

A Practical Study of

EPHESIANS: Heaven's Plan for Life on Earth

"What It's Like Living According to God's Plan"

Study #3 – Ephesians 2:1-10

HIS PLAN FOR GIVING LIFE

Key Verse: Ephesians 2:8

For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and this [salvation] is not of yourselves—it is the gift of God;

Text:

v. 1 And you He made alive when you were dead through your trespasses and sins,

v. 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

v. 3 Among these we all once lived in the desires of our flesh, practicing the desires of our flesh and of our thoughts, and were children of wrath by nature, as also the rest.

v. 4 But God, being wealthy in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

v. 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, He made us alive together with the Christ, by grace you have been saved.

v. 6 And raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

v. 7 in order that He might demonstrate in the coming ages the surpassing wealth of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

v. 8 For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and this [salvation] is not of yourselves—it is the gift of God;

v. 9 not because of works, in order that no one might boast.

v.10 For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, in order that we should walk in them.

INTRODUCTION:**Abbott says:**

II. 1—10. *This exhibition of God's power has not stopped there. He has made us partakers of Christ's resurrection and exaltation, having given us life when we were dead through our sins. Not for any merit of our own, but of His own free grace, for it was when we were dead in our sins that He thus loved us. But though our salvation was not on account of any works of ours, it was God's purpose in His new creation of us that we should walk in the path of holiness which He designed.*

p. 38

Anders says:

Winston Churchill once said that there is nothing quite so exhilarating as being shot at and missed. That must have been how Corrie Ten Boom felt. Death shot at her but missed.

In that sense we've all been shot at. We have all died, spiritually; but God has given us a second chance. While we are dead, we may respond to his gift of life and receive new spiritual life. Chapter 2 of Ephesians tells the story.

p. 109

Barclay says:

THE CHRISTLESS LIFE AND THE GRACE OF GOD
EPHESIANS 2:1—10

p.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

In vv. 1—10 the theme of redemption (1:7) is developed in terms of God's raising of humanity from the death of sin to the new life in Christ (a theme that permeates Romans).

p. 756

Baxter says:

Our New Condition in Christ (ii. 1—10)

Look now through the first ten verses of Chapter ii., which tell of our *new condition* in Christ. In verses 1 to 3 we see the four unhappy characteristics of our condition before we were brought into saving union with Him.

p. 170

Bickel & Jantz say:

UNDERSTAND HOW POWERLESS WE WERE (2:1—10)

We tend to have a pretty inflated view of ourselves, especially regarding spiritual matters. Many people believe that God saves us because we're basically good folks. Even some Christians buy into this idea. In the first three verses of Ephesians 2, Paul tells us exactly who we were and where we came from before God saved us. Paul isn't twisting our aim until we say, "Okay, we get it; we're wretched, miserable human beings!" He simply wants us to put ourselves in perspective. We need to understand who we were without Christ and who we are with Christ.

p. 66

Boice says:

John R. W. Stott says, "Paul first plumbs the depths of pessimism about man." However, after he has done this he also "rises to the heights of optimism about God" and of how his grace saves sinners.¹

p. 46

Bruce says:

3. THE SAVING GRACE OF GOD (2:1—10)

p.

C. Henry says:

1. Release from Death and Sin to Union with Christ (2:1—10)

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Release from spiritual death and from sin is essential to Christian unity. The patterns of sin, as followed by the disobedient ones of this world, are spiritual death. Yet Paul acknowledges that we also were involved at one time and were all subject to the wrath of God. But God, out of His abundant mercy and love, changed all this. He made us alive together, raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ (2:5, 6). As we were lost in sin together, so we are joined in Christ and with Christ. The purpose of God is an eternal one—to demonstrate in us through future ages what grace can do (v. 7).
p. 306

Calvin says:

To bring home more effectually to the Ephesians the general doctrine of Divine grace, he reminds them of their former condition. This application consists of two parts. “Ye were formerly lost; but now God, by his grace, has rescued you from destruction.”
p. 219

Eadie says:

The apostle resumes the thought which he had broken off in ver. 20. He wished the Ephesian saints to know what was the exceeding greatness of God’s power toward those who believe—a species of power exemplified and pledged in the resurrection of Jesus. That power, he virtually intimates, you have experienced, for he who gave life to Jesus gave life to you, when you were dead in trespasses and sins.
p. 117

Foulkes says:

New life from the dead (ii. 1—10)

I. The apostle’s intercession has led him to speak of the power of God shown supremely in raising His Son Jesus Christ from the dead, and to pray that his readers may know spiritual power in their lives in such measure (i. 19f.). He has also spoken of their calling into His Body, the Church. He wants to demonstrate the great truth that Jew and Gentile are brought together into that Body. But before he does so he shows that both Jew and Gentile alike have now received new life in and with the risen Christ. This section is one long sentence and the AV, by printing the words *hath he quickened* in italics, indicates that the verb of

the sentence does not belong to the text at this point. It comes only in verse 5, and is put here to make the sentence read more easily in English.
p. 68

Gaebelein says:

The Production of the Masterwork and its Destiny.

CHAPTER 2:1—10

- I. What we are by Nature. 1—3
2. What God does—rich in Mercy. 4—6
3. The Destiny of the Masterwork. 7
4. Saved by Grace. 8—10

p. 245

Hendriksen says:

The easy manner in which Paul shifts from “you” to “we” and back again, in verses 1—10 with “you” in verses 1, 2, and 8; “we” in verses 3, 4, 6, 7, and 10; and a “we” that clearly includes a “you” in verse 5—indicates that though a distinction is being drawn at times, it is upon what all have in common that the emphasis falls.
pp. 109—110

Lincoln says:

God’s Gracious Salvation as Resurrection and Exaltation with Christ (2:1—10)

p.

Lincoln says:

Verses 1—3 depict the sinful condition of the readers’ past existence and indeed that of all humanity. Verses 4—7 express the change occasioned for believers in Christ by God’s mercy and grace. Verses 8—10 provide a summary of the nature of the salvation achieved by God.
p. 84

Lloyd-Jones says:

In these words the apostle is concerned to show the Ephesian Christians, and all the other Christians to whom he was writing, and therefore to us, the greatness and the glory of the Christian salvation. These Ephesians had already believed the gospel. He had already thanked God for their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love to all the saints. They had been sealed with the Holy Spirit and they had the earnest of the inheritance within them. And yet the apostle prays that the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened. They are merely at the beginning, they are merely as babes. He wants them to grasp something of the largeness and the greatness and the majesty of this wonderful salvation.

p. 13

MacArthur says:

In Ephesians 2:1—10 Paul clarifies what it means to receive salvation and to be a part of Christ's Body, the church. Here the apostle moves from eternity past into time. He describes the act and process of salvation, the miracle that draws men into the eternal plan portrayed in chapter 1. In context this section builds on the thought of 1:19, where Paul introduces the great power of Christ toward us who believe and then digresses to discuss that power in Christ's life. He returns now to show that power in our salvation.

In the first ten verses Paul presents the past, present, and future of the Christian: what he was (vv. 1—3), what he is (vv. 4—6, 8—9), and what he will be (vv. 7, 10). Within this framework he gives six aspects of salvation: It is from sin (vv. 1—3), by love (v. 4), into life (v. 5), with a purpose (vv. 6—7), through faith (vv. 8—9), and unto good works (v. 10).

p. 52

McGee says:

This chapter begins with the little conjunction *and*; so it is actually a continuation of the thought of the first chapter. Paul has been talking about that tremendous power that raised Jesus from the dead. We shall see that this power is the same power that makes us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins, alive in Christ. That takes power! It takes *resurrection* power. It is this power that so many of God's children want to experience. Frances Ridley Havergal expresses it in as lovely and fine a way as it could be, and I'm sure it is a prayer in the hearts of many Christians today.

Oh, let me know
The power of the resurrection;

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Oh, let me show
Thy risen life in calm and clear reflection;
Oh, let me give
Out of the gifts thou freely gavest;
Oh, let me live
With life abundantly because thou livest.
Frances Ridley Havergal

p. 230

O'Brien says:

C. Saved by Grace: Raised and Exalted with Christ, 2:1—10

p. 153

O'Brien says:

The paragraph consists of two sentences in the original: vv. 1—7 and vv. 8—10. The subject of the sentence (“God”) and the main verb (“made alive”) are not mentioned until vv. 4 and 5. Accordingly, the first sentence (vv. 1—7) falls into two parts, the anacoluthon of vv. 1—3 and the contrasting statement of vv. 4—7. This syntactical division of the paragraph reflects a threefold division in relation to its content: (a) vv. 1—3 describe the sinful condition of the readers’ past and of the rest of humanity, (b) vv. 4—7 speak of the great love and mercy of God, who made the readers alive with Christ, and (c) vv. 8—10 summarize the nature of this salvation which God has effected.

p. 154

Patzia says:

Chapter 2:1—10 contains a number of contrasting features: First, there are the people who are mentioned. The author begins by referring to the Gentiles specifically (2:1), but then in 2:3 he expands his audience to include the Jews as well. By this, he shows that all of humanity was alienated from God and became recipients of his grace (2:3—7). And even though he returns to “you” (second person plural) in 2:8, one gets the impression that he still has both groups in mind until he addresses the Gentiles directly in 2:11.

