

Paul's Letter to
The Ephesians



Lesson 2-The Transforming Power of Christ and His Church

Focus: Ephesians 2:1-22

1. The Power of God's Grace brings us to life Spiritually and helps us to Walk in the way of righteousness (v.1-3,4,5)

a. *Out in the world, unconverted as we are before receiving the renewal of Christ's Spirit we are just "dead in sins and trespasses" (v.1). We are spiritually dead without Jesus Christ. Before Christ, we didn't have much of a true spiritual interest and we did not desire to walk in the way of righteousness, but rather, in the way of sin. That way leads to death, however, and it is going nowhere good or hopeful. "The wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23). People naturally tend to follow the spirit of evil and sinfulness ever since mankind fell from God's Holy way and was separated from His holiness by their sin (Isaiah 59:2). **People walk around "fulfilling the [sinful] desires of the flesh and of the mind"** (v.3). (Galatians 5:19-23 shows the difference between the flesh and the Spirit). **"By nature..."** people are naturally doing what is evil. If they want to lie, they lie. If they want to steal, or be unfaithful to their spouse, they do. If they want to kill, or covet, or dishonor their parents they do it. People, by sin, and without the true knowledge of God just tend to follow their own selfish and sinful ways. **"By nature the children of wrath..."** **"The carnal mind is enmity against God: It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be..." (Romans 8:7).** "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him..." (1 Corinthians 2:14).*

b. *But praise be to God that HE has a way to transform and convert our hearts!! **"You has He made alive, who WERE dead in trespasses and sins"** (v.1). **He raises us up from that condition of spiritual death just like Christ was raised up from his physical death.** God raises us up to **"set us" in His "heavenly places"** (Ephesians 1:20). We become "new creatures" "in Christ" "behold, all things are become new" (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). God changes our heart's desires. He renews our minds in Him by the working of His Spirit so that we have that true desire for His holiness, and we have from Him the power needed to obtain it (Romans 8:10-14).*

2. The Power of God's grace daily transforms and renews our lives in Christ (fashioning us according to His will) (v.4-10)

a. *God is **"rich in mercy"** towards us. And **"He loves us"** with **"great love!"** (v.4). "Even when we were dead in sins..." Christ still loved us. Being "yet sinners, Christ died for us" (See Romans 5:8). God shows His awesome love for us in this way!! He makes us alive **"together with Christ"** (v.5), so that we can **"sit together in heavenly places in Christ"** (v.6). And in the "ages to come" we can study the wonders of His love and saving grace—the "exceeding riches" of His grace "in His kindness toward us **through Christ"** (v.7). We are **Christ's "workmanship"** (creation) "saved by grace through faith" "not" by "works" (v.10,8,9). **The religion of Christ is not a do it yourself, help yourself (self-help) kind of religion or faith.** It is not righteousness by self-motivated or inspired good works. It is **not** a work-your-way-up to heaven kind of*

faith! It does **not** follow Lucifer's idea of making himself a god; being all powerful and holy on his own apart from God. **The faith of Christ is about being "saved by grace through [our] faith" in Him.** It is about the power of God's Spirit coming from outside of us, to work in us. **Yes, it is about righteousness, but not self-righteousness. We are Christ's "workmanship" and only as we "abide in Christ" can any possible victory be obtained over sin's power!** It is the grace and fruit of **God's Spirit** that works to transform us (See Galatians 5:22,23). **"Without [Christ]" we "can do nothing"** (John 15:4,5), but through Christ "we can do all things" (Philippians 4:13). Yes, we have a choice and must use it. Yes, we must choose to work together with Christ and to obey His voice. But all our strength and power comes from Christ and His Spirit working in us. His presence brings the desires for Holiness and gives the enabling power to achieve new victories in that pathway. **"Abide in Christ" by faithfully worshiping Him in prayer daily, studying of His word, and willing obedience to His voice!**

3. **God redeemed the ungodly Gentiles and brought them into "one" family of faith with those who were naturally born as Jews (v.11-17)**
 - a. Our brother Paul speaks of the "uncircumcision" (non-Jewish), and the "circumcision" (Jewish) having been separate from each other. "That at that time" being "without Christ" we were all "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, **having no hope, and without God in the world" (v.12).** "But now in Christ" something new is beginning to take place!! We are "brought near" "by the blood of Christ!" (v.13). **The "middle wall of partition" is broken down!** (v.14) Christ makes "of the two" "**ONE new man**" "**...ONE BODY by the cross**" (v.14,15). Jesus preached peace to those who were "far off" and also those who "were near" (v.17).
 - b. "The law of commandments contained in ordinances" which Christ "abolished in his flesh" was **not** the Ten Commandments—that is obvious, if you study God's teaching (and Paul's teachings) in both the Old and the New Testaments (for example see Romans 3:31; 7:7,12; James 2:10-12, etc.). **Be very careful not to misconstrue the writings and teachings of the Apostle Paul as some have done "to their own destruction"** (2 Peter 3:15,16). The effect of these particular "commandments contained in ordinances" which Paul mentions is that they kept people separate in "two." But now Christ makes "one new man." **"If we belong to Christ, then we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29).** We become spiritual Jews, partaking of all the blessings and promises made to Israel—this is who God's "new covenant" in Christ is made with (Hebrews 8:10) and we must become a part of that group by faith in Christ. However, we do not need to become literally "circumcised" to become a part of God's Israel by faith in Christ!! That old "commandment contained in ordinances" is not necessary for the believer in Jesus anymore (See 1 Corinthians 7:18,19).
4. **All who believe in Christ are to become "fellow-citizens...of the household of God...a holy temple in the Lord" (v.18-22).** By faith in Christ we are to be members of the household of God. We must build upon the foundation of God's prophets, apostles, and Christ Himself—the Highest!! As believers in Christ we are now to be "a chosen generation...a holy nation...the people of God" (1 Peter 2:9,10).

Question (s) for the Heart:

Will you seek God daily in prayer, His word, and faithful obedience to it, so that you may grow in the "riches of His grace"? _____