

# Made Alive!

Ephesians 2:1-10



- ❑ In Ephesians 1:19-23, Paul says that God's "incomparably great power" is demonstrated in Christ, who was raised from the dead and exalted to the heavenly realms above all rulers, authorities and spiritual powers. How does this relate to us? Read Ephesians 2:1-10.
- ❑ These verses present a "before and after" description – a "once but now" description. The Christian recipients of Paul's letter were once dead, but God made them alive (2:1, 4-5).

## We Were Dead

- ❑ Paul tells his readers, "you were dead in your transgressions and sins" (2:1), and later makes it clear that "all of us" were dead (2:3-5).

1. In what sense were we "dead?" Why were we dead?<sup>1</sup>



2. What are the characteristics of this "dead" condition? How is this lifestyle (way of living) described? (2:2-3) As you fill in the following blanks, think of examples.

- Following the ways of \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>2</sup> (2:2a)
- Following the \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>3</sup> (2:2b)
- Gratifying (indulging) the cravings (desires) of our \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>4</sup> (2:3a)

- ❑ In our "dead" condition, we were not only under the controlling and destructive influence of the world, the devil, and the flesh (sinful nature), we were "objects of wrath" (2:3b). Our opposition to God meant that we must face His holy and righteous anger and judgment.

## But God Made Us Alive!

3. In what sense were we (believers) "made alive?"<sup>5</sup> How was this accomplished? (2:4-6)

<sup>1</sup> In this context, "dead" does not mean physically dead, but rather "spiritually dead." To be spiritually dead is to be alienated or separated from God, who is the source of life. This death is a result of "transgressions and sins" (2:1) which include attitudes and actions offensive to God. As Paul said, "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

Furthermore, "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). Thus in our natural condition, we are all spiritually dead (Rom. 5:12).

<sup>2</sup> "this world" - the system of humanity with all its ideas, attitudes, values, and behaviors that are opposed to God.

<sup>3</sup> "ruler (prince) of the kingdom (power) of the air" refers to "the devil," or Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). The devil is also called "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4). The devil is the leader of the spiritual forces that oppose God. Later Paul will write that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the ... powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12). While Christ has defeated the devil (Eph. 1:21-22; Col. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:22), his complete destruction is future. Until then, he is still powerfully active.

<sup>4</sup> "sinful nature" (*sarx*) – literally "flesh." In this context, "flesh" refers to fallen humanity in rebellion against God. Because of sin, our "flesh" is corrupt. It is infected with self-centeredness, self-indulgence, pride, and other attitudes opposed to God. This corrupts our desires, and distorts and perverts our thinking relative to God and his ways.

<sup>5</sup> In this context, "alive" does not mean physically alive, but rather "spiritually alive." To be spiritually alive is to be connected to God – to be in personal relationship with God, who is the source of life. This life is "eternal life" – life in union with the eternal God. It is the ultimate quality of life. This life is found only "in Christ" (Romans 6:23).

- ❑ We were “made alive” *with* Christ. God raised us up *with* Christ, and seated us *with* him in the heavenly realms “in Christ” (2:5-6).<sup>6</sup> This new life is possible only in union with Christ.
- 4. Paul says, “it is by grace you have been saved.” What are we saved from? (2:2-3) Does “being raised and exalted with Christ” really make a difference in our lives?<sup>7</sup> Explain.
- 5. Why does God save us? List the words and phrases that indicate his motives. (2:4-8)<sup>8</sup>

📖 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast” (2:8-9, *NIV*).

- 6. What do the above verses (2:8-9) tell us about God, salvation, and us? Why is the teaching of these verses so important?<sup>9</sup>



## We are God's Workmanship

- ❑ Read Ephesians 2:10. In Christ, we are God's workmanship. We are “new creations” (2 Corinthians 5:17). While our good works cannot save us, we are saved to do good works according to God's purpose. As our study continues, we will see what God wants us to do.

## Reflection/Application

- Paul presents only two conditions relative to God – dead and alive. Assuming this is correct, what condition best describes you? Do you need to be “made alive?” God “makes us alive with Christ” as we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Do you need to do that?
- As Christians, we have been raised with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms! Are you experiencing the salvation and victory that is in Christ? What are your struggles? Read Romans 6-8 and Colossians 3:1-17, and constantly remember *who you are* “in Christ.” Pray that God would strengthen your faith, and empower you by his Spirit.

<sup>6</sup> Paul uses three compound verbs, each with the prefix *syn* (with): *synezōpoiēsen* (made alive with); *synēgeiren* (raised with); and *synekathisen* (seated with). While God has already done these things, the full realization is future. While God has ‘raised us up’ spiritually, our bodily resurrection (in imperishable bodies) is future (1 Cor. 15:50-57). In what sense have we been seated with Christ in the heavenly realms? F.F. Bruce responds, “Enthronement with Christ in the heavenly realm is not yet part of the experience of believers, but that is their proper location because they are incorporated in him. Their true home is where Christ is; their citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20)” (F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], 287)

<sup>7</sup> Christ won the victory over sin, death, and the spiritual powers of evil. “In Christ” we share in his victory. We are no longer enslaved to sin (Rom. 6:5-10). We can resist the devil (Jas. 4:7). We have victory “in Christ.”

<sup>8</sup> “his great love for us” (v. 4); “rich in mercy” (v. 4); “grace” (unmerited favor) (vv. 5, 7, 8); “kindness” (v. 7). Verse 7 says God saved us “in order that [for all time and eternity] he might show (display) the incomparable riches of his grace.” In other words, God does these things “to the praise of his glorious grace” (1:6). It is for His glory.

<sup>9</sup> It's impossible for us to earn our salvation. It's impossible for us to do enough good works to gain God's approval. In our ‘deadness,’ we are helpless. Only God can rescue us from our desperate condition. He is the one who initiates the process. Salvation is a ‘gift of God,’ which he offers according to his great love, mercy and grace. Our response, enabled by his grace, is faith. Some say that faith itself is the gift, arguing that ‘this’ in verse 8 refers to faith. But ‘this’ more likely refers to salvation by grace as a whole. Some use these verses to stress the Reformed or Calvinistic view of grace (irresistible, efficacious), but I will avoid that discussion here. See “Divine Sovereignty & Human Responsibility” on the ICF website. Suffice it to say, we can take no credit for our salvation. It is all God's grace.