Second, there is the contrast between their former pagan way of life (2:1—3) and their new life in Christ (2:4—10). At one time they were spiritually dead, and because of their sinful nature, they lived sinful lives, walked in the evil ways of the world, and disobeyed God; but now, as a result of God’s grace and mercy

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upon their lives, they have been made spiritually alive and share in Christ's resurrection and exaltation. Their new creation is a manifestation of "good works" (2:10) rather than a life of disobedience and evil.

Third, these two ways of life reflect the contrasting forces that confront mankind: On the one side, there is a world ("the ways of this world"), Satan ("ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient"), and the flesh ("the cravings of our sinful nature"); offsetting these are God's mercy, love, and grace, which make life, resurrection, and enthronement with Christ possible.

p. 176

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

This is probably the clearest exposition of the gospel in all of Paul's epistles: We are saved by grace through faith totally apart from human merit or works. It is not that Christians do not do good works (we were created for this purpose), but that they are not a requirement or proof of acceptance with God. Luther summarized it succinctly: It is not against *works* that we contend, but against *trust* in works."

p. 1533

Simpson & Bruce say:

In order to set forth the magnitude of the change wrought in the believers' emancipation from the power of darkness (cf. Col. 1:13) and the splendid possibilities consequent on their translation into the kingdom of God's Son, the apostle now proceeds to depict their former experience of the power of Satan and to contrast it with their present immunities and resources. There is no real break in their present immunities and resources. There is no real break in the line of thought.

p. 45

Westcott says:

ii. 1—10. In describing the third element in the Lord's present work, St. Paul enlarges the scope of his original statement, and shews how the mercy and love of God was extended not only to Gentiles (1, 2) but to all Christians alike, whether Jews or Gentiles (3—6), who are a new creation designed for the fulfillment of His will (10).

p. 28

Wiersbe says:

From death to life. Lost sinners are not simply sick people needing help; they are dead people needing life. The Son of God died that we might receive life through faith in Him (John 5:24).

From bondage to freedom. Lost sinners are in bondage to the world, the flesh, and the devil (vv. 1—3) and cannot free themselves. In Christ, you have true freedom (John 12:31—32; Gal. 1:4; 5:24). Now God is working in you and through you to accomplish His great purposes (v. 10).
p. 773

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v. 1 And you He made alive when you were dead through your trespasses and sins.

The NET Bible then translates verse 1:

And although you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

Peterson paraphrases verse 1:

It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin.

Barclay says:

The great central idea of sin is failure, failure to hit the target, failure to hold to the road, failure to make life what life was capable of becoming; and that definition of sin includes every one of us. When we understand what sin is, we are left in no doubt as to the universality of sin, and in no possible doubt of our own sin.
p. 113

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Redemption has made it possible for human beings to be brought from death to life (v.5). Without God, people are spiritually dead (Col 2:13) and utterly unable to meet the requirements of the divine law (Ro 7:9). Paul is not speaking here about physical death nor only about the sinner's ultimate fate in the second death. What is meant is a real and present death. The most vital part of a person's personality—the spirit—is dead to the most important factor in life—God.
p. 756

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

“Transgressions” (GK 4183) are lapses, while “sins” (GK 281) are shortcomings. This repetition simply serves to underscore the multiplicity of ways in which our spiritual death is evidenced.
p. 756

Baxter says:

“Dead in trespasses and sins” (verse 1). The fundamental idea in death is not cessation, but *separation*. Physical death is the separation of the spirit from God. It means the absence of that highest life which was originally in man before sin divorced man's spirit from God who is its life-giving environment. To pass from time into eternity thus dead toward God, alienated and separated from Him, is surely a dread enough thought to send us out with renewed concern for the saving of the Christless souls around us.
p. 170

Bickel & Jantz say:

Ephesians 2:1—3 contains the clearest and most concise description of the natural human condition in the entire Bible. Paul highlights three characteristics, and they aren't pretty:

- We were *dead* and doomed forever because of our sin natures.
- We were *enslaved* to sin and to Satan, following him rather than God.
- We were *under God's anger*.

This is who we were in our natural state. Because of our sin nature, we were enemies of a holy god. We were under God's anger, not because He is against us but because of God's complete and total opposition to sin and evil. Truly, we were in a sorry and desperate state.

p. 66

Boice says:

Like a spiritual corpse, a sinner is unable to make a single move toward God, think a single thought about God, or even correctly respond to God—unless God is first present to bring the spiritually dead person to life, which is what Paul says he does do.

p. 47

Bruce says:

1 “You” at the beginning of v. 1 probably means “you Gentiles,” over against “we also”—that is to say, we Jews—in v. 3. “You” stands in the accusative case, but there is no expressed verb to which it forms the object. The verb implied is either “raised” as in Eph. 1:20 (God not only raised Christ from the dead; he raised “you also”)⁹ or (more probably) “brought to life”¹⁰ in v. 5 below. In the latter case the construction begun in v. 1 is broken off after the succession of adjective clauses, and the sense is resumed with the new sentence “But God...” in vv. 4 and 5.

p. 280

Calvin says:

As to the first, he says that they *were dead*; and states, at the same time, the cause of the death—*trespasses and sins*.² He does not mean simply that they

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were in danger of death; but he declares that it was a real and present death under which they laboured. As spiritual death is nothing else than the alienation of the soul from God, we are all born as dead men, and we live as dead men, until we are made partakers of the life of Christ,
p. 219

Eadie says:

Previous life, for death is but the cessation of life. The Spirit of life fled from Adam's disobedient heart, and it died in being severed from God. 2. It implies insensibility. The dead, which are as insusceptible as their kindred clay, can be neither wooed nor won back to existence.
pp. 120—121

Gaebelein says:

After the great revelation of the first chapter and the prayer which followed, the production of the Masterpiece itself is now brought more fully into view.
p. 245

Gaebelein says:

The first verse tells us that we are by nature in the state of death—"dead in trespasses and sins." Man is dead spiritually; he is dead towards God (John v:24—25). This fact that the unregenerated man is dead is much denied in our days. We hear of "the better self", or "the good spark" which is in everybody, and the truth God has revealed concerning man, that he is dead in trespasses and sins is but little believed.
p. 246

Hendriksen says:

The word *you* is the object of the sentence, placed first for the sake of emphasis. It is as if the apostle were saying, "It was on *you*, so unworthy, that God took pity." Yet, in the original the subject of the sentence, namely, "God," and the predicate, "made alive," are not mentioned until verses 4 and 5.
p.

Hendriksen says:

The apostle, I believe, was so completely overwhelmed by the sense of gratitude when he contrasted the former utter wretchedness of the addressed with their present riches in Christ that he purposely postponed the description of the latter until he had portrayed the former. No doubt he did this in order that the Ephesians, having been reminded at some length (verses 1—3) of the dreaded darkness of death in which they formerly walked, would rejoice all the more when at last (verse 4 ff.) they are told that all this is now past, since God, in his infinite mercy, love, and grace, had caused the light of life to dawn upon them (yes, upon “us”). The more men learn to see the dimensions of their utterly lost condition the more they will also, by God’s grace, appreciate their marvelous deliverance.

p. 111

Henry says:

Unregenerate souls are dead in trespasses and sins. All those who are in their sins, are dead in sins.

p. 1849

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

A living corpse: without the gracious presence of God’s Spirit in the soul, and so unable to think, will, or do aught that is holy.

p. 1283

Lange says:

Selfishness is a destructive pervading disease of one’s own Ego, which dies of it. To live for self and only for self is a poor, pitiable life.

p. 85

Lenski says:

These pronouns show that in this paragraph no distinction is made between former Gentiles and former Jews.

