

EPHESIANS 2:2  
The Wonderful Work of Salvation  
Message 35  
Oct. 2/2011

INTRO: We will not spend much time in introducing Ephesians 2 tonight. Let me just repeat how I see the flow of the text following on from chapter 1. Let me read these verses again, from 1:22 through 2:3, as I did in the last message, "And He (God) put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, even you who were dead in trespasses and sins, 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, 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 others!"

Now I shared how I see chapter 2 as a digression from his account of his prayers for them which he began in 1:15. And as I see it, this chapter could be put in as a parenthesis, an additional thought that is sidetracked from his prayers. And in this first digression, he reminds the Ephesians of what they were like before they were saved and before God began to fill all in all in them. First, they were dead. Spiritually dead. Cut off from God and deep in sin and filled with sin. So he says they were dead in trespasses and sins.

They had lived a life, that in the eyes of their Creator, fell far from what they were created for. Where they should have stood for truth and right, they fell, and so they were trespassers of the will and character of God. And they were dead in sins. They missed the mark of the will and character of God in their conduct. They were sinners! And in these trespasses and sins, they were cut off from God. They were, in the words of Paul, without God and without hope in the world.

Then one day, here came this little preacher, you can read the account in Acts 19, and he preached the message of 'the way'. Jesus is the way, he said. Now I tell you this that though it was a great and magnificent city, it was steeped in idolatry and sin. And there was a silversmith there that made silver shrines of Diana, a false goddess. And Paul

preached boldly and said, "These are no gods." And he preached the true way to them. Well, he created no small stir, but he did leave some believers behind. And now, he is writing to these believers to remind them of their own past, and what a glorious thing it is that God is filling all in all in them.

And now, in chapter 2 Paul is marveling that God is filling even them, these once wicked Ephesian Gentiles. And he reminds them that they were once dead. And he briefly pointed out to them the sphere of their death. It was in trespasses and sins. But now he will show them the path of this death. And he begins in 2:2a to show them the cause of the death they had once lived in, and that is because they had once walked in these trespasses and sins. Paul says they once walked in trespasses and sins, that is why they were dead in them. And now, he will show them the sphere in which they walked.

b) The cause of this death (2:2-3)

(1) Their life conduct (2a)

So, these Ephesian believers, who were now Christians and filled with all the fullness of God, had once been dead in trespasses and sins. That is true of many of us. We too are Gentiles. We too were dead in trespasses and sins. And Paul will now briefly share with them, maybe by way of reminder, of what their life conduct was like before they were saved. That is, how they once walked. So he says that before they were saved, they walked in trespasses and sins. That is all you can do when you are unsaved. No amount of reformation can change that.

But now note first the description of the sphere in which they walked. It was, and I quote, "...according to the *course of this world*.." Now the phrase, 'according to the course of this

world' is so far reaching that a whole book would hardly suffice, and I am not exaggerating. I would translate this phrase literally as, "according to the age of this world." Both the word 'age' *aiwn*, and world, *kosmos*, need much explanation.

So, let me deal with the second important word in this clause first, so we might get a better understanding of the first word, *course* or *age* or *aiwn*. The text says they walked according to the course of *this world*. The word *world* can be used in several different ways. It basically means orderly arrangement. When Peter says in 1 Peter 3:3 to women, "Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel..." that word *adornment* is the word here translated world. It means orderly arrangement. When women are concerned about their orderly arrangement, they are to put emphasis on the internal, rather than the external.

Second, the word *world* may also speak of the earth, though it seldom does (John 21:25). But it is used more often for lost mankind. So John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world..." This is a reference to lost, sinful mankind. Jesus said in John 15:19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." This is lost sinful mankind. The use of the word world in

Ephesians 2:2 is that of lost, sinful mankind.

