

## REMEMBERING OUR HOPELESS PAST

God's Action in Behalf of the Sinner: Ephesians 2:1-10

<sup>1</sup>And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

<sup>2</sup>Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

<sup>3</sup>Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

<sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

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

<sup>6</sup>And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

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

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

<sup>9</sup>Not of works, lest any man should boast.

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



## **REMEMBERING OUR HOPELESS PAST**

God's Action in Behalf of the Sinner: Ephesians 2:21-10

### **1A. The Sinner's State by Nature: 2-10**

- 1b. The former condition: 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

"And you" is a commentary on 1:19 and shows that what happened to Christ in 1:20 has also happened to them: "raising him up" v. 20 ". . .and you" 2:1.

- 1c. Their state:

The term "dead" refers to spiritual death, describing the complete absence of spiritual life. The term death whether in the physical or spiritual realm, speaks of separation and incapacity.

- 2c. Their sins:

- 1d. The term "trespasses" refers to a violation of God's law as separate acts—**desire of the flesh**.

- 2d. The term "sins" refers to all kinds of sins—**desire of the mind**.

The definite article for each of those two terms refers to well-known sins the Ephesians practiced in their fallen state.

- 2b. The conduct: 2:2-3a

Spiritually the unsaved are dead towards God but actually walk continually in evil.

- 1c. They follow the course of this world: the term *aion* (age), speaks of the basic philosophy or satanic world, "the spirit of this age."

- 2c. They follow the prince of demons:

Satan is the prince of demons, (Mk. 3:22; Mt. 12:26).

The term "works" (literally energizes), is used only of supernatural activity in the NT: Prayer, God, Satan.

The term *aer* speaks of the atmosphere.

- 3c. They follow the desires of the flesh and mind:

- 1d. Flesh refers to the physical matter of the body, John 1:14, or the lower, old nature.

- 2d. Mind (*dianoion*) refers to the various impulses of the mind.

The problems for the unsaved are thus external (1c), infernal (2c) and internal (3c).

3b. The fatal consequence: 2:3b

The term wrath refers to God's attitude toward sin. The phrase "by nature" refers to innately, naturally as opposed to what is acquired.

The term "we all" (3a) means no exception.  
The term wrath (3b) means no escape.

C. H. Spurgeon said, "He who doubts human depravity had better begin to study himself."

**2A. The Saint's Standing in Grace: 2:4-10**

1b. The source of our standing: 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he has loved us

1c. Being "rich" is a present participle and shows that this is an intrinsic quality of God.

2c. "Mercy" emphasizes the person's misery: man's misery calls forth God's mercy.

Mercy refers to God's withholding from us what we do deserve.  
Grace refers to God giving us what we don't deserve.  
Grace can be defined as the unmerited, unmeritable and ill-merited favor of God.

3c. The term "loved us" refers to both Jews and Gentiles.

2b. The change in our standing: 2:5-6

1c. Our former condition: 5

We were dead in offenses. The word "and" *kai*, should best be rendered "indeed."

2c. Our present position: 6

1d. We were made alive:

This Greek term, *sunzoopoiesen*, was probably coined by Paul. Physical and spiritual life are closely linked here. Three important actions are mentioned:  
Quickened: vivification  
Raised: resurrection  
Seated: ascension

2d. We were enthroned:

The blessings of verses 5 and 6 are an explication of some of the spiritual blessings of 1:3:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Philippians 3:20 speaks of our citizenship which is now in heaven.

- 3b. The purpose for our standing: 2:7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

The term "show" is in the middle voice, referring to the fact that He saves us for His own purpose and His own glory.

Many believers say they do not know why God saved them. Here is the answer, to bring glory to Himself.

- the supreme display of God's love is the cross.
- the supreme display of God's power is the resurrection and ascension.
- the supreme display of God's grace is bringing men to glory.

When God glorifies Himself, He displays any or all of His attributes, in this case He shows His attribute of grace.

- 4b. The possibility of our standing: 2:8-10

What follows is one of the best-known salvation passages in the New Testament. Every Christian should be able to quote John 3:16, Acts 16:31 and Eph. 2:8-9 when asked how a person can be saved.

- 1c. The origin of our standing: 8-9 GRACE

1d. Grace is the source of our salvation,

2d. Faith is the means of our salvation.

"This" "it is the gift of God" has as an antecedent the whole concept of salvation, including FAITH. "The gift of God" is emphatic. Grace and faith in salvation are God's gift. Paul and other biblical writers make it clear that faith is a gift worked by God (Col. 2:12) "energized"—a divine activity, John 6:44, drawn; John 6:65, given of my Father; Phil. 2:13; John 1:13; Rom. 9:15.

Calvin said it well: "***Faith is a gift worked by God and willed by man.***"

3d. Works are ineffective for salvation:

Works are the result of salvation.

2c. The outcome of salvation: 10 GOOD WORKS

1d. We are God's "workmanship," His *poiema*, His poem.

2d. Our good works are ordained by God.

--good works follow salvation.

--there is no room for boasting.

--God's plan is a prepared plan, and we must plan our part in it.

--God has a path fitted for every individual.

3A. The Corruption of Sin:

The sin nature in man leads to a condition which theologians refer to as total depravity.