They were all spiritually “dead,” completely separated from God and the true life that is in God alone. “Dead” is preparatory to the predication “quicken” or “made alive” mentioned in v. 5.

p. 407

Lenski says:

The two plurals make plain the continuation of this cause; every trespass (see 1:7) and every sin (missing the mark) exhibited the deadness.

p. 407

Lincoln says:

Trespasses and sins both bring about the condition of death and characterize the existence of those who are spiritually dead.

p. 93

Lovett says:

DEAD. Physical death is the separation of one’s soul from his body. Spiritual death is the separation of one’s soul from God. Everything evil is isolated from god by virtue of His absolute holiness. Prior to salvation, we all existed in a death environment where Satan had us enslaved through our evil thoughts and deeds. As dead things cannot give life to themselves, neither can evil man make himself holy. Thus we were all trapped, needing help from the outside. Jesus’ resurrection power, mentioned above, rescues us from this death state. How? By union with Christ. The life is actually His. We get it by being **joined** to Him.

p. 94

MacArthur says:

First, salvation is from sin, which characterizes life before Christ. In these three verses there is perhaps no clearer statement in Scripture on the sinfulness of man apart from Christ.

The wages, or payment, for sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and because man is born in sin he is born to death. Man does not *become* spiritually dead because he sins; he is spiritually dead because by nature he is sinful. Except for Jesus Christ, that is the condition of every human being since the Fall, including every believer before he is saved. It is the past condition of believers and the present condition of everyone else.

p. 52

MacArthur says:

He is spiritually dead while being physically alive. Because he is dead to God, he is dead to spiritual life, truth, righteousness, inner peace and happiness, and ultimately to every other good thing.

p. 53

MacArthur says:

Paraptoma (trespasses) means to slip, fall, stumble, deviate, or go the wrong direction. Hamartia (sins) originally carried the idea of missing the mark, as when hunting with a bow and arrow. It then came to represent missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. In the spiritual realm it refers to missing and falling short of God's standard of holiness, and in the New Testament it is the most common and general term for sin (used 173 times).

p. 54

MacArthur says:

2:1 dead in trespasses and sins. A sobering reminder of the total sinfulness and lostness from which believers have been redeemed. *In* indicates the realm or sphere in which unregenerate sinners exist.

p. 1686

Patzia says:

Those who live without Christ are described as being spiritually **dead**. In such a condition there is no desire to relate one's life to God, because such a life is characterized by disobedience (lit., "trespasses," *paraptoma*, and **sins**, *hamartia*). Many attempts have been made to distinguish these two terms and to

define trespass as “false step,” “deviation from a prescribed path,” and so on, and sin as “missing the mark” or “falling short of a standard.” However, the usage of these terms in the NT varies and does not permit refined distinctions. In this context it is better to take them as all-encompassing phrases that describe the lives of those who are spiritually dead.
p. 177

Robertson says:

When ye were dead (ontas nekrous). Present active participle referring to their former state. Spiritually dead.
p. 523

Spurgeon says:

Here is the point. God has quickened us, who were dead in trespasses and sins, spiritually dead. We were full of vigour towards everything which was contrary to the law of the holiness of God, we walked according to the course of this world; but as for anything spiritual, we were not only somewhat incapable, and somewhat weakened; but we were actually and absolutely dead. We had no sense with which to comprehend spiritual things. We had neither the eye that could see, or the ear that could hear, nor the power that could feel.
p. 359

Stedman says:

THE HUMAN DILEMMA Ephesians 2:1—3

Perhaps you have already noted in your reading that the great theme of Ephesians is the unifying, restoring work of Jesus Christ. He has come to smash every barrier among men, to span every chasm, to break down every obstacle which divides and fragments humanity, and to unite all things together in himself. The good news of the gospel is that he has already begun.
p. 94

Stedman says:

But you will never understand these problems, as the Apostle goes on to show us in chapter 2, until you grasp the difficulties our Lord faces—the condition of mankind in its lost state—and how absolutely impossible it is for man to do anything to change himself. It takes the great power of God; nothing else will suffice. That is the theme of the first half of chapter 2.
p. 94

Stedman says:

But study Paul's analysis and I think you will see what he means and how accurate this description is. There are two basic characteristics which we immediately associate with a dead person. The first is their utter impotence, their powerlessness.

A friend of mine told me of the time he was taken on a tour of a mortuary by a young Christian man who worked there part time. They came into the room where the bodies were lying out on slabs, and the young man pulled back a sheet and said, "tell him about Jesus." My friend said, "I've never forgotten that! How impotent is a person who is dead! How impossible it is to teach him. How difficult, how absolutely hopeless it is for him to respond to any appeal, to do anything constructive."

The second mark of death is corruption. The reason mortuaries exist is that dead bodies tend immediately to deteriorate. They decay, they fall apart, they lose their consistency, they begin to rot, to smell. You remember that in the story of Lazarus, Martha said to Jesus, "It's too late, already he stinks. He's been dead four days." That is also a mark of death—corruption. Impotence and corruption.

p. 96

The Navigators say:

Sin: the human condition (2:1—3)

Look at Paul's description of people who were without Christ (verse 1). He did not describe them as unfulfilled or incomplete. He said that people were *dead*; that is, their spirits were dead because they had broken relationship with the source of life: God.

p. 37

Wuest says:

And you being dead with reference to your trespasses and sins, He made alive; in the sphere of which trespasses and sins at one time you ordered your behavior as dominated by the spirit of the age in this world system, as dominated by the leader of the authority of the lower atmosphere, the source also of the spirit that is now operating in the sons of the disobedience among whom also we all ordered our behavior in the sphere of the cravings of our evil nature, continually practicing the desires of our evil nature and of our thoughts, and were continually children of wrath by nature, as also the rest.
p. 216

Wuest says:

The words “And you,” “take up the closing thought of the preceding chapter, the magnitude of God’s power toward believers as exhibited in Christ’s resurrection. He now shows that the same power is applied to his readers. Hence the connection is, ‘When He raised Him from the dead, etc., and *you did* He quicken, even as He quickened Christ.’ The structure of the passage is broken. Paul having prominently in mind the thought *God quickened you as He did Christ*, begins with *you also*. Then the connection is interrupted by vv. 2, 3, which describe their previous condition.
p. 59

v. 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

The NET Bible then translates verse 2:

in which you formerly lived according to this world's present path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience,

Peterson paraphrases verse 2:

You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience.

Anders says:

Paul describes the way we lived while we were in this spiritually alienated condition. We **followed the ways of this world**. That is, we lived according to the non-Christian value system. This value system is created and energized by Satan (**the ruler of the kingdom of the air**). This does not mean that non-Christians realize that their values are created and energized by Satan. In fact, most would probably deny it. Nevertheless, Satan, in his craftiness, places the things in front of us that we, in our sinful condition, find attractive, and, therefore, pursue as though they were our ideas. The **spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient** is probably not the **ruler of the kingdom of the air** as the NIV translation suggests but rather an impersonal atmosphere created and energized by the ruler. Satan's kingdom encourages us to have ungodly values, attitudes, and actions, much the same way a spirit of enthusiasm at a ball game might encourage us to embrace the attitudes and actions of a sports fan. We cheer, yell, jump up and down, and otherwise act in ways that we would not if we were not under the influence of the spirit of enthusiasm. Under the spirit of Satan's kingdom we act in disobedient ways we would not normally follow.

p. 110

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

2 Verses 2—4 are a typical Pauline digression. The mention of “transgressions and sins” in v.1 leads the apostle to supply a fuller account than he had intended of the Ephesians' former way of life. As a result, he does not pick up the thread of his original sentence until v. 5.

p. 756—757

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

In any case, the evil one is certainly identified in the two clauses that follow. He is the “ruler” (GK 807) of a realm said to be “of the air”. Taken literally, this would signify the atmosphere around the earth, which, according to ancient cosmology, was the abode of demons. Paul may be adopting that term as a figure of speech to suggest Satan's dominion. Satan is also the unholy “spirit” (1Co 2:12) who apes the operations of his divine counterpart by being constantly “at work” (the same basic word as used of the Holy Spirit in Eph 1:19—20, implying a mutual rivalry). “Those who are disobedient” discloses the fact that rebellion against God and refusal to believe in him are inherent in humankind (Eph 5:16).

p. 757

Calvin says:

He now proceeds farther, and explains the cause of our corruption to be the dominion which the devil exercises over us. A more severe condemnation of mankind could not have been pronounced. What does he leave to us, when he declares us to be the slaves of Satan, and subject to his will, so long as we live out of the kingdom of Christ?

p. 220

Dunnam says:

1. In sin we are controlled by Satan. *The prince of the power of the air* is a title for Satan (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4; John 12:31). The unredeemed world is described in Colossians 1:13 as the *power of darkness*, and our salvation depends upon being rescued from that realm and brought into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13).

p. 166

Eadie says:

His chosen abode is the dark nebulous zone which canopies such a region of spiritual mortality, close upon its inhabitants, ever near and ever active, unseen and yet real, unfelt and yet mighty, giving to thethat “form and pressure”—that—which the apostle here describes as its characteristic element.

p. 127

Fergusson says:

He proveth they were thus dead in sins and trespasses from their walking in and making a daily trade of sin, without striving against it, or any through remorse for it: which woful walk of theirs he doth illustrate from two guides, which they followed, and by which they were carried on and encouraged in their sinful course. The first was, the universal corrupt course and custom of the world (that is, of wicked men in the world, Psa. xvii. 14,) in all ages, which had become a law for them to walk by; the second guide was Satan, who is here called a prince; not only because there being a number of those unclean spirits, they are joined as

one politic body among themselves under one, who is as prince and head of the rest.

p. 145

Fergusson says:

3. Such is the power of converting grace, that it causes men to change their former way and course, though they have been never so much rooted in it, and habituated to it: for while he saith, "Wherein in time past ye walked," he implieth there was a change wrought, and that they did not so walk in the time present.

p. 146

Fergusson says:

7. All men in their unrenewed state are very slaves to Satan, whose woful motions and suggestions they follow, and whom they resemble and imitate in their sin and wickedness; for so much is implied while he saith, "They walked according to the prince of the power of the air," that is, the devil.

p. 146

Henry says:

We are by nature bond-slaves to sin and Satan. Those who walk according to the course of this world, walk *according to the prince of the power of the air*. Wicked men are slaves to Satan. The course and tenor of their lives are according to his suggestions; they are subject to him, and are led captive by him at his will, whereupon he is called the god of this world, and *the spirit that now worketh in children of disobedience*.

p. 1850

Hughes says:

The Devil. Paul describes the Devil as "the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient" (v.2). Satan is described in Scripture as "the prince of this world" (John 12:31), "the prince of demons" (Matthew 9:34), and, a sobering title, "the god of this age" (2Corinthians 4:4). As "the ruler of the kingdom of the air," he commands innumerable hosts in

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the unseen world and this creates a spirit of the age, a *cosmos diabolicus* in which he knits just enough good with evil to achieve his purposes. This Devil dominates and energizes the spiritually dead!

p. 67

Lange says:

Here Paul evidently passes to what stands behind the course of this world, influencing it, working through it.

p. 73

Lenski says:

“In which at one time you walked,” with its historical aorist, describes the former life as being wholly in the sphere of what was filled with spiritual death.

p. 407

Lenski says:

To walk “in accord with the eon of this world” is to live in a way that harmonizes with the whole age in its present corrupt and debased order which is due to the fallen state of mankind and thus contrary to the kingdom of heaven which shall last forever.

p. 408

Lincoln says:

“in accordance with the ruler of the realm of the air.” Only now is the solidarity of evil, of which the recipients of the letter were once a part, given a personal connotation. Their lives were under the control of a ruler. Supernatural powers hostile to human welfare and to God’s redemptive purposes have already figured in 1:21 and will do so again in 3:10 and 6:11, 12.

p. 95

Lloyd-Jones says:

The apostle's statement here is *that the man who is not a Christian is a man who is simply governed and controlled by the world*, its mind, its outlook, its mentality. I know of nothing which is more sad about man in sin than just that.
p. 21

Lloyd-Jones says:

The devil is so subtle that he dominates man and persuades him at the same time that he is not being dominated. Man even thinks he is emancipating himself by turning his back on the Bible. The devil is also called 'the god of this world'. The Lord Jesus Christ called him 'the prince of this world'. He is referred to as 'Beelzebub, the chief of the devils'. And it is he who is dominating it all. He hates God. He was an angel created perfect by God, a bright seraph. He stood up against God because he wanted to be God; and he hates God, and his one object is to mar God's creation, to ruin God's world. So he came into it and beguiled Eve and Adam, and he has been doing it ever since. He dominates the life of man. We are all under the dominion of Satan by nature. He has his forces, his powers; he is 'the prince'. Of what? Of the powers of the air.'
p. 23

Lovett says:

CLOUD. Satan's kingdom is in view here. Scripture insists on his reality. His abode is not some distant realm, but that nebulous region immediately surrounding men's spirits. Paul uses the Greek word for air to picture his presence and proximity to our souls. With his agents, he operates just beyond the wall of the flesh, unseen, unfelt—as close as the air we breathe. As the body is required to inhale any smog about it, so is the human spirit subjected to satanic influence. The unholy spirit is as close to us as the Holy Spirit, operating in similar fashion.
p. 94

McGee says:

The description of our past is not very pretty. We walked according to the spirit of the age. We conformed to the society and the civilization and the lifestyle of the world. We were walking according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that energizes the sons of disobedience. That is Satan and he takes folks and leads them around.
p. 233

O'Brien says:

The gravity of their previous condition, however, serves to magnify the wonder of God's mercy. The past is recalled not because the emphasis falls upon it, but in order to draw attention to God's mighty action in Christ.
p. 158

O'Brien says:

The devil is further characterized as the spirit²⁹ who exercises effective and compelling power over the lives of men and women: *the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*
p. 160

Patzia says:

Before one becomes a Christian, however, one virtually gives spiritual allegiance to these evil forces, particularly to the **ruler**, who is envisioned as Satan, or the devil (6:11). That ruler is defined further as **the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.**
p. 178

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

Walking is a biblical expression that pictures a believer's steady, normal progress with God (Ps. 1:1). Paul here refers to a believer's old walk. Whether it was a path of moral carelessness or the dark alley of evil, believers should no longer walk according to their past evil ways
p. 1533

Robinson says:

'Next, you may see that power as it has been at work in yourselves. You also it has raised from the dead. For you were dead—not with a physical death such as was the death of Christ, but dead in your sins. Your former life was a

death rather than a life. You shaped your conduct after the fashion of the present world, after the will of the power that dominates it—Satan and his unseen satellites—the inspiring force of those who refuse obedience to God'.
pp. 152—153

Wuest says:

In the sphere of which (trespasses and sins) at one time you ordered your behavior as dominated by the age-spirit of this world system, as dominated by the leader of the authority of the lower atmosphere, (the leader also) of the spirit that is now operating in the sons of the impersuasableness.
p. 63

v. 3 Among these we all once lived in the desires of our flesh, practicing the desires of our flesh and of our thoughts, and were children of wrath by nature, as also the rest.

The NET Bible then translates verse 3:

among whom all of us also formerly lived out our lives in the cravings of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest...

Peterson paraphrases verse 3:

We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose his temper and do away with the whole lot of us.

Abbott says:

“we also, we too.” Having spoken specially of the Gentiles in the preceding verses, the apostle now passes to the Jews.
p. 43

Arthur says:

Are you bowed to the ground, unable to look up because of the weight of guilt or sin you're carrying? Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. You are not alone. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory (“the true estimate”) of God (Romans 3:23). Yes, you who were created in God's image have desecrated that image and failed to give a true estimate of the character of God in your life. But, Beloved, Christ came to save you! Like all mankind, you are born dead in trespasses and sins. Because of sin, you have walked your own way. Like all of us, you have followed your lusts and walked under the power of the devil. But Jesus Christ brings all that to an end when you turn to Him, when you acknowledge that He is God and that He has a right to rule your life.
p. 62

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Those who prefer to stand on their own and refuse to accept what God has done for them in Christ are self-condemned.
p. 757

Baxter says:

“We all had our way of living in time past, in ... the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (verse 3). The “desires of the *flesh*” are earth-bound appetites. The “desires of the *mind*” are earth-bound ambitions. This was our pre-conversion condition. We did not realize it until the Holy Spirit broke through the thick encrustments of our depravity with the regenerating light of the Gospel.
p. 171

Boice says:

How can anyone possibly talk about the wrath of God today? I know the idea is in the Bible, in obscure places, but surely it is something Christians today should be embarrassed about and try as hard as possible to repudiate. Speak of God's love. Speak of mercy, even justice. But not wrath, at least not if you want to be taken seriously by people living in our century.
p. 49

Calvin says:

To fulfill these desires, is to live according to the guidance of our natural disposition and of our mind. *The flesh* means here the disposition, or, what is called, the inclination of the nature; and the next expression (.....) means what such as it exists in men by nature; so that *lusts* do not refer exclusively to the lower appetites, or what is called the sensual part of man, but extend to the world.
p. 222

Henry says:

Our state and course are such as deserve wrath, and would end in eternal wrath, if divine grace did not interpose. What reason have sinners then to be looking out for that grace that will make them children of God and heirs of glory!
p. 1850

Hughes says:

The dead, those without Christ, are dominated by the *world*, the *Devil*, and the *flesh*. The world dominates from *without*, the flesh from *within*, and the Devil from *beyond*. These are the terrible dynamics of spiritual death!
p. 67

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Mental suggestions and purposes (independent of God), as distinguished from the blind impulses of "the flesh."
p. 1283

Lange says:

He who does not walk in God's way, following the guiding star of God's will, gets other blind guides, and is induced to cut such capers, that he is plunged into extreme corruption.

p. 85

Lenski says:

It is best to think of the reasonings, reflections, conclusions formed by the thinking mind as these direct our volitions and the resulting acts. By adding this second genitive Paul is not speaking of two sources of our volitions. We question whether he refers to source at all. The psychological source of all volitions is the will.

p. 411

Lenski says:

First, lusts—next, deeds—now, what we actually were. Lusts and deeds as the evidence, now the final fact: “children by nature of wrath.”

p. 412

Lincoln says:

“in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the wishes of the flesh and the thoughts.” The major characteristic of the past sinful way of life that is now taken up is its orientation to the flesh.

p. 97

Lloyd-Jones says:

You notice that this term is used twice in this third verse: ‘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’. It is obvious at once that the word ‘flesh’ is used there by the apostle in two different senses, otherwise he is just repeating himself. He uses ‘flesh’ first in a general sense, and then he uses it in a

particular sense. So it is very important that we should know the precise connotation each time he uses his term.