Now that we know what the word world refers to, we want to consider this word, *aiwn*, translated 'course'. This word is used 128 times in the NT. 71 times it is translated as ever or forever or any words made up with ever. Another 12 times it is used with words translated as never, or evermore, or eternal. But, 38 times it is translated 'world'. Many times when translators try to help God make sense, they unwittingly cover important truths. That is most unfortunate.

Let me give you an example, 5 times the KJV translates the Greek phrase, the *aiwn* to come as the world to come. But *aiwn* does not mean *world*. *Kosmos* means world. All five times the NKJV rightly translated it 'the age to come'. Look at Luke 18 for an example (read verses 29-30). Now the Scriptures, and the Jews correctly so, divide time into two ages. There is this age and the age to come. So turn with me to Matthew 12 (read 31-32). There we have those two divisions. Now to the Jews, the age to come begins with the millennium. I think it may refer to the time of the new heavens and the new earth.

Now I want you to note that in Luke 18:30, this present time, is contrasted with the age to come. Now there are also two words for time in the NT. One is *kairos* and one is *chronos*. We get our word chronology from this word for

time and it refers to quantity of time. Kairos, however, refers more to quality of time. Let me explain. If we speak of harvest season, we would use kairos, not chronos. Harvest does not always happen at the same chronos. It is not always August the 10th. It depends on the season, not the chronology of time. It depends on the kind of time, not the number of months and days that have gone by.

Now I want you to notice that in Luke 18:30 it says this, "...who shall not receive many times more in this present time (kairos), and in the age (aiwn) to come, eternal life." Now I want you to notice something very important. The word age, is aiwn, and the word translated eternal is aiwnios life, which is from the same root word.

Now I have never given you much history of what happened when I decided to leave the Bergthaler Conference. I do want to share one part of that with you. There was a certain doctrine that we all disagreed with except for one pastor. We did not agree with the doctrine of OSAS. Now there is an argument that this particular teaching uses in its favor and it goes like this: *A Christian cannot lose his salvation because God promises the believer eternal life and if you can lose it, it surely was not eternal.* From when I was a young believer, I met that argument. And I could not answer it for some time.

Now in the conference, one of the

pastors said to me on a ministerial meeting, "Now you have said sometimes that eternal life speaks of quality of life, not quantity of life. What do you mean by that?" Since it was not appropriate to get into that topic at that time, I left it until when the devotional happened to be my turn and I took time to explain it there.

When I was taken to task by the conference, of the four petty items held against me, this explanation was on the top of the agenda, "1. Doctrinal issues, i.e., John 3:16." What that means is they took issue with my explanation of the phrase eternal life in John 3:16.

You see, the phrase "eternal life" in Luke 18:30 is the very same as that which is translated "eternal life" in John 3:16. Now the argument of the OSAS teaching is that if you have eternal life, quantity eternal, you cannot lose your salvation because if you do you did not have eternal life. I want to give you some of what I gave on that devotional.

Here is a quote from the TWOT. It says, "The LXX generally translates *olam* by *aiwn* which has essentially the same range of meaning. That neither the Hebrew nor the Greek word in itself contains the idea of endlessness is shown by the fact that they sometimes refer to events or conditions that occurred at a definite point in the past, and also by the fact that sometimes it is thought desirable to repeat

the word, not merely saying 'forever,' but 'forever and ever'" (TWOT II:673 pgph 2). So this writer says that neither the Hebrew word 'olam' and the Greek equivalent contain the idea of endlessness.

Henry C. Theissen, in his systematic theology says, "The eternal life received at salvation is more than eternal existence; it is rather a quality of life, a richness of life in the presence of Christ" (page 340).

A Baptist writer by name of Boyce W. Blackwelder says, "The expression refers basically to the quality of life" (Pg. 73). And again, he writes, "Eternal life is not merely a matter of endless existence; it is a quality of life, the God-kind of life. All men, by their very nature are immortal. Likewise Satan and the demons have endless existence. The New Testament does not equate never-ending being with eternal life. Only Christians, that is, individuals who have received Jesus Christ and are trusting in Him, have eternal life, because it is experienced by faith. It is redemption through and fellowship with the Son of God and with the Father. Our Lord defines it in John 17:3: 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent'" (pgs. 104-105).

