

Then and Now  
Ephesians 2:1-7

INTRO: In the Greek text, verses 1-7 are one long sentence. The theme of this sentence is THEN and NOW. The then is a state of spiritual death. The now is a state of spiritual life. Believers who were dead are now alive in Christ (vss 1, 5).

In verses 1-3, we get a close up look at the unsaved person; we see his horrible condition and greatness of his spiritual need. In verses 4-7, we see what God has done for the believer. Verse four opens with the words, "But God." We were lost, "But God," loved us, made us alive, and gave us a new position, seated in heavenly places.

Verses 1-3 is Then, before salvation. Verses 4-7 is Now that we are made alive in Christ.

I. VSS. 1-3, THEN, DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS

- A. Vs. 1, The death spoken of here is spiritual death, not physical. The unregenerate person is "dead in trespasses and sins." This was the state of the believer before salvation.
1. To be spiritually dead means:
    - a. Inability to understand or appreciate spiritual things.
    - b. No spiritual life. He can do nothing to please God. He is dead.
    - c. No communication with the living. One who is dead spiritually has no communication with God.
    - d. Separation from God.
    - e. No hearing or seeing. A corpse does not hear the conversation in the funeral parlor. A corpse does not see those peering at it. The spiritually dead do not hear or see spiritual things (Matt 13:13).
    - f. No appetite for food or drink. The lost have no desire for spiritual food or drink.
    - g. No response to spiritual stimuli. Just as a corpse does not respond to physical stimuli,

the spiritually dead do not respond to spiritual stimuli because he can't.

2. The lost man can not respond spiritually until God gives life to him.
  3. The unregenerate person is not sick, friend; it's much worse than that. He is dead.
    - a. He does not need reviving; he needs resurrection.
    - b. All the unregenerate are dead. The only difference between one sinner and another is the extent of decomposition.
    - c. The world is a big graveyard filled with folks who are dead while they live. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (I Tim 5:6).
  4. The cause is of spiritual death is trespasses, wrong steps, and sins, missing the mark. "The word for sin is harmartia; and harmartia is a shooting term; the arrow misses; that is harmartia. Sin is the failure to hit the target of life" (Barclay 95)
    - a. Romans 6:23: "The wages of sin is death...." Separation from God is meant here.
    - b. Sin is a killer; because of Adam's sin, all men sin (Rom. 5:12). Physical and spiritual death are caused by sin. Sin kills innocence and sin kills ideals.
- B. Vss. 2-3, The condition of the unregenerate is further described in verses 2-3.
1. Vs. 2a, The unregenerate are followers of the world, and its ways. This is what the born again used to do.
    - a. Unbelievers follow the lifestyles and values of other unbelievers. They bow to the world's peer pressure, it is a herd mentality.
    - b. "This world," Greek *kosmos*, is the satanically organized system that hates and opposes all that is godly (John 15:18, 19, 23).
  2. Vs. 2b, "According to the prince of the power of the air." Satan is "the prince of the power of the air."

- a. The world is under Satan's control: "The whole world lieth in wickedness" (I John 5:19). The world is cradled in Satan's arms and he rocks men and women right into hell itself.
  - b. In II Cor 4:4, Satan is called, "the God of this world."
- 3. Vs. 2c, The unregenerate are "disobedient." The spirit of Satan works in the lives of the disobedient, unregenerate man.
  - a. The unregenerate actively rebel against God.
  - b. They, the lost, rebel because they are children of disobedience.
  - c. Those who are born again love God and want to do right because through the Holy Spirit their want to has been changed. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
- 4. Vs. 3, Paul reminds the Gentiles that they had no monopoly on sinful living. Jew and Gentile, when unconverted, lived "in the lusts of our flesh."
  - a. "Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind..."
    - 1.) The actions of the sinner is the sinful because his appetites are sinful. He is at the mercy of desire, the desire of the flesh.
    - 2.) Unregenerate man is depraved; he is unable to do anything to merit salvation. He cannot do anything spiritually good to please God.
  - b. "Were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."
    - 1.) We were damned to hell. The unregenerate person is damned already (John 3:18, 36).
    - 2.) We cannot save ourselves, "But God," in His grace steps in to make salvation possible.

## II. VSS. 4-7, NOW, ALIVE IN CHRIST

- A. Vs. 4, "But God," these words make all the difference in the world and in eternity.
1. The conjunction "but" introduces the action of God toward sinners (Romans 5:6-8).
  2. God is described as rich in mercy.
    - a. Mercy means "undeserved kindness" toward sinners.
    - b. Mercy means that we do not get what we deserve. "Nothing good have I done to deserve God's own Son..."
  3. Our merciful God acts on the behalf of sinners because of His great love. The love of God is greater far than any tongue can tell, hell.
    - a. "Love" is the Greek word *agape* in this verse. It is divine love, love with a heavenly origin.
    - b. As used here love means, "to seek the highest good in the one loved."
    - c. Sinners are spiritually dead and have nothing to offer God. That is why Paul describes this love as great.
- B. Vs. 5, Because of His great love, God has "quickenened us together with Christ."
1. "Quickened" means to be made alive, even when we were dead in sins.
  2. The same power that raised Christ from the grave physically is the power that has made us alive spiritually.
    - a. John 5:25 says: "The hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."
    - b. When a man hears and believes the Word of God, he "is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).
  3. "By grace ye are saved."
    - a. Grace is everything for nothing.
    - b. It is help for the helpless, hope for the hopeless.
    - c. Grace changes our unrighteousness to righteousness and sets aside our demerit and gives us righteousness which we do not merit.

- d. God owes us nothing but gives us complete salvation. That's grace.
- C. Vs. 6, Our physical position is on earth, but our spiritual position is in heaven. We, like Lazarus, have received a call to come from the grave to be with Christ Jesus and fellowship with Him.
- D. Vs. 7, Throughout all eternity, we, the redeemed, shall be trophies of God's grace.
  - 1. God's purpose in redemption is not merely to keep us out of hell; we are redeemed to His glory.
  - 2. We are saved "to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). The first question in the Baptist Catechism is, