
 3. Are these heavenly places merely God’s certain guarantee of what He will do for us?
 4. Are these heavenly places the spiritual blessings of the gospel and church state on earth?
 5. Let us understand it by context – a vital connection to Jesus Christ as members of Him.
- D. Allowing context to keep us thinking vitally, can we support such a thought from Scripture?
 1. We certainly understand our legal position in Jesus Christ, but the context is a vital union.
 2. What do we mean by “vital”? That change in nature that gives us a new spiritual man.
 3. As regenerate elect, we are made partakers of the divine nature like Christ (II Pet 1:2-4).
 4. Regeneration gives us a new man with holiness and understanding (I Cor 2:16; Ep 4:24).
 5. We are members of his body in a union like the body and marriage (Eph 1:23; 5:29-32).
 6. The first resurrection, which we believe to be the spiritual resurrection of John 5:25, results in reigning with Jesus Christ (Rev 1:6; 20:6).
 7. Compare also other verses of close or vital union with Christ (Genesis 2:23; John 6:56; 14:20; Romans 8:17; 12:5; I Corinthians 6:15; 12:12-13; II Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 2:19; 3:1-4; I John 5:20).
 8. Paul told Hebrews on earth that they had come in contact with heaven (Heb 12:22-24).
- E. We will follow Jesus to heaven in fact and reality, when we are resurrected and glorified!

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

- A. Eternity and heaven have a purpose – for God to display His exceeding rich grace in Jesus.
- B. The song of the redeemed in heaven indicates their comprehension of it (Rev 5:9-10; 14:3).
- C. God has chosen some to be vessels of mercy to display the riches of His glory (Rom 9:23).

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

- A. Summarizing the point, Paul declared that salvation, especially regeneration, was by grace.
- B. What is the gift of God? All of salvation, not just faith, proven by the next verse (Rom 6:23); for whatever is God’s gift is also not of works, which means salvation, not faith.
- C. What is the role of faith? It is the assurance, result, evidence, proof, and claim of salvation, which is based on God’s predestinating grace and powerful regeneration (1:13-14,19).
- D. If we retrace Paul’s argument, God’s exceeding mighty power worked in us to lead us to believe (1:19), and it was by believing that we were sealed and given our earnest (1:13-14).
- E. The salvation here, especially regeneration, is not of ourselves, as we understand (John 1:13).
- F. Arminians take the words from this verse and reword it thus: “For by faith are ye saved through grace; and though it depends entirely on yourselves: we still call it the gift of God.”

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

- A. There is no meritorious cause or instrumental means of salvation found in man himself.
- B. God will not allow boasting or sharing of His glory in heaven with anyone (I Cor 1:29-31).
- C. Consider the next verse, which declares us to be His workmanship, not our improvement.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- A. You have no more to do with your salvation or regeneration than any other part of creation.
- B. A born again child is God's creative work, not his own (John 1:13; 3:6,8; 5:25-29; Jas 1:18).
- C. We were created and worked into regenerate children for good works, not because of them.
- D. God has ordained that His regenerate elect should walk in good works, not that they would.
- E. The bottom line of all the rich grace in these ten verses is that we should have good works!
- F. Faithful ministers will make good works a primary emphasis of teaching (Titus 2:15; 3:8).

11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

- A. Here is a break with the previous lesson about God's power in our regeneration (1:19 – 2:10).
- B. Not only were the Ephesians dead in sin, they were also racially cut out of God's holy nation.
- C. The Jews despised Gentiles, as laws pertaining to Peter and Cornelius indicated (Acts 10:28).
- D. Remembering from whence we have come is good to realize the glorious grace of our Father.
- E. God had chosen one man and one nation from that man as His own (Deut 7:6-8; Amos 3:2).
- F. As Gentiles in the flesh, the Ephesians and we were rightfully despised and rejected by the fleshly people of God, the Jews.
- G. All circumcision is done with hands, so why does Paul mention hands? See Colossians 2:11!
- H. The blessed God was a racist, in that He chose the Jews and loved them only of all nations.
 - 1. He annihilated the seven nations of Canaan for the sake of His own people Israel.
 - 2. He allowed the rest of the world to wander on in ignorance and wickedness (Acts 17:30).
 - 3. Do you realize that 7/8 or 85% of the Bible is written by Jews and for Jews?
 - 4. Consider how the Lord and His apostles dealt with the woman of Canaan (Mat 15:21-28).
- I. It does not matter how highly you think of your ancestors, they were alien pagans from God!
- J. But the death of Jesus Christ and the gospel about it brought Jews and Gentiles together.

12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

- A. As Gentiles in the flesh, (1) the Ephesians and we had no knowledge of Jesus Christ, (2) we were outside the nation of Israel, (3) the covenants given to Israel did not apply to us, (4) we had no hope for the future, and (5) we had no faith in the true God.
- B. The issue raised here is purely fleshly and national. Many physical Jews were not elect.
- C. How had the Ephesians been without Christ? Is Paul speaking legally, vitally, or practically?
 - 1. They were outside Christ practically, for they were in Him eternally and legally (1:3-6).
 - 2. They were outside Christ practically, because the context states a flesh condition (2:11).
 - 3. They were outside Christ practically, because national citizenship was not legal salvation.
 - 4. They were outside Christ practically, because the union with Christ in context is brought about by the gospel (2:17), involves access to God (2:18), and is the church (2:19-22).
- D. They were aliens from the church-state of God called Israel, being foreign Gentile pagans.
- E. They were strangers from the covenants of promise, which spoke of Jesus Christ and heaven.
- F. They were without hope, yet elect in Christ, because they had never heard the gospel of hope.

G. They were without God, yet chosen by Him, because they had never heard of Him in truth.

13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

- A. Whatever relationship with Jesus Christ is discovered in 2:12 must also apply here, and it is the practical relationship of Gentile believers in Jesus Christ being in the kingdom with Jews.
- B. The blood of Christ washed away all the practical obstacles that hindered Gentiles spiritually.
- C. Here is a relationship with Jesus Christ that occurred in time, not in eternity or at the cross.
- D. The blood of Christ clearly refers to legal salvation, but it made a practical aspect possible.
- E. There are two things: (1) uniting Jews and Gentiles and (2) reconciling both to God (2:16).
- F. The Gentiles had no knowledge or right to the worship of God, but Christ's cross opened it.

14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

- A. The peace here is not peace with God, but rather peace between Jews and Gentiles (2:15).
- B. It is called "our peace," because it was peace between the "we" and "ye" of the chapter.
- C. The making of both one, which is the peace under review, is uniting Jews and Gentiles.
- D. The middle wall of partition is between Jews and Gentiles, not between sinners and God.
- E. No wonder Gentiles glorified God for hearing such a glorious message of peace (Acts 13:48).

15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

- A. The enmity must be seen in two aspects: between sinners and God, and Jews and Gentiles.
- B. The flesh of Jesus Christ is more than His body; it is His perfect life and sacrificial death.
- C. Compare this verse and those around it to the abolition of ordinances by Christ (Col 2:14).
- D. The Jews were condemned by the law of carnal ordinances, and the Gentiles did not even have them; but God sent Jesus Christ to fulfill, satisfy, and abolish them to make a new body.

16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

- A. The "one body" here is uniting Jews and Gentiles into one nation, kingdom, and church.
- B. Both needed to be reconciled by God, the Jews under the law, and the Gentiles without law.
- C. It is important to see that Paul is pursuing two thoughts – peace with God and one another.
- D. The ordinances of the Law separated the Jews from God and the Gentiles from the Jews.
- E. It is heresy and a travesty of Bible interpretation to maintain that the Jews are a unique body.

17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

- A. The phase of salvation taught here is practical – that based on conversion by the gospel.
- B. Paul gloried in his privilege to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (3:1-7; Rom 11:13; 15:8-21).
- C. The gospel of peace in Jesus Christ was first preached to the Jews, then to the Gentiles.
- D. Both Jews and Gentiles needed to hear the gospel of peace, for they had none of their own.
- E. Consider the fantastic truth that even Jews had to be brought into the kingdom (I Pet 2:4-10).
- F. Jews adoring Jewishness are Hagar and the synagogue of Satan (Gal 4:21-31; Rev 2:9; 3:9).

18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

- A. This access to the Father continues practical benefits of the gospel (Rom 5:2; Heb 10:19-22).
- B. It had been the privilege of Jews to have access to God by ordinances, now both by grace.
- C. It is through the Lord Jesus Christ that Jews or Gentiles have open access to the Father.
- D. Both Jews and Gentiles come to God the Father the same way – through Christ by the Spirit.

19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

- A. We had been aliens and strangers (2:12), but now we are fellowcitizens with Jewish saints.
- B. “Fellowcitizens” implies a kingdom, a church, a congregation of the Lord, a house, etc.
- C. The kingdom of God or His household now includes both Jews and Gentiles in one body.
- D. God rebuilt the tabernacle of David with Gentiles, which the apostles confirmed (Ac 15:16).
- E. Jews and Gentiles are come to Mt Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, and saints (Heb 12:22-24).
- F. The believers in Jesus Christ are closely connected to the spirits of perfect saints in heaven!
- G. The Gentile converts in Ephesus were not second-class citizens! They were fellowcitizens!
- H. It is heresy and a travesty of Bible interpretation to maintain that the Jews are still superior!

20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

- A. The New kingdom or church is built on John the Baptist, apostles, prophets, and Jesus Christ.
- B. Forget angels, Moses, the Levitical priests, and the Law from Sinai! The New is far better!
- C. The law and [Old Testament] prophets were til John, now things are different (Luke 16:16).
- D. There was a drastic reformation of the old way of worship to form the new way (Heb 9:10).
- E. God has taken pagan and foreign Gentiles and included them in His new spiritual building.
- F. Of course, the Apostle and High Priest that counts in our religion is Jesus Christ (Heb 3:1)!

21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

- A. It is in the Lord Jesus Christ that Jews and Gentiles in every place make up the house of God.
- B. This is the visible kingdom of God made up of believing Jews and Gentiles everywhere.
- C. Jews and Gentiles are now framed together into one house, church, or building over all.
- D. In this epistle, Paul lists the “household of God” and the “whole family in heaven and earth.”
- E. The lively stones of this spiritual house are more than local church members (I Peter 2:4-10).
- F. They could ignore the temple of stones in Jerusalem, which Jesus Christ tore down (Matt 24:1-2)? They were a holy temple in the Lord across the Mediterranean from it (I Tim 3:15).
- G. The church universal or house of God grows as God adds to it both vitally and practically.

22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

- A. It is again in Jesus Christ that every local church is formed as a habitation of the Holy Spirit, which is why the churches of the New Testaments are the churches “of God” or “of Christ.”
- B. By virtue of “ye” and “also,” the building here is different from the one of the previous verse.
- C. The overall kingdom, or God’s house and church, is different from individual local churches.
- D. The Ephesian saints themselves were builded together into a local temple (4:16; I Cor 12:18).

- E. They needed no envy for the temple in Jerusalem, for they had God by His Spirit with them!
- F. Every true local church is a body of Jesus Christ unto itself with the Holy Spirit inhabiting their membership and assemblies, and they all partake of that Spirit (I Cor 3:16; 12:13,27).
- G. Jesus Christ warned this very local church that He would remove the Holy Spirit (Rev 2:5).

Conclusion:

1. God regenerated you by the power of the Holy Ghost to be a new creature with good works (Ep 2:10).
2. Do you understand the significance of being a fellowcitizen with O.T. saints? Does it affect your life?