J.L. Stauffer, in his booklet, "The Eternal Security Teaching"

quotes C.I. Scofield of the famous Scofield reference Bible like this: "Eternal life is a phrase of quality of life, rather than of duration merely."

So in Luke 18:30, the phrase, 'this present time' speaks of a quality of life in this present age and the phrase, 'life everlasting' speaks of a quality of life in the life to come, as I see it. We will not deal here with the word for 'life' in the phrase eternal life, though it is important too. However, we need to understand the word 'age' in order to understand our text in Ephesians 2.

Now, if my conclusion on the meaning of the words translated eternal life is right, that means when I say I have eternal life, the quality of life I live must show that. Nobody can see that I have eternal life as far as duration is concerned. But they can see if I have it by the kind of life I live.

So, now we are ready to look at Ephesians 2:2 and the fact that before they were born again, their quality of life was according to the course, or age of this world. What Paul is talking about is their identification with the world in its sinful ways. They were walking according to the 'age' of this world. They were following the spirit of this present kosmos (1 Cor. 2:12).

So let me tell you how I see the use of Paul's phrase, that they



walked 'according to the age of this world' or according to the course of this world. This age, the age we are in is an age that never stands still. It is always on the move. There is always that which is in and that which is out. There is always a way of identifying with this age and not identifying with it. Trespasses and sin always put us in with the world. That is why the world loves its own. But, there is also always a way of identifying with God, and it is never the way of trespasses and sin. It is the way of righteousness, holiness and godliness. And the world hates that way.

Consider for a moment with me Youceff in Iran, whom we have been praying for. He is in prison for what he believes. He has to believe a certain way. And if he believes in Christ, he is to be killed. So they have given him the chance to recant, or he will have to die, unless God intervenes. Have you asked yourselves, what makes these Muslims like this? Why can they not see how ridiculous their way is. Conversion by force. Horrible. But behind that is the highly organized demonic world.

In the ever changing 'age' or 'course' of this world, mankind is ever adapting. It is the way of darkness. It may be in nicely dressed religion, but it is still the way of darkness. William Hendriksen in his commentary on Ephesians starts his introduction like this, "Loathsome wickedness marked the world of Paul's day

(Eph. 2:2). And I say, "Loathsome wickedness marks the world of our day."

The age of this world has many ways of manifesting itself and just as many attractions. Our hearts naturally gravitate to the ways of the world. You can watch this in ever changing worldliness of dress and hair styles or in many other ways.

Now it is amazing that sometimes even fallen humans rise up against the ridiculousness of modern fads. I was sent an e-mail that said that officials in Albany Georgia banned what they called 'saggy pants'. In less than a year they collected \$4,000.00. Here is what the article said further, "Officials say the ordinance bans anyone from wearing pants or skirts more than 7.6 centimetres below the top of the hips, exposing the skin or undergarments. First-time offenders face a \$25 fine. On further offences, the fine can rise to \$200. The ordinance also allows 40 hours of community service to be completed in lieu of fines."

Is it not incredible how man's fallen hearts just want to be *in*. It may not only be on how we dress, it may be in how we talk or express ourselves. There is no place where the age of this world does not have an alternative path to godliness. Nor does worldliness necessarily dislike religion. No, it may even thrive there. Nor is worldliness discouraged when one religious

group cuts the other one down. We might think the devil is divided against himself, but in every way he gains. Only when righteousness, truth, godliness or holiness and such like are at work, does he begin to lose. Such are the ways of the age of this world. So the song writer says, "Is this vile world a friend to bring us on to God?"

So the manner of the Ephesian's conduct before they were saved was that they walked according to the course of this world. But now, secondly, it was according to the prince of the power of the air. It is very easy to read over a phrase like this and go right on and never understand what is going on. What is the meaning of these words?

