

Ephesians 2:1-10 Answers
Saved by Grace through Faith for Good Works

Overview:

The letter to the saints in Ephesus can be divided into two parts:

Chapters 1-3 are theological (doctrine/belief); chapters 4-6 are practical (duty/behavior)

Chapters 1-3 concern the Wealth of the Believer; chapters 4-6 concern the Walk of the Believer.

******What did God do for us when we were dead in our trespasses and sins (2:1-10)?** Even though we were dead in sin, God made us alive in Christ (2:5). This was totally the result of God's mercy (2:4) grace (2:5). It was not our own doing (2:8). It was a gift (2:8).

In general, when you think about something being dead, what does that mean (2:1)? The Greek word for "dead" (2:1) is *nekros* (necrotic) and means lifeless, inanimate, destitute of power, inactive, inoperative.

Examples: A dead dog cannot respond to external stimulus. You may call his name, but he will not come. You may hold his favorite food up to his nose, but he will not eat it. You may kick him, but he will not run. He is unresponsive. He is dead! A ship that is dead in the water has lost its power; it is not moving.

1. What does it mean to be dead in trespasses and sins (2:1)? See *Romans 6:17, 8:7-8, 1 Corinthians 2:14*. Those who are dead in their sins do not have the ability to escape their sins and the trespasses. They cannot do anything about it. They cannot break the cycle. Spiritually, a person dead in trespasses and sins might be compared to a spiritual zombie; humanly speaking, there is no remedy, no hope.

ESV **Romans 6:17** . . . you . . . were once slaves of sin . . .

ESV **Romans 8:7-8** . . . the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

ESV **1 Corinthians 2:14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Sick or Dead? Some people see lost man as a sick person on a death bed. A miracle cure called the Gospel is held up to his lips. If he drinks it he will be healed. If he refuses it he will die. The choice is belongs with the sick man. Contrary to this sick man imagery, the actual picture is of a morgue, not a hospital. The man is not sick, he is dead. He cannot respond to any medicine. Unless God resurrects a corpse, there is no hope. Thus Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him . . ." (John 6:44).

2. What trespasses did we commit (2:1)? See *Romans 2:14-15, 5:20*. “Trespasses” is from *paraptoma* and refers to a false step or a misdeed. God has boundaries for right and wrong and we have stepped over the line.

Example: God set a boundary for Adam regarding what he could and could not eat. Adam trespassed when he went out of bounds and ate the forbidden fruit. Our problem is not fruit per se; it is disobedience to God in any of a number of other areas.

God gave the Jews the Law of Moses in order to show them their sin:

ESV **Romans 5:20** . . . the law came in to increase the trespass . . .

God gave the Gentiles a conscience to condemn them:

ESV **Romans 2:14-15** For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them

3. How would you define the word “sins” (2:1)? See *Romans 1:29-31, 3:23*. “Sins” is from *hamartia* and originally meant “to miss the mark”. If you were shooting at a target and missed the bull’s eye, you missed the mark. Applied to a spiritual situation, we have missed the mark of God’s holiness. It is a departure from the way of righteousness (BAGD, p 43).

Sin is the distance between you and God’s glory:

ESV **Romans 3:23** . . . all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .

4. It says in 2:1 that we were *dead* in trespasses in sins. It also states that we once *walked* in trespasses and sins (2:2). **What does it mean to walk in trespasses and sins (2:2)?** We were dead men walking! Walked is from *peripateo*, to walk around in, to take full advantage of opportunities offered. We lived in sin (or more aptly, we really wallered in it).

Taking 2:1-3 together, what traits characterize someone who is dead in trespasses and sins (2:1)? A person who is dead in trespasses and sins follows the course of the world and the devil and is characterized by disobedience and living in the passions of the flesh. He is liable to God’s wrath.

Examples of sin:

ESV **Romans 1:29-31** They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

5. What is the course of this world (2:2)? See *John 14:16-17, 1 John 2:15-16, 5:19*. The course of this world is not good; it has set a course straight for hell. The word world (*kosmos*), when used in a negative sense, is used in the Bible to refer to any system of thought that sets itself up in opposition to God. It is all that is hostile to God, lost in sin, “wholly at odds with anything divine; ruined and depraved” (BAGD, p. 446).

