

GOD ABOVE ALL

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS

**above all, live
alive**

Ephesians 2: 1-10

the book of ephesians

- Paul wrote this letter to a large network of local churches in Ephesus and the surrounding cities to affirm them in their new identity in Christ as a means of strengthening them in their ongoing struggle with the powers of darkness, to promote a greater unity between Jews and Gentiles within and among the churches of the area, and to stimulate an ever-increasing transformation of their lifestyles into a greater conformity to the purity and holiness that God has called them to display.
 - *New Testament Exegetical Commentary*, Clinton A. Arnold.

ephesians 2:1–10

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

ephesians 2:1–10

and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Before Jesus

- Before Jesus, each person is in a state of death.
 - **Ephesians 2:1–2a:** *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked,*
- This is not to say that an unbeliever cannot be kind, moral, or loving. It simply means that their spiritual present and future is one that has no life.
- “In which you once walked” means that it is simply the way that you lived.

what hold people in bondage?

- Ephesians 2:2–3: *in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*
- Paul gives us three things we were “under control” of that separates people from God.

the world

- *v.2a: in which you once walked, following the course of this world,*
- “This could be interpreted to refer to the various non-Christian religions, ideologies, philosophies, values, and economic systems as well as to the more mundane but the equally powerful influence of peer pressure, fashion, and the media. These influences provide a script for living day-to-day life apart from God and his values.”
 - NTEC, pg. 131

the world

- The world around us can have immense influence over us. A TV, cell phone, music, the education system, advertisements are all speaking to people whether they realize it or not.
- The influence of the world is so great that for the non-Christian these things keep them from seeing the one true God.

satan

- *v.2:2: in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—*
- The book of John references Satan as a ruler of the world and he's the "ruler of demons" in the synoptics.
- In the belief system of Judaism the "air" is a place where demons were active. In the belief system of people of Ephesus there were "aerial spirits" or "aerial powers."

satan

- Paul believes in a spiritual enemy, and he believes that this enemy is active in people.
- Satan can deceive people and lead them away from God and into sin.
- The influence is not excuse. Saying “Satan made me do it” does not mean that you are not responsible for your actions.

the flesh

- *v.2:3: among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*
- “Flesh” is the thoughts, desires, emotions, that have power over people.
- This is not our physical flesh, but our human nature.

bondage

- We must have balance in the way we look at and fight our sin.
- In the language Paul uses he is saying that non-believers are still under these powers. On their own there is nothing anyone can do to escape these three powerful influences.
- But for believers the beautiful truth is that he uses the word, “were.”
 - You “were” dead. Past tense.

but God

- Paul paints the bleak picture of an unredeemed humanity so that the dazzling light of God's goodness shines through.
- **Ephesians 2:4–5:** *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

but God

- God is an over-giver.
 - In chapter 1 He doesn't merely give, he lavishes.
 - He doesn't just save us, He adopts us.
- He does not have just enough mercy, He is rich in it.
 - He has more than enough.
- He doesn't just love us, his love for us great.
- His grace isn't just abundant, it's immeasurable (v.7)

where you sit

- *v.2:6: and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*
- **Ephesians 1:20–23:** *that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

where you sit

- In chapter 1 the sitting of Jesus at the right hand of the Father is not merely positional.
- It is a statement of authority because He is seated above all the evil spiritual forces and everything is placed under His feet.
- Now Paul says that we as believers are seated with Christ in that place and this means He has given us authority.

where you sit

- We are no longer under control of the ways of the world because we sit above the world with Christ.
- We are no longer under the control of Satan because we sit above every power and authority with Christ.
- We are no longer under the control of our flesh because the exaltation is a spiritual act of authority.

where you sit

- Because of Christ, the things that you were formerly under the control of have no power over you.
- The problems and our sin comes when we willingly go back.
- You have every spiritual blessing in Christ. His divine power has given you everything you need. You can be free!

live alive

- Ephesians 2:8–10: *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
- You have been made alive by Jesus.
- Live like you're alive.

live alive

- Paul reminds the Ephesians of the power of the gospel that is found in the power of Jesus and Jesus alone.
- He reaffirms their identity.
 - *You are His workmanship*
- Then He tells them to live believing that God wants to use them every single day.

reflection

- Are you living in bondage to your sin?
- Do you believe that God gives abundant grace for you and for others?
- Do you live alive?