Well, let us look first at who this prince is. Now the word for 'prince' is archwn. It is a word used for a ruler. The Sanhedrin, the 70 of Israel were called rulers. Magistrates are called rulers. An archwn is an authority ruler over people. Consider John 3:1 in this light. Now Nicodemus was likely one of the Sanhedrin.

Now our text speaks of the prince of the power of the air. Who is this. Well, from the context we can clearly tell that it refers to the devil. It says the Ephesians, before they were saved, walked according to the course of this age, according to prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience. Now the spirit that now works in the sons

of disobedience is the devil. That much is easy. Now look at Mark 3:22 (read). Look also at John 14:30 (read).

So, the prince of the power of the air is Satan. He is the head over all demons. But how is he the prince of the power of the air? Well, consider second, the word 'power'. Now there are two related words translated power. There is *dunamis* and there is *exousia*. *Dunamis* speaks of ability, and *exousia* speaks of authority. The word used here is *exousia*. He is the prince of the authority of the air. By sinning, man has put himself under the authority of Satan. So he sets the age of this world and man is smitten under his authority. And man cannot come free. He has come under this demonic authority.

Now the most difficult phrase here is 'of the air'. He is the prince of authority of the air. What can be the meaning of this? Does he have authority over the air to do with it as he wishes? Does it mean he is the authority of the air so that the sound waves come under his authority? Does that mean radio and television are wrong because the air waves are under the authority of Satan?

This is truly a difficult phrase. I ran into one brick wall after another as I studied this. Then I began to study the word air and it seemed I could not get anywhere until I studied the word air in Revelation. Turn with me to Revelation 16:17 (read). "Then

the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, 'It is done!'" Now listen to Adam Clarke's commentary: "To signify that this plague was to be widely diffused, and perhaps to intimate that pestilences and various deaths would be the effect of this vial. But possibly air in this place may have some emblematical meaning."

Matthew Poole says, "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air: I take this to be best interpreted (as Mr. Mede doth it) by the power of the air, of which Satan is called the prince, #Eph 2:2, that is, upon all the children of the devil, that had so long given disturbance to the church of Christ." And commentator after commentator connects the word 'air' here with Ephesians 2:2.

But listen now to John Gill's commentary: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, &c. Or "upon the air," as the Alexandrian copy, Syriac and Arabic versions, read; by which is meant the kingdom of Satan, he being the prince of the power of the air, #Eph 2:2 not that he has power over the air, to raise or lay winds and storms in it at pleasure; but he is so called because he is the prince of that posse of devils, the principalities and powers of darkness, that have their dwelling in the air; hence the air, encompassing the whole earth, stands for the kingdom of

Satan all the world over: and this vial differs from all the rest; that whereas the rest only affect some part or branch of the antichristian state, this will affect all the remains of the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan powers, gathered and united together at Armageddon; and the pouring out of this vial is the execution of divine wrath and vengeance upon them all at once; and the effects of this vial will not only reach to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, and their armies, or the united forces of the remains of Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans, who will be slain, and their flesh given to the fowls of the air; and not only to the beast and false prophet, who will be taken in this battle, and cast alive into the lake of fire, which is expressive both of their temporal and eternal punishment, #Re 19:17-21 but to the binding of Satan upon the second coming of Christ, of which notice is before given, #Re 16:15 and even to the destruction of Gog and Magog at the end of the thousand years' reign; yea, to the casting of the devil into everlasting fire, since this vial is the last plague, in which the wrath of God is filled up, and so brings to the end of all things, #Re 20:1-10. The first accomplishment of this vial will be the decisive battle at Armageddon, when the remains of all Christ's and his church's enemies will have a total defeat; and this will be the third and last woe, which will utterly destroy those that have destroyed the earth, Pagans,

Papists, and Mahometans, even all the open enemies of Christ, so that nothing will lie in the way of his kingdom; now will the spiritual reign of Christ, which has been gradually advancing by the pouring out of each vial, be in its full glory: but though antichrist will be no more, and Satan will have no more in form an open kingdom upon earth; yet, towards the close of this reign, great lukewarmness and coldness will seize professors of religion, and immorality and profaneness will abound again; which will bring on the times of the coming of the son of man; who, upon his personal descent from the third heaven into the air, will drive Satan and his posse of devils from their territories, and quickly will the general conflagration begin, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and which is no inconsiderable part of the pouring out of this vial into the air."