ESV 1 John 2:15-16 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions - is not from the Father but is from the world.

ESV 1 John 5:19 . . . the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

ESV John 14:16-17 . . . I will ask the Father, and he will give you . . . the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

6. Who is the prince of the power of the air (2:2)? See *Matthew 9:34*. The prince of the power of the air is none other than old slew foot himself: Satan, the sinister minster of evil.

Joke: If you ever have a famous radio ministry, be sure the emcee does not introduce you as the prince of the power of the air!

What did Paul mean by “air” in 2:2? Satan has been cast of heaven and he is not yet in Hell. The word “air” here is used figuratively to refer to everything in between heaven and hell.

Satan bound? Some Christians understand the book of Revelation to teach that Satan is now, during the church, bound so that he can no longer deceive the nations. However, although limited, he is still alive and well on planet earth, tempting and confusing people.

7. What spirit is now at work in the sons of disobedience (2:2)? This is not the Holy Spirit! It is a spirit of anti-Christ, an evil spirit, an unclean spirit. We are bad enough in our fallen state, but to add insult to injury, Satan and his demons are at work to push us into even greater sin.

Notes: 1.) That we were the sons of disobedience means that our mother is disobedience and we are her offspring (Hendriksen, p. 114). 2.) “Disobedience” is from *apeitheia* which literally means, “not persuaded.”

8. What does it mean to live in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and mind (2:3)? See *Genesis 6:5, 8:21*. The word flesh is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to corrupt human nature (Hendriksen, p. 115). While it can be a hedonistic lifestyle of carnal pleasure, it can also be living a life purely on the natural plane, almost like animals do.

ESV Romans 7:18 . . . I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.

ESV Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

ESV **Genesis 8:21** . . . the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.

9. What does it mean to be “by nature children of wrath” (2:3)? *See Psalm 51:5, John 3:36, Romans 1:18, 2:8, 5:12-18, Ephesians 5:6.* It means that we, in our natural state, are deserving of God’s wrath for our sins. Though one man, Adam, we all were made sinners and deserving of wrath. We are born in sin and liable to judgment.

ESV **Romans 5:12** . . . sin came into the world through one man . . .

ESV **Romans 5:15** . . . many died through one man's trespass . . .

ESV **Romans 5:16** . . . For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation . . .

ESV **Romans 5:17** . . . because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man . . .

ESV **Romans 5:18** . . . one trespass led to condemnation for all men . . .

ESV **Psalm 51:5** . . . I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

ESV **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

ESV **Romans 1:18** . . . the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men . . .

ESV **Romans 2:8** . . . for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

ESV **Ephesians 5:6** . . . the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

10. In developing a biblical anthropology, what is the significance of the phrase, “like the rest of mankind” (2:3)? *See Romans 3:10-12.* Sin is a universal problem. There are no exceptions.

ESV **Romans 3:10-12** . . . None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.

Total Depravity: The doctrine of man’s natural sinfulness is called total depravity. This does not mean that man is as bad as he possibly could be. There is obviously relative good among non-Christians. We are dead with respect to doing good spiritually. Sin has infected and effected every aspect of the mind, will and emotions to such an extent that on our own we will never trust in Christ for righteousness. Perhaps instead of total depravity it could be called radical depravity.

Example: Imagine a glass of wine with a few drops of deadly poison in it. The whole glass is not poison, but the whole glass is poisoned.

Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!

Ephesians 2:4-5 contains what are arguably the two most important words in theology. Can you guess what those two words are? (Reread). The two words are “but God”. Those two words change *everything*. We were dead, “but God” intervened and make us alive.

11. Based on 2:4-5, what caused God to make us alive from the dead? It was because of His rich mercy, and His great love, 1:4.

12. What is mercy (2:4)? Mercy is compassion or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one’s power. Mercy is not getting something bad that you deserve.

Example: A convicted criminal might throw himself on the mercy of the court that just found him guilty.

13. According to 2:4, why did God show rich mercy toward us? God showed mercy toward us because of His great love for us. It was not because of anything good in us or anything good we had done. God loves us because He loves us. He decided to love us despite the fact that we had arrayed ourselves as His enemies and were dead in our trespasses and sins. You don’t really appreciate God’s mercy and love until you understand the depth of your sins.

“Together with Christ”: Notice that we are made alive “together with Christ” (2:5). The same resurrection power that resurrected Jesus from the dead (1:20) also makes us alive.

The Gift of Faith: *The First London Baptist Confession* (1646 Edition), article XXIV says, “Faith is ordinarily begotten by the preaching of the gospel, or word of Christ, without respect to any power or agency in the creature; but it being wholly passive, and dead in trespasses and sins, doth believe and is converted by no less power than that which raised Christ from the dead.”

14. Based on 2:5, what is the basis of our salvation? It is by grace that we have been saved.

What is grace (2:5)? Grace (*charis*) is undeserved favor.

15. What is the difference between mercy and grace (2:5)? Mercy is not getting something bad that you do deserve and grace is getting something good that you don’t deserve!

16. So, by grace we have been saved. Based on the context, from what have we been saved (1:5)? See back to 2:1-3. We have been saved from the power of our sins, from following the course of this world, from demonic influence and from God’s wrath.

17. What did Paul mean when he wrote that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places (1:6)? See back to 1:20-22. This is a spiritual truth, a statement of fact, to reassure his readers that they are connected with Christ in heaven just as surely as He was resurrected from the dead. We are seated with him in a position of authority over all the forces that are presently arrayed against the Gospel and the church. God did an end-run around them and saved us.

18. According to 2:7, why did God do all this for us? God saved us so that for all eternity He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ. It will take all of eternity for us to begin to appreciate what God did for us in Christ.

Quote: “. . . throughout all eternity the redeemed will be exhibited as the monuments of ‘the marvelous grace of our loving Lord,’ who drew us from destruction’s pit and raised us to heights of heavenly bliss, and did all this at such a cost to himself that he spared not his own Son, and in such a manner that not a single one of his attributes, not even his justice, was eclipsed” (Hendriksen, p. 119).

19. Just in case you missed it the first time (2:5), Paul reviewed the process of salvation in 2:8-10. **What salvation equation can be derived from 2:8-10?** We are saved by grace, through faith for good works. The prepositions involved in the formula are very important (by, through, for).

The basis of our salvation is God’s grace. We tap into that grace through the agency of faith. The end result of being saved is doing the good works that God prepared in advance for us to do. Works are the fruit our salvation, not the root. As is stated very clearly, “not as a result of works” (2:9).

ESV **John 15:5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

ESV **John 15:8** By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

ESV **John 15:16** . . . I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit . . .

20. It says, “this is not your own doing” (2:8). In 2:8, to what does “this” refer (grace, saved or faith)? What is not our own doing? Greek nouns have one of three genders (masculine, feminine or neuter). The word “this” is a pronoun and grammatically should have the same gender as whatever word to which it refers. Both grace and faith are feminine; saved is a masculine participle. The pronoun “this” is neuter, meaning it refers back to the whole process of salvation. None of it is our own doing. Grace is a gift of God. Being saved is a gift of God. Faith is a gift of God. Thus, technically, regeneration precedes faith; even our faith is the result of God’s grace.

According to 2:9, why did God design it so that salvation is not a result of works? It is so that no one may boast.

ESV **Romans 3:27** Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded.

What word did Paul use to describe us in 2:10? We are God’s workmanship in Christ. The good works we do are the outworking of God’s workmanship in us.

Word Study: “Workmanship” (2:10) is from *poiéma* from which we get “poem”. We are God’s poetry!

21. According to 2:10, why were we created? We were created in Christ for good works.

When did God plan that we would be saved for good works (2:10)? Good works were not an after-thought; they were prepared by God beforehand.

So What?

22. According to 2:1-3, what is man's problem?

23. What is God's role in the salvation process (2:4-9)?

24. How would you explain how to be saved based on today's study?

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. This is put people's minds in gear and them something to look for as the text is read. It causes focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session and are based on the ESV.

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