

Ephesians 2:1-13

Ephesians 2:1-13 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, (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 who now works in the sons of disobedience, (3) among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (4) But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, (5) even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (6) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (8) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast. (10) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (11) Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh; who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands; (12) that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. (13) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Questions On The Text

What was our condition without Christ?

Verses 1-3: Prior to Christ, we were in a state of spiritual death because of the sin in which we once walked. The prince (literally, ruler) of the power of the air is Satan who is at work in the sons of disobedience, those who have not received Christ.

While in this condition, we indulged the desires of the mind and the flesh and were children of wrath which means that we were under the judgment of God and destined for hell. God has now reversed this condition and given us life in Christ.

What has God done for us as a result of His love?

Verses 4-6: God's love has been expressed through the richness of His mercy. That mercy was demonstrated in three divine actions. He made us spiritually alive in Christ when we were previously dead in our sin. Second, He raised us up with Christ in resurrection life, and action represented by water baptism.

And third, He made us sit with Christ in the heavenly places. Regardless of our earthly circumstances, our elevated position in Christ is the basis of victorious living.

Why did God show such mercy towards us?

Verse 7: God's purpose for showing such rich mercy is that in the ages to come, i.e. in heaven, the church, a company of redeemed rebels, might be an eternal testimony of the incredible richness of God's grace and kindness in Christ.

What was the means of our salvation?

Verses 8-9: Our salvation was brought about through God's grace and is accessed by faith, and even that faith is the gift of God. Certainly our salvation is not as a result of our own works. Nor is God's grace accessed by our works. If this were so, we would have reason to boast. See Romans 11:6.

What was the purpose of creating us in Christ?

Verse 10: We were created in Christ for good works. This creation is not our original creation as human beings, but rather our re-creation in Christ. Hence, in 2 Corinthians 5:17, we are referred to as a “new creation.” The purpose of this new creation is to produce the good works which God Himself predetermined for us to walk in.

This emphasises yet again that our salvation is by grace alone since the works that we are to do are the result of being recreated by God and not the other way around. This is further emphasised in the Greek, as “His” is the first word in the sentence which indicates that the new creation and the resultant good works are initiated by God.

What was the position of Gentiles prior to salvation?

Verses 11-12: Prior to salvation, Gentiles were the Uncircumcision. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham (see Genesis 17:9-14) and so marked Israel as God’s covenant people. Being called Uncircumcision was a reminder that they were outside of that special covenant.

Second, they were without Christ and therefore had no access to the benefits of the cross. Third, they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The word “commonwealth” is only used once more in the New Testament in Acts 22:28 and refers to citizenship. Outside of Christ, Gentiles have no citizenship in heaven.

Fourth, they were strangers from the covenant of promise. Fifth, they had no hope. And sixth, they were without God. A very bleak picture!

What has God done for the Gentiles?

Verse 13: Those who are in Christ are no longer far away from God, but are now close to Him because of the blood of Jesus.

Further Questions For Discussion:

What desires of the mind or the flesh are commonly indulged by those who don’t know Christ?

How should being seated with Christ in the heavenly places affect our daily living?

Why has God shown mercy towards us?

How is the grace of God accessed?

Why did God recreate us?

What does it mean to be the Uncircumcision?