And so, in brief, Gill's definition of the prince of the power of the 'air' is that, "...he is so called because he is the prince of that posse of devils, the principalities and powers of darkness, that have their dwelling in the air; hence the air, encompassing the whole earth, stands for the kingdom of Satan all the world over..." Now what is significant in Revelation 16 is that in verses 17-21, we have the seventh and last angel pouring out the last of seven vials of wrath. Look at 16:2

(read). The first vial of God's wrath is poured out on the earth. In verse 3, the second vial is poured out upon the sea. In verse 4, the third is poured out on the rivers and fountains of water. In verse 8, the fourth is poured out on the sun. In verse 10, the fifth is poured out on the seat of the beast, and the sixth is poured out on the Euphrates River and it is dried up to make way for the armies to make their way to Israel for that final great battle, that battle of Armageddon. But notice in verses 13-14, the spiritual powers that are activated out of the mouth of the devil, the dragon; the beast, the antichrist, and the false prophet. What we have here is tremendous powers of Satan released to wreak havoc.

Now, what is interesting is that it is right here that the seventh vial of God's wrath is poured out, and it is poured out upon the air. It is noteworthy to consider part of Gill's comment here, "whereas the rest (i.e. the other six vials) only affect some part or branch of the antichristian state, this will affect all the remains of the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan powers, gathered and united together at Armageddon; and the pouring out of this vial is the execution of divine wrath and vengeance upon them all at once; and the effects of this vial will not only reach to the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, and their armies, or the united forces of the remains of Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans,



who will be slain, and their flesh given to the fowls of the air; and not only to the beast and false prophet, who will be taken in this battle, and cast alive into the lake of fire, which is expressive both of their temporal and eternal punishment, #Re 19:17-21 but to the binding of Satan upon the second coming of Christ, of which notice is before given, #Re 16:15..." What he is saying is that this vial is not only poured out on Satan's human kingdom, but also on the whole demonic realm in the air!

Now the Ephesian believers were those who had once walked in trespasses and sins. They had walked according to the course of this world which was ordered by the prince of the power of the air, and now we have added a clause, "...the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience." The NKJV calls them the 'sons of disobedience.' The word 'sons' is better than 'children'. However, if I were to translate the word translated disobedience, I would translate it *unbelief*. The phrase would then read, "the sons of unbelief." The original word is 'apeitheis'. The root of this word is, 'peithw' which basically to persuade, and then to be persuaded. This word is negated by the word 'a'. That would mean not to believe, thus it literally means to not be persuaded. In the KJV, this word has 4 times been translated as unbelief, and 3 times to be disobedient. The Online Bible program then says it signifies obstinacy or opposition

to the divine will.

CONCL: Now let me wrap this whole thing up by giving you a translation of this passage reflecting my understanding of it, "And God put all things under Christ's feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all, even you Ephesians, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the age of this world, according to the Devil, prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 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 others!"

Here is the miracle of it all. Jesus, who fills all in all was filling even these Ephesians who once were dead in trespasses and sins, in which they walked according to the course of this world which operates according to the prince of the authority of the air, that great and wicked spirit, Satan, the one who now works in the sons of disobedience.

So, what we have is that these Ephesians who once also were Satan's sons of disobedience, are now those who are being filled by all the fullness of their Lord, Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, of which they are part! And if you are one of those in a country like Iran, you can lose your life for it!