

EPHESIANS

Bible Study 2:1-10

Questions will be posed and space will be allowed for a written response. Make every effort to answer the questions before looking below for the answer. **The answers will be in bold print at the end of the “questions” section.**

Thanksgiving and Prayer – 2:1-10

This section is a “before” and “after” word picture of the Ephesians and a description of what God did to move them from the “before” to the “after.”

1. What are some of the “before” descriptions mentioned in verses 1-3?
2. What motivates God to come to our rescue? (v. 4)
3. What are the “after” descriptions in verses 5-10?
4. 2:8-9 Paul again piles term upon term to make his point. What is the point that Paul is making?
5. What is your favorite verse/phrase in this section?

Some Answers to the above Questions:

1. Some “before” pictures are...

V. 1 – Dead

Corpses can’t move. Dead people can’t do anything; they are totally unable to help themselves. Such was the spiritual plight in which the Gentile Ephesians had found themselves. If any were inclined to question Paul’s diagnosis regarding their spiritual bankruptcy, he urged them to take a look at their lives and actions. (PBC)

V. 1 – Transgressions

It is “trespass” That evokes the image of making a false step so as to lose one’s footing. In the NT it refers chiefly to an offense against God. (CC)

V. 1 – Sins

It stresses the moral character of sin as a lack of God’s holiness and describes acts that violate his standards. In line with the secular meaning of “failure to reach a goal,” Paul says that “all have sinned and lack the glory of God” (Rom 3:23)—so sin involves not missing a target slightly, but coming nowhere near it. (CC)

V. 2 – Used to live...Followed ways of world

Imagine a person whose entire perspective on life had been shaped only by television programming. What would such a person’s morality be like? His sexual ethics? His attitude toward violence? The value he placed on life? How strongly would he desire to serve others? The world sets standards different from those of Christ. (LL)

V. 2 – and ruler of the air

This evil principle, the spirit of disobedience, is located, as it were in the air, is the spiritual atmosphere wherein they live, move, and breathe. It is nothing but sin, disobedience, unrighteousness that the men of this world spiritually inhale and exhale without ceasing. (Stoeckhardt)

V. 3 – Gratifying cravings

A few examples: Abortion, business corruption, cohabitation, homosexuality, political correctness (there is more than one truth), spiritual laxity among Christians. – The word Paul uses for cravings carries the idea of wanting that which is forbidden, seeking that which is clearly wrong. Before Christ, our glands speak louder than our brains or our conscience. We follow our appetites. (LL)

V. 3 – Our sinful nature

Paul here writes of a fallen nature without God. It is our natural tendency as sinners to do as sinners to do the wrong, to lay ourselves wide open to temptation and sin. Jesus described sins coming “from within, out of men’s hearts.” He said, “All these (sins) come from the inside...(Mark 7:20-23). That warped inside of us is our sinful nature. (LL)

V. 3 – Objects of wrath

Paul paints a grim picture. All people are by nature spiritually dead, totally unable to change their condition. Not only are they unable to improve their lot, but they are the objects of an offended God’s wrath. They can expect nothing but the harshest of punishment – and that for all eternity. (PBC)

Hebrew 10:31 “It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

2. His great love for us (the whole world) – This is agape love. It speaks of a love and affection that is totally one-way. It all comes from God. Nothing in man the sinner, the God-hater, the spiritual corpse, drew God to him. Love resides only in the heart of God.

God is rich in mercy. Mercy is the attitude in the mind and heart of God that moves Him to take pity on us when He sees our lost and wretched state. God’s mercy is his overflowing active compassion, freely exercised, excluding all idea of merit on the part of humans.

3. “After” descriptions are...

V. 5 - We are made alive in Christ

Through Baptism, we were put to death by the judgment of God’s Law and raised as forgiven children (Rom. 6:1-11). (TLSB)

V. 5 Saved by grace

See verse 8 for fuller explanation

V. 6 – Raised us up with Christ

God revived us spiritually

V. 6 – Seated...in heavenly realms

This emphasizes how our union with Christ assures us of our place in heaven. Just as Christ has ascended to sit at the right hand of God the Father, so we can be confident that our place “in the heavenly realms” is secure. (LL)

V. 7 – Incomparable riches...kindness

There is nothing in our present range of experience that can compare with heaven. His riches are a useful goodness and gentleness. They come to us as Jesus dealt with the woman that was caught in sin, with the thief on the cross, with Peter or with Saul.

V. 8 – Saved by grace

It is utter generosity, unselfishness, spontaneous, recklessly prodigal generosity, which acts wholly out of loving concern for the other's need. Man is completely unworthy of the love and help thus offered to him.

V. 8 – Through faith

Grace is the “give” word; faith is the “receive” word. Faith itself is regarded by St Paul as a gift (Phil 1:20). The point of the verse is that the whole process is not something we do for ourselves; God does it all for us.

V. 8 – Not of yourselves

No human effort can contribute to our salvation; it is the gift of God. The Greek literally says, “not from you.” – “You have not done this of your own strength.”

V. 8 – It is a gift of God

Gifts are not earned.

V. 9 – Not of works

The only way good works could save us with a perfect and just God is if our whole life were perfect. God cannot accept a 99 percent morally perfect life. He requires 100 percent perfection.

V. 9 – No one can boast

The idea behind the Greek word for boast is an attitude of self-congratulation and pride.

V. 10 – God's workmanship

The Greek for this word sometimes has the connotation of a “work of art.” Another way of expressing the idea of “workmanship” is to say that someone who has very lovingly crafted something.

V. 10 – Created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

God has much work for us to do. Good works are a crucial aspect of the Christian life. Our good works, however, become an expression of thankfulness for all Christ has done for us, not an attempt to win heaven.

4. There is no other way to be saved than by God's grace through the faith He works in our hearts.