1b. The description of total depravity:

1c. Total depravity does not mean:

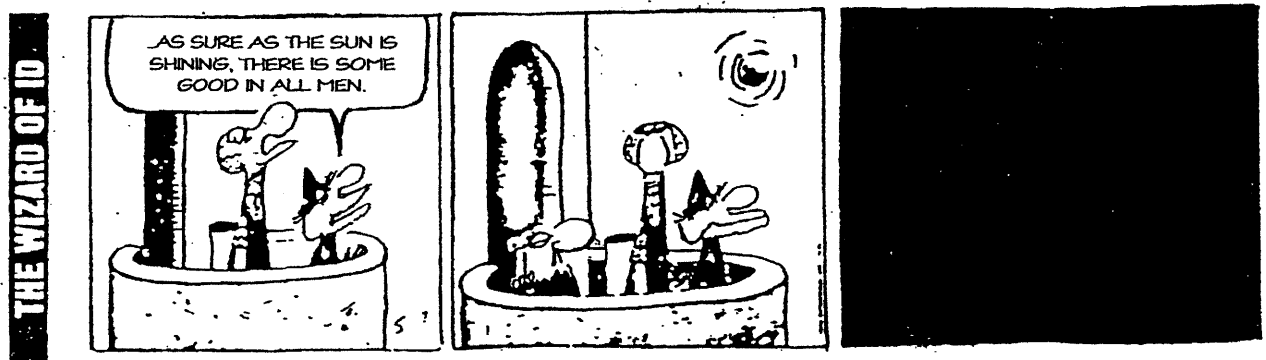
- 1d. That every man is as wicked as he can be.
- 2d. That everyone will indulge in every form of evil
- 3d. That man can do no good.

2c. Total depravity is "the unmeritoriousness of man in the sight of God." (C. C. Ryrie

It means that the depravity is total:

- 1d. It affects every individual
- 2d. It affects every aspect of his being.

Ryrie is correct in observing "Total depravity must always be measured against God's holiness. Relative goodness exists in people. They can do good works which are appreciated by others. But nothing that anyone can do can gain salvational merit or favor in the sight of a holy God." (*Basic Theology*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986, 221).



2b. The denial of total depravity:

Mal Couch, President of Tyndale Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas, bemoans the fact that among evangelicals the biblical doctrine of man's total depravity is no longer held as firmly as it once was. His incisive comments are worth quoting at length:

As Evangelicals move further away from the solid study of the Word of God, there will come about an accelerated slippage away from the crucial doctrines of Christianity. This is presently taking place in our own camp with those who are now denying the doctrine of Total Depravity, including the fact that lost humanity is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph.

2:1,5). Modern humanism coming into our Evangelical circles wants to soften this vital truth. Many of our present day theologians attended what were at one time good seminaries. But those schools have now shifted!

They are now replacing this doctrine of Depravity with warmed over old line Pelagianism and Arminianism that says, man can to some degree cooperate and help God out in the salvation process. In the history of theology, when God's sovereignty is emphasized and taught, the greatness of God goes up, and the truth of the depravity and lostness of humanity becomes more certain. When the Lord is dethroned, His omnipotence and sovereignty is lowered and the spiritual ability and moral "goodness" of humanity is elevated.

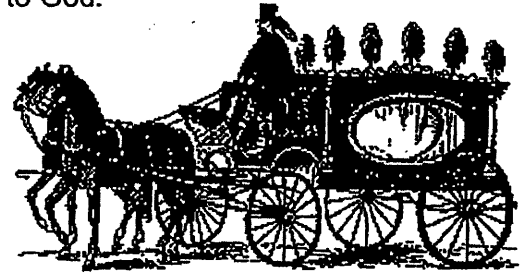
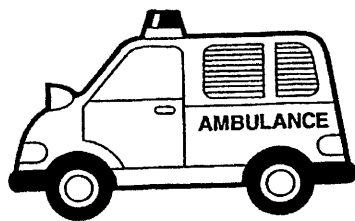
We are now into such a theological freefall brought on by the death of solid, spiritual, and Evangelical scholarship that is repudiating such doctrines as the spiritual deadness of mankind.

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How foolish of some Evangelical so-called scholars to deny the captivity of the will, and in turn, deny that the lost are held captive being dead in trespasses and sins! They want to give the will some power, choice, and authority. Paul is making it very clear that the lost are no longer human as God intended before the Fall. He writes that "we existed in the past as natural (*phusei*) children "related to" wrath (*orges*), i.e., due God's wrath. . . ("Dead in Trespasses and Sins: Ephesians 2:1, 5, *The Conservative Theological Journal*, August 2005, Vol. 9, #27, 225, 232).

3b. The defense of total depravity:

In Ephesians 2 the Apostle Paul asserts that every man before redemption is dead in spiritual and moral ability. The natural man does not need, figuratively speaking, an ambulance but a hearse. In their dead state, humans are totally given over to sin without the power to return to God.



It is worthwhile to list the comments of several theologians below:

1c. Ernest Best:

"People are born dead and remain so until they come to believe (Calvin). Those who are dead in this way cannot come to life of their own accord; only God can make them live; so the passage goes on to speak of the way God gives life (vv 5, 6)" (*Ephesians*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998, 201).

## UNDERSTANDING OUR SALVATION

1. What one word best describes our condition before salvation?

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2. What was your part in salvation?

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3. What was the source of your salvation?

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4. What aspect is excluded from our obtaining salvation?

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5. What is God's purpose for saving us?

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6. What is God's purpose for us in the future?

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7. What has God ordained for every believer?

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8. Am I fulfilling God's purpose for my life?

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