The word 'flesh' is used in the Scripture in four main ways, Two of them are general and two are particular. What I mean is this: the word 'flesh' is sometimes used in Scripture to represent the whole of mankind. Take a phrase like this, 'All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field'. Flesh is used there to cover the term mankind, 'all flesh'. That is one, very general way. But it is also sometimes used to describe the covering of our bones. What does a man's body consist of? Well, there is the skeleton, the frame which consists of bones and so on. But you do not see the bones because they are covered with that we call flesh—muscles, fat, ligaments, etc. Now the term 'flesh' is sometimes used like that. Job says, 'I shall yet see him in my flesh', and he means there really 'in the body'. Those are the two general meanings.

But there are two other meanings which are more particular, and more spiritual, in their connotation. And these are the important ones for our purpose now. The first is again fairly general or has a fairly wide meaning. 'Flesh' is used by the apostle to denote that which is the complete antithesis to the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. There is a perfect example of this in Galatians 5:17: 'for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit (with a capital S), and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other'. There he is using the term 'flesh' in a wide spiritual sense; it represents everything in man that is opposed to the working and the power and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Now this is tremendously important, so let me give you further definitions of it. Flesh in this sense means human nature in a state of sin, man in sin. Or take a yet more comprehensive definition of it. It is the entire nature of man apart from the renewing grace of Christ; so it embraces the soul, and the moral and the intellectual faculties, as well as the body. Flesh in this wide, general, spiritual sense is the entire man in sin apart from the grace of Christ.

pp. 38—39

Lovett says:

WRATH. God's hatred of sin is unquestioned. That man is born with a sinful nature is also conceded. The infant does not arrive in this world with God's wrath upon him. Yet, as soon as he is capable of a responsible thought or act, he will sin. Why? His nature (satanically inspired) guarantees it. Consequently all are under wrath, because that "all have sinned: (Rom. 3:23). The only remedy is receiving a **new nature** not subject to Satan's influence. God rescues us from Satan's domain by providing us with Christ's own victorious nature at salvation.

p. 95

O'Brien says:

Having reminded his Gentile Christian readers of their former pagan existence, Paul now asserts that prior to their conversion he and other Jewish believers had been in a similar desperate state, for *all of us also* were included among the disobedient.³²

p. 161

Patzia says:

Thus, by following their natural desires, people became subject to the dreadful judgment of God (“we were by nature children of wrath,” RSV).

p. 178

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

Lusts means “strong desires.” Even with the modifier **of our flesh**, this word pertains to more than merely sensual cravings. The natural human desires for fame, power, and riches are meant as well (Gal. 5:19—21).

p. 1533

Robinson says:

Not that we Jews were in any better case. We also lived in sin, following the dictates of our lower desires. We, no less than the Gentiles, were objects in ourselves of the Divine wrath. In ourselves, I say: but the merciful God has not left us to ourselves. Dead as we were, Gentiles and Jews alike, He has quickened us with Christ,—Grace, free grace, has saved you!—and raised us with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly sphere: and all this, in Christ Jesus. For His purpose has been to display to the ages that are yet to come the surpassing wealth of His grace, in the goodness shown toward us in Christ Jesus’.

p. 155

Simpson & Bruce say:

But the apostle is far too ingenuous to exempt himself from the black list of those whom the old serpent has thus outwitted. We all carry about with us the

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tinder of corruption and our drafty adversary knows how to apply a match to the combustibles at hand. A powder-magazine can be commendably quiet so long as it keeps cool; but let a spark alight upon it and you may look for an explosion. The lusts of the flesh and of the mind only need provocatives to flare up in baleful conflagration. Even apostles have no ground of boasting here; for they have not made themselves to differ from what they were aforetime.

p. 49

Stedman says:

The wrath of God is what we might call “the law of inevitable consequences.” If we make a wrong decision it will affect us, it will hurt us, even though we intended it to be right. If I should suddenly decide to get up and walk right into a wall, I would suffer the wrath of God. I would be hurt. That wrath is designed to awaken me, to make me realize that I am violating a basic law of my own nature. If I shove my hands into my pockets and nonchalantly stroll off the top of a twenty-story building with the hope that I’ll survive, I will suffer the wrath of God. It would be what you’d call “jumping to a conclusion!” There are a lot of people who are acting that way these days.

Why is it that we accept the wrath of God in physical terms without a struggle, but when it moves into the moral realm we get all upset? We say, “It isn’t fair. Why shouldn’t I run off with my neighbor’s wife? Why shouldn’t I find the happiness I deserve after years of having to live with this slob I’ve been married to? Why should I experience any evil results from that? But the same kind of law applies here. Evil results will come, inevitable consequences which will destroy our humanity, tear down the beauty of human dignity within us. We will become brutalized, dehumanized, depersonalized—all of these terms are being thrown around today. That is the wrath of God.

We are subject to that wrath, Paul says, because of these great forces at work. The devil, with his clever, subtle strategies, works through the world to force us to conform to patterns which destroy, and works through the flesh, so that we move in utter naivete from a normal satisfying of human need into that excess which destroys.

p. 104

Westcott says:

At this point St. Paul is constrained to recognize that the description which he has given of the moral condition of the Ephesians applied also to himself, a Jew by birth, and his fellow-believers. Before their conversion they were not separated from the ‘sons of disobedience,’ *among whom*, he adds, *we all also once lived...doing the will (lit. wills) of the flesh and of the mind.*

p. 30

Wuest says:

The words, “among whom,” refer back to “the children of disobedience.” It is not “in the midst of whom,” but “numbered among whom.”

p. 63

Wuest says:

We “were by nature the children of wrath.” “Were” is in the Greek text, imperfect in tense, which tense speaks of continuous action or state of being. Our totally depraved condition before salvation was a continuous one, from birth on without a cessation of that condition.

p. 64

v. 4 But God, being wealthy in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.

The NET Bible then translates verse 4:

But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us,

Peterson paraphrases verse 4:

Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, he embraced us.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

There is an inexhaustible treasury of such mercy in the loving heart of God.
p. 757

Baxter says:

But now, thank God, at verse 4 there comes an emphatic break—“*BUT GOD*”—and from this point there is a grandly different story to tell. Verses 4—10 express what we now are through our saving union with Christ. Our new condition is set forth in four particulars which stand out in marked contrast over against the four unhappy characteristics of our former life apart from Christ.
p. 171

Bickel & Jantz say:**Life with Christ (2:4—10)**

The first word in Ephesians 2:4 isn't very glamorous, but it's one of the sweetest words Paul could have used. The word is *But*. It's the word that sets up the next section. It's the word that tells us we are no longer dead, enslaved, and under God's anger. It's the word that gives us hope. Despite all we are and the desperate condition we are in, God has not given up on us. God, who is rich in mercy, extravagant in love, and abundant in grace, has raised us from spiritual death just as surely as He raised Christ from the dead. In fact, we have life because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This section of Ephesians is one of the most significant in all of Scripture because it's all about our salvation from death to life. In three powerful verses, Paul explains how and why God saved us.

p. 67

Fergusson says:

The apostle having already set forth that miserable state wherein both Jew and Gentile were by nature and before conversion, he doth in the second place hold forth their delivery from that woful state, and that in such a lively, ravishing, and comprehensive strain of speech, as might not only inform their judgments, but also work upon their affections to embrace and adhere unto those truths which he here delivereth, according to his intended scope.

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p. 148

Foulkes says:

Such was the plight of all mankind. *But God* broke in. In strong contrast to the need and sinfulness of man, and meeting that need and sinfulness, there comes the fact of God's love, and the action that springs from His pity. The subject of the verb has waited from the beginning of the chapter to this point. The verb waits till the next verse, till Paul in his usual manner (cf. i. 17, iii. 9, 15f.), having mentioned the name of God, speaks in glowing terms of His goodness and grace.

p. 71

Gaebelein says:

After this dark picture of death, ruin and wrath, we read what God has done and does, for all who believe on His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. "But God who is rich in mercy, for the great love, wherewith He loved us" (verse 4). This is the blessed bridge, which leads out of the dark and dreary, hopeless condition. *But God!* Man is guilty and lost. *But God!* God now comes in and makes known the riches of His mercy.

p. 247

Hendriksen says:

As far as the present paragraph is concerned the tragic account of man's forlorn condition is finished. But the main idea with which the apostle started out has not yet been expressed. The words "and you," as the *object* of the chapter's opening sentence, must not be left hanging in mid-air. *The Ephesians* cannot be left in their state of wrath and condition of misery. Both object and Ephesians must be "rescued." And it is high time that this be done. The great throbbing heart of this marvelous missionary, a heart so filled with compassion,⁵⁶ can wait no longer. Here then finally, after all these modifiers and in connection with the repetition in verse 5 of the words of the words of verse 1—"even though...dead through...trespasses"—comes the main clause: the subject and the main verb: "God (verse 4)...made alive" (verse 5).

p. 116

Henry says:

God himself is the author of this great and happy change. Love is his inclination to do us good considered simply as creatures: mercy respects us as apostate and as miserable creatures. That love of God is great love, and that mercy of his is rich mercy.

p. 1850

Lincoln says:

“but God...” The adversative...introduces a contrasting situation brought about because of who God is and what he has done.

p. 100

Lloyd-Jones says:

With these two words we come to the introduction to the Christian message, the peculiar, specific message which the Christian faith has to offer to us. These two words, in and of themselves, in a sense contain the whole of the gospel. The gospel tells of what God has done, God's intervention; it is something that comes entirely from outside us and displays to us that wondrous and amazing and astonishing work of God which the apostle goes on to describe and to define in the following verses.

p. 59

Lovett says:

BUT GOD. Those two words mark the turning point for men. All are headed for hell until God intervenes. His action is prompted by love. Besides, He has such a merciful nature He was compelled to act in behalf of fallen man rather than destroy him and shift to some other project. Think what the real nature of man must be if the Almighty God **can fall in love with him!** Is it not unthinkable that God would have a love affair with those who could not respond to Him **in kind!**

p. 95

MacArthur says:

Salvation is *from* sin and *by* love. God's **mercy** is *plousios*, **rich**, overabounding, without measure, unlimited. The problem with reconciliation is not on the Lord's side. The two words **but God** show where the initiative was in providing the power of salvation. His great desire is to be rejoined with the creatures He made in His own image and for His own glory. The rebellion and rejection is on man's side. Because He was **rich in mercy** toward us and had **great love** for us, He provided a way for us to return to Him.
p. 58

MacArthur says:

Salvation is for God's glory by putting on display His boundless mercy and love for those who are spiritually dead because of their sinfulness.
p. 1686

McGee says:

This little conjunction *but* is so important. But God, being rich in mercy, on account of His great love with which He loved us made us alive together with Christ. God is *rich* in mercy. He had mercy on me. He has had mercy on you. This is such a radical change from the first three verses, which are as black and hopeless as anything can be. Man is a complete failure. He is incapable of saving himself. God comes on this scene of death with His mercy. He does not have too little, too late. He has a surplus, for He is an infinite God who is rich in infinite mercy. He has what man needs. He has what you need. The only requirement is that you believe Him.
p. 234

O'Brien says:

4 The magnificent change which God has effected is jubilantly sounded forth. His gracious initiative and sovereign action stand in wonderful contrast with the hopeless condition of fallen humanity which has been described in vv. 1—3. Men and women outside of Christ were the objects of divine wrath, *but God* had mercy on them. We were dead, *but* he has made us alive with Christ. We were in bondage to evil powers, *but God* has seated us with Christ in the heavenly realms. A completely new situation has arisen because he has taken every necessary step to reverse our condition in sin.
p. 164

Simpson & Bruce say:

Paul has a gospel to proclaim radiant with life, a resurrection from a living death to a deathless vitality. Its recipients are upraised from “sin’s dark sepulcher” to the panoramic observatory of the skies. What can reanimate the cold sterilities of such a necropolis as he has just portrayed? The enquiry dates from the days of Ezekiel and admits of only one answer. The Spirit of the Lord must breathe on these dry bones. And how plenteous in mercy must He be to brood over the skeletons in that grim charnel-house of souls beheld in the alley of vision, despite all their offensiveness, and to deign to requicken them by His own invincible energy!
p. 51

Stedman says:

So, Paul says, we are “like the rest of mankind.” It is universal. It isn’t a question of race or sex. It doesn’t matter whether we are men or women, whether we are born into a civilized country or reared as savages in the jungle—the condition is still the same. There is no escape, except for the next two words, “But God...”
p. 105

Wuest says:

But God, being wealthy in the sphere of mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, and we, being dead with respect to our trespasses, made us alive together with the Christ; by grace have you been saved completely in past time, with the present result that you are in a state of salvation which persists through present time, and raised us with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in order that He might exhibit for His own glory in the ages that will pile themselves one upon another in continuous succession, the surpassing wealth of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by the grace have you been saved in time past completely, through faith, with the result that your salvation persists through present time; and this [salvation] is not from you as a source; of God it is the gift, not from a source of works, in order that no one might boast; for we are His handiwork, created in Christ Jesus with a view to good works which God prepared beforehand in order that within their sphere we may order our behavior.
pp. 216—217

v. 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, He made us alive together with the Christ, by grace you have been saved.

The NET Bible then translates verse 5:

even though we were dead in transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you are saved!—

Peterson paraphrases verse 5:

He took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. He did all this on his own, with no help from us!

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

The main verb of this extended sentence in the Greek does not emerge until this verse (see comment on v.1). Paul's main point is that God "made us alive with [GK 5188] Christ" (cf. Col 2:15). This is the first of three verbs that describe what God has done in Christ for every Christian (the other two are in v.6).
p. 757

Baxter says:

It is a marvel of Divine *power*, for when our condition was such who *could* have done it but God? And it is a marvel of Divine *grace*, for when our condition was such who *would* have done it but God? This is the *first* operation of God's power "to us-ward" who believe, namely, renewal to spiritual aliveness in Christ.
p. 171

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Salvation is to the Christian not a thing to be waited for hereafter, but already realized (1 John 3:14).
p. 1284

Lincoln says:

Salvation for those whose plight is spiritual death must involve a raising to life. This is in fact what God has accomplished for believers. He made them alive with Christ.
p. 101

MacArthur says:

Far more than anything else, a spiritually dead person needs to be made alive by god. Salvation brings spiritual life to the dead. The power that raises believers out of death and makes them alive (cf. Rom. 6:1—7) is the same power that energizes every aspect of Christian living
p. 1686

Meyer says:

In the day that we were born, we were cast out in the open field, dead in trespasses and sins, and to the abhorring of our person. But He loved us even then. His great love was not diverted by the spectacle of our loathsomeness. He knew what we were, and what we should be, and how much pain and sorrow we should cost Him; but He loved us still. He foresaw our failures and backslidings, and lapses into the darkness of shadow; but none of these things availed to quench His love. So rich was He in mercy that He could afford to be prodigal of His wealth.

It is a great comfort to know that God loved us when there was nothing to attract His love; because He will not be surprised by anything He discovers in us, and He will not turn from us at those manifestations of evil which sometimes make us lose heart. He knew the worst from the first. He did not love us because we were fair, but to make us so. We cannot understand it; but since He began He will not fail or be discouraged until He has finished his work.
p. 41

Parker says:

You cannot conceive God's notion of pardon. You have an idea of what you mean by forgiveness; but when you have exhausted your own notion of the term forgiveness, you have not shown the Divine intent concerning the soul that is to be forgiven. When God forgives, he does not merely pardon, barely pardon,--he does not by some great straining effort of his love, just come within reach of the suppliant, and lay upon his heart the blessing which is besought. He pardons with pardons! When he casts our sins away, it is not into a shallow pool, it is into the depths. of the sea; when he throws it away, it is not on one side, it is behind him. Will you arithmeticians measure the distance which is meant by behind the infinite? When god takes a man's sins away from him, he puts them as far from him as the east is from the west. Can you tell how far the east is from the west? It is an expression that is often upon your lips. Have you ever measured the distance? You cannot; it is an immeasurable line. So, when God comes to pardon us, he pardons with pardons, with pardons again and again, wave upon wave, until we say, "Thou hast done exceeding abundantly above all that we ask." The finite can never grasp the infinite, and our poor mortal capacities cannot hold God's idea of pardon. We have, thank God, some notion of forgiveness; but not until you yourself have entered personally into the mystery of this forgiveness, can you understand or have any hint of the depth of the sea into which God has cast the sins of which we have repented.

p. 5

Patrick & Lowth say:

Hath quickened us together with Christ.] Not only by giving us a new birth, or renovation of life, but an assurance also of eternal life; for “because I live,” saith Christ, “you shall live also” (John xiv. 19).
p. 750

v. 6 And raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

The NET Bible then translates verse 6:

and he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

Peterson paraphrases verse 6:

Then he picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah.

