

## EPHESIANS 2

### BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

*Here in Paul's letter to the Ephesians the "how" of salvation is clearly expressed: We are saved by GRACE ALONE--not works. God has done all the work, and He only asks us to accept this gift. Works are what salvation PRODUCES in us when we truly walking with God. -JT*

**1** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, **2** in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. **3** All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. **4** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **5** made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. **6** And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, **7** in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **8** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**9** not by works, so that no one can boast. **10** For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ

Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**11** Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—**12** remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. **13** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

**14** For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, **15** by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, **16** and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. **17** He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. **18** For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

**19** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. **21** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. **22** And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

## STUDY NOTES

BlueLetterBible.org Commentary

**Who were dead in trespasses and sins:** Though Christians are now alive, they must never forget where they came *from*. They were **dead in trespasses and sins**.

There are many kinds of life: vegetable life, animal life, mental life, moral life, and spiritual life. A being might be alive in one sense but dead in another. To be spiritually dead does not mean that we are physically dead, socially dead, or psychologically dead. Yet it is a real death, a "dead death" nonetheless. "The most vital part of man's personality — the spirit — is dead to the most important factor in life — God." (Wood) "Not in a moral sense, nor a mental sense, but in a spiritual sense, poor humanity is dead, and so the word of God again and again most positively describes it." (Spurgeon)

**In which you once walked:** At one time we lived in trespasses and sins, according to the course of this world, which is orchestrated by Satan. Satan (the prince of the power of the air) is still very much active among those in rebellion against God — the sons of disobedience.

**Once walked** means it should be different for those who are made alive by Jesus Christ. A dead man feels comfortable in his coffin; but if he were to be made alive again, he would instantly feel suffocated and uncomfortable. There would be a strong urge to escape the coffin and leave it behind. In the same way, when we were spiritually dead we felt comfortable in trespasses and sins; but having come to new life we feel we must escape that coffin and leave it behind.

**The prince of the power of the air:** This unique title for Satan speaks of his authority (**prince**) and his realm (**the air**, a way of referring to Satan's "environment"). "The domain of the air, in fact, is another way of indicating the *heavenly realm*, which, according to Ephesians 6:12, is the abode of those principalities and powers, *world-rulers of this darkness* and



*spiritual forces of wickedness* against which the people of Christ wage war.” (Bruce) Satan is not the ultimate ruler, but he is a prince in the sense that “Evil men set him up for their sovereign, and are wholly at his beck and obedience.” (Trapp)

**We all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh:** We once were among the *sons of disobedience*, proven by our conduct. We embraced *the lusts of the flesh*, which are primarily perversions of the legitimate desires of human nature. “The converts are to be reminded what they have been delivered from, as well as what they have been lifted into. They must be led to look down again into the pit, into the grave, from which grace called them out and set them free.” (Moule)

**His great love with which He loved us:** Some warp the idea of God’s great mercy and love into something that justifies our pride. Some imagine that God loves us because we are so lovable. Instead, God’s love is so great that it extends even to the unlovely — to the children of wrath mentioned in the previous verse.

**When we were dead:** This is when God started loving us. He did not wait until we were lovable. He loved us even when we were **dead in trespasses**, providing nothing lovable to Him. This is the requirement for being saved. You must first be dead, dead to every attempt to justify yourself before God. *He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me... has passed from death into life* (John 5:24).

**Made us alive together with Christ:** This is what God did to those who were dead in sin. He shared in our death so that we could share in His resurrection life. The old man is crucified and we are new creations in Jesus with the old things passing away and all things becoming new.

**By grace you have been saved:** Paul is compelled to add here that this is the work of God’s grace, in no way involving man’s merit. Our salvation—our rescue—from spiritual death is God’s work done for the undeserving.

**“NOT BY WORKS,  
SO THAT NO ONE CAN BOAST”**  
Under God’s plan of salvation,  
God alone receives the glory.

**The exceeding riches of His grace:** “So is it with the grace of God: he has as much grace as you want, and he has a great deal more than that. The Lord has as much grace as a whole universe will require, but he has vastly more. He overflows: all the demands that can ever be made on the grace of God will never impoverish him, or even diminish his store of mercy; there will remain an incalculably precious mine of mercy as full as when he first began to bless the sons of men.” (Spurgeon)

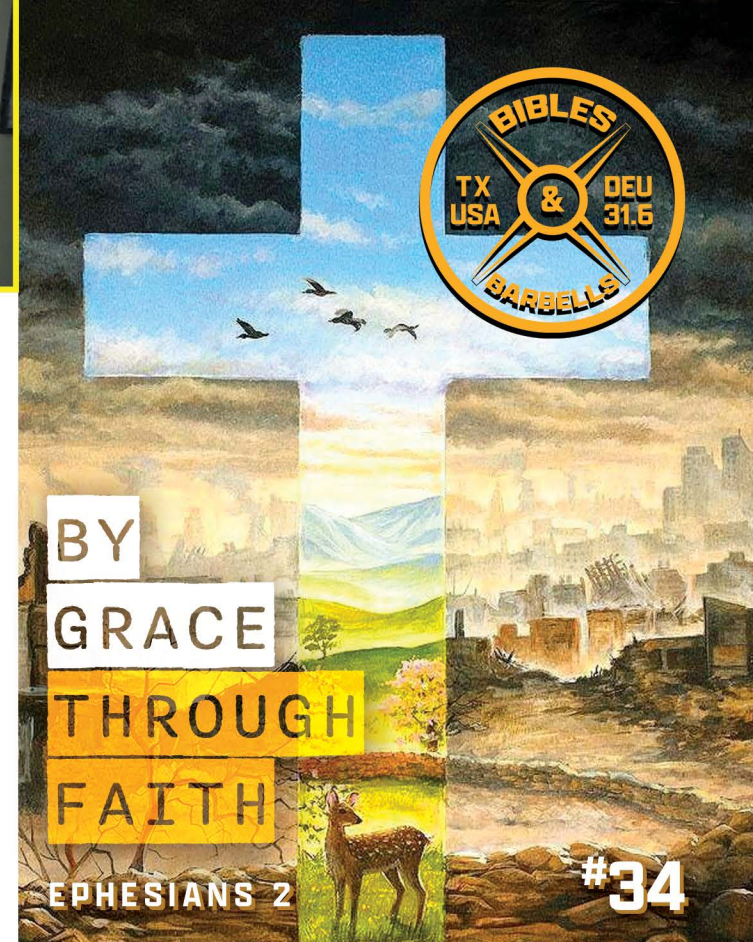
**For by grace you have been saved:** Paul cannot speak of this glorious work God does without reminding us that it is a gift of **grace**, given to the undeserving. We are not even saved by our faith (though faith itself is not a work), but **by grace through** faith. We can think of water flowing through a hose. The water is the important part, but it is communicated through the hose. The hose does not quench your thirst; the water does. But the hose brings water to the place you can benefit from it.

**Not of works, lest anyone should boast:** God did it not of works simply so that no one could boast. If salvation was the accomplishment of man in any way, we could boast about it. But under God’s plan of salvation, God alone receives the glory. “I thought Napoleon did a good thing, when, on the day of his coronation, he took his crown, and put it on his own head. Why should he not take the symbol that was his due? And if you get to heaven, one half by grace and one half by works, you will say, ‘Atonement profited me a little, but integrity profited me much more.’ ” (Spurgeon)

**Created in Christ Jesus for good works:** That beautiful thing God is making of us is active in good works. These are just as much a part of God’s predestined plan as anything else is. These good works are valid evidence that someone is walking as one of God’s chosen. “Works play no part at all in securing salvation. But afterwards Christians will prove their faith by their works. Here Paul shows himself at one with James.” (Wood)

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**WE HAVE DIED WITH CHRIST**



**WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM**

**ROMANS 6:8**