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

6 In addition to making us alive with Christ (v.5), God has “raised us up” with him (GK 5283; cf. Col 2:12) and has “seated us with”(GK 5154) him on his throne “in the heavenly realms.” Jesus actually left the tomb in which he had been laid and appeared to his disciples; forty days later, he ascended into heaven (Ac 1:6—11) and sat down at the right hand of the Father (1:20—21).
p. 757

Baxter says:

Third, over against flesh-bound affections we now find: “And made us to *sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus*” (verse 6). Our eyes are opened to heavenly realities, and our minds moved by heavenly desires, and our hearts satisfied with heavenly joys. That is where we are *now* in the sense of spiritual privilege. We ought to be living there daily in spiritual experience.
p. 172

Eadie says:

Believers are not only quickened, but they are also raised up; they not only receive life, but they experience a resurrection. The dead, on being quickened, do not lie in their graves; they come forth, cast from them the cerements of mortality, and re-enter the haunts of living humanity. Jesus rose on being vivified, and left His sepulcher with the grave-clothes in it. His people enjoy the activities as well as the elements of vitality, for they are raised out of the spiritual death-world, and are not found “the living among the dead.”
p. 145

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

in Christ Jesus—Our union with Him is the ground of our present spiritual, and future bodily, resurrection and ascension.
p. 1284

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v. 7 in order that He might demonstrate in the coming ages the surpassing wealth of His grace in kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

The NET Bible then translates verse 7:

to demonstrate in the coming ages the surpassing wealth of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Peterson paraphrases verse 7:

Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus.

Abbott says:

“In the coming ages.” It seems more suitable to the context, as well as to the use of parallel expressions, to understand this of the future life,
p. 50

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

All this was done by God in Christ with a single end in view: to demonstrate in successive ages “the incomparable riches of his grace” (cf. 1:7, 18; 2:4, 7; 3:8, 16). This was God’s publicity program for the whole of history—and beyond. He planned a continuing exhibition of his favor toward humankind to cover all the centuries between the ascension and the return of Christ, and after that through all eternity (cf. Jude 25).
p. 758

Gaebelein says:

“That in the ages to come He might show (or display) the exceeding (surpassing) riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus” (verse 7). This is one of the richest and deepest statements in the Bible. Two ages follow the present age. The millennial age, and after that has lasted for a thousand years, the eternal state begins. In the coming age and in all eternity, God is going to make known His glory through and in His Masterwork. All His redeemed will be with Him in glory. When He comes again He brings many sons to glory; and we shall reign and rule with Him over the earth.
p. 249

MacArthur says:

Salvation, of course, is very much for the believer’s blessing, but it is even more for the purpose of eternally glorifying God for bestowing on believers His endless and limitless grace and kindness. The whole of heaven glorifies Him for what He has done in saving sinners
p. 1686

Meyer says:

We are monuments of God's wealth.

That He could love us when we were dead like Lazarus, in trespasses and sins; that He has linked us in the bonds of indissoluble union with his Son; that He has made it possible for us to share His resurrection, His Triumph, and His Throne; that we, the poor children of earth and sin, should be admitted into the inner circle of Deity—*this* will be, to all eternity, the mightiest proof of the exceeding riches of his grace.

The word “exceeding” might be rendered “beyond throwing distance.” Fling your thoughts forward as far as you can, and there will always be an immense *beyond*; throw them as high as you may, till they outsoar the stars, and there will always be an *above*; let them sink forever, and there will always be a *beneath*—in the exceeding riches of God's grace.

p. 18

Stedman says:

Immediately Paul explores the purpose of God in redeeming mankind. Why does he come into our lives? Why does he change the fundamental basis of our experience? The answer is that in the coming ages he plans to display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. In other words, God's purpose in doing all this is that he might have a display case in which his grace—the glory of his character and being—will become fully evident.

p. 129

v. 8 For it is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and this [salvation] is not of yourselves—it is the gift of God;

The NET Bible then translates verse 8:

For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God;

Peterson paraphrases verse 8:

Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish!

Arthur says:

The minute you simply believe, the minute you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and acknowledge Him as God, you are saved by the grace of God. You are saved, but not saved to live as you please. Rather you are saved so that you can walk in the good works that God has ordained for you. Works that He has planned especially for you. For example, one of the works God has ordained for me is to teach people how to study the Word of God. This book is part of His calling on my life. That good works vary, but they all have their source in God.

Don't miss these good works by focusing on your past, your sin, your failures, or by excusing yourself from serving God because of what you were or what was done to you. If I did that, I would never be doing what I am doing now because my past is not a pretty one. You must choose, as I did, to believe God, to say with Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am (1 Corinthians 15:10). His grace toward me will not be in vain. Rather, I am going to walk out of the prison of my past and live in freedom. Yet it is not going to be me, but the grace of God in me! I am going to appropriate that all-sufficient, more-than-abundant, lavish grace.

O my friend, free yourself from that load of guilt. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. You are without excuse. Appropriate His grace and press on!

p. 63

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

Paul again reminds his readers (cf. v.5) that they owe their salvation entirely to the undeserved favor of God. "Grace" is the objective, operative, and instrumental cause of salvation.

p. 758

Bickel & Jantz say:

Our salvation is a gift that God gives us out of His extravagant love. We can't earn God's special favor and we can't take credit for it. Our salvation has been accomplished with Christ (2:6), *through* Christ (2:7), and in Christ Jesus (2:10).

p. 67

Bruce says:

8 It is by this surpassingly rich grace of God, then, that salvation is secured for men and women.⁶³ As in v. 5, “you have been saved” is equivalent to “you have been justified.” What Paul says here about salvation he says elsewhere about justification, which is freely bestowed by God’s grace (Rom. 3:24) and received “not on the ground of legal works but through faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal. 2:16). “Through faith” here implies Jesus Christ as the object of that faith,
p. 289

Lloyd-Jones says:

In these three verses the apostle summarises the great argument which he has been conducting in the first seven verses of this chapter. He brings it all to a focus. I suppose that in certain respects we can say that there is no more important doctrinal statement anywhere in the Epistle.
p.128

Lovett says:

GIFT. The Holy spirit wants it perfectly clear that man’s rescue and exaltation to such heights is something that God has done by Himself. Even though the faith-method was used to make the selection of those who would receive this gift, the gift itself is not the work of human hands. Even the ability to exercise faith in Christ requires a “pre-salvation work” of the Holy Spirit (John 6:44). The enslavement by Satan, through the old nature, is such that God’s Spirit must **enable** us to accept the free gift in Christ. While He does this for all men, since there is “no respect of persons with God,” yet “not all men will exercise faith” (2 Thess. 3:2).
p. 97

O’Brien says:

Paul has just shown that what has happened to believers has been due to the amazingly rich grace of God, the demonstration of which will continue in the ages to come so that all who see it will marvel and praise God.
p. 173

Patzia says:

Grace can be defined as favor, graciousness, goodwill, and so on. When it is applied to God, it signifies that action of God by which he moved graciously upon undeserving humanity. The essence of grace is that it is God's (**for it is by grace**) and that it is free; otherwise, it would not be grace.
p. 183

Radmacher, Allen & House say:

Christians **have been saved** by **grace**. The grace of God is the source of salvation; **faith** is the channel, not the cause. God alone saves. Salvation never originates in the efforts of people; it always arises out of the lovingkindness of God. Truly, "salvation is of the Lord" (Jon 2:9). The past tense of the verb *saved* in this passage indicates that the believer's salvation has already occurred in the past, at the Cross. **the gift of God**: We cannot do anything to earn our salvation.
p. 1534

Robertson says:

Explanatory reason. "By the grace" already mentioned in verse 5 and so with the article. *Through faith (dia pisteos)*. This phrase he adds in repeating what he said in verse 5 to make it plainer. "Grace is God's part, "faith" ours."
p. 525

Robinson says:

8—10. 'Grace, I say, free grace has saved you, grace responded to by faith. It is not from yourselves that this salvation comes: it is a gift, and the gift is God's. Merit has no part in it: boasting is excluded. It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves: He has created us afresh in Christ Jesus, that we may do good works which He has made ready for our doing. Not of works, but unto works, is the Divine order of our salvation'.
p. 156

Simpson & Bruce say:

Here we sight what may fairly be termed the central message of this Epistle, already not obscurely foreshadowed. Salvation is of Jehovah (Ps. 3:8), His august monopoly. We have undone ourselves, but in Him resides our help.
p. 54

Spurgeon says:

What is faith? *It is made up of three things—knowledge, belief, and trust.*
p. 372

v. 9 not because of works, in order that no one might boast.

The NET Bible then translates verse 9:

it is not from works, so that no one can boast.

Peterson paraphrases verse 9:

We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving.

C. Henry says:

But salvation is no cause for pride, though it does occasion rejoicing; we did not save ourselves. Works could not avail. Grace did it—the gift of God. We are His workmanship, and the glory belongs to Him. Yet human decision is still required. Salvation is in response to our faith (2:8), and it falls short of its goal until it issues in good works, which God has planned from the beginning (v. 10). Through them God’s glory is revealed in man.

p. 306

Meyer says:

...“not of works, that no man should glory.” We are not to work up to the new life, but from it. The good works we do before regeneration are not even reckoned to our account. The apostle calls them *dead* works. They are the automatic convulsive movements of a corpse. The only works that please God, and are accepted through the mediation of Christ, are those which emanate from the life which He imparts in regeneration by the Holy Ghost. We are *created* unto good works. “He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works.” Cain’s gift of fruit may be both fair and fragrant; but it is rejected because it is an attempt to purchase God’s favour, instead of being the outcome and flower of his faith.

p. 28

v.10 For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, in order that we should walk in them.

The NET Bible then translates verse 10:

For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them.

Peterson paraphrases verse 10:

He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.

Abbott says:

If we are God's workmanship, our salvation is not our own work, but the gift of God; and if we are created in Christ for good works, there could be no works preceding this creation from which any merit could arise.
p. 52

Barclay says:

We know what God wants us to do; God has prepared long beforehand the kind of life He wants us to live, and has told us about it in His book and through His Son. We cannot earn God's love; but we can and must show how grateful we are for it, by seeking with our whole hearts to live the kind of life which will bring joy to the heart of God.
p. 123

Barker & Kohlenberger say:

This verse is the outcome of the whole process. It shows what salvation is intended for: to produce the good works that attest its reality. While works play no part at all in securing salvation, Christians will prove their faith by works. Here Paul shows himself at one with James (see Jas 2:14—26).
p. 759

Bickel & Jantz say:**We are God's masterpiece (2:10)**

Christians occasionally have a tendency to take this grace business too far. The way we sometimes figure it, since there's nothing we can do to earn God's salvation, there's nothing we can do to take it away. So we live a life "under grace," pretty much doing what we want to do. Admittedly, we can do nothing to earn salvation, but that doesn't mean we have nothing to do. To the contrary, God saved us through Jesus "so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago" (2:10). William Barclay calls this the "Pauline Paradox." We are not saved *because* of good works, but God "created us anew in Christ Jesus" so we could do good works. God's grace is the *means* of salvation, but good works are the *evidence* of salvation.
pp. 68—69

Bruce says:

The work of grace which has transformed those who were spiritually and morally dead into new men and women, alive with the resurrection life of Christ, is God's work from first to last: "we are his workmanship."

p. 290

Calvin says:

For we are his work. By setting aside the contrary supposition, he proves his statement, that *by grace we are saved*,--that we have no remaining works by which we can merit salvation; for all the good works which we possess are the fruit of regeneration. Hence it follows, that works themselves are a part of grace.

p. 229

Dunnam says:

God has made us what we are; we have absolutely nothing of which to boast. This word "boast" is characteristically Pauline, occurring as a verb or noun over fifty times in his letters. By His own creative imagination, mind, and power, God brought the final person into being; so by the redemptive work of Christ, God makes new persons now.

Redemption means much more than the repair of the ravages and ruptures resulting from humanity's fall. It does not mean the restoration of Eden's innocence, but much more. It is the creation of a new humanity and a new world, which has previously existed only in the mind and purpose of God.

p. 168

Foulkes says:

The work of god for mankind in Christ has been described as the gift of new life, and as the gift of salvation. Now it is shown further that man of himself could have no part in it by its being described as a new creation. *We*, in this new life, this new nature that we have received, are *his workmanship*.

pp. 76—77

Hughes says:

The word “workmanship” comes from the Greek word *poiema*, from which we derive our English word *poem*. The Greek literally means, “that which has been made—a work—a making,” and sometimes it is even translated as “poem.” In one of Sir Walter Scott’s novels he has one of his characters say to another who has just given a beautiful description of the city, “Aha, so thou can’st play the maker yet?” Then Scott adds a footnote explaining that the ancient Scottish word for “poet” is the word “maker,” which is the literal translation of the original Greek.¹ Because of this some have tried to replace “workmanship” (as the NIV renders it) with “poem”—“we are His poem.” But the result is misleading because the Greek *poiema* meant any work of art. It could mean a statue or a song or architecture or a poem or a painting.

The best translation by far is that given by F. F. Bruce: “his work of art, his masterpiece.”² *We are God’s works of art.*
pp. 81—82

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

workmanship—lit., “thing of His making”; “handiwork.” Here the spiritual creation, not the physical, is referred to (vss. 8,9). **created**—having been created (ch. 4:24; Ps. 102:18; Isa. 43:21; II Cor. 5:5, 17). **unto good works**—for good works.” “Good works” cannot be performed until we are new” created unto” them. Paul never calls the works of the law “good works.” We are not *saved by*, but *created unto*, good works.
p. 1284

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

God marks out for each in His purposes beforehand, the particular good works, and the time and way which He sees best. God both makes ready by His providence the opportunities for *the works*, and makes *us* ready for their performance
p. 1284

Lovett says:

NEW CREATION. Once more the genius of God bursts forth. Instead of destroying our old natures, **He uses them.** As soon as a man is saved, he owns two natures, old (inherited from Adam) and new (Christ’s own). It is the struggle

between these two natures that makes for Christian growth. Maturity comes as we decide more and more for Christ and less for self, something which is impossible apart from owning two natures. Inasmuch as the old nature drops off at physical death, the Christian himself is referred to as a “new creature” in Christ (2Cor. 5:17). Of course God plans for Christians to display their new nature and be done with the old, but it is having to determine to do so, moment by moment, that builds us in Christ.

p. 97

O'Brien says:

10 God's salvation has already been described in terms of a resurrection from the dead, a liberation from slavery, and a rescue from condemnation. Now it is spoken of as a new creation, and a further reason (*for*; cf. v. 8) is given why this salvation is not of human origin and therefore cannot be the basis for human boasting. It is *God's* workmanship from first to last; believers *have been created*¹⁰¹ in Christ Jesus for good works. These 'good works' cannot be the ground of our salvation or the subject of our boasting since they are the *goal* of the new creation. They are the fruit of salvation, not its basis or cause. So once again in this magnificent paragraph the apostle makes clear that we are wholly dependent on God's gracious, sovereign activity for our salvation.

p. 178

Patrick & Lowth say:

He hath before prepared us.] i.e. Before we do them, by giving us the knowledge of his will, and the assistance of his Spirit to perform them: i.e. our entire renovation or new creation, by which alone we are enabled to do works good and acceptable in his sight, is from God, who by Christ Jesus hath given us the knowledge of our duty, and by his grace and Spirit have enabled us for the performance of it.

p. 751

Patzia says:

This verse continues to emphasize God's activity and neatly sums up themes developed earlier in the epistle. First, **we are God's workmanship** (*poiema*). This idea echoes the entire aspect of rebirth or re-creation that took place **in Christ Jesus** (2:4—6; cf. 2Cor. 5:17, where Paul writes that “if anyone

is in Christ, he is a new creation”). All of this is God’s doing and eliminates any sense of pride that would come if this were a “self-creation.”

Second, God has **created us in Christ Jesus to do good works** (cf. 1:4, 6, 12, 14, 15). The whole context, which emphasizes God’s gift of grace and faith, as well as the stress upon being God’s creation in Christ, prohibits one from taking **good works** in any meritorious way, even though they are an essential ingredient of one’s new life in Christ. The expression means that believers are created with a view *toward* good works; believers are saved *for* or *unto* good works, not a *by* or *because of* them. Good works are the outcome, not the cause, of salvation.

p. 185

Westcott says:

For it is His workmanship—of His making—we are... The position of the pronoun is emphatic.

p. 33

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CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1:

LESSON #2:

LESSON #3:

LESSON #4:

LESSON #5:

LESSON #6:

LESSON #7:

LESSON #8:

LESSON #9:

LESSON #10:

LESSON #11:

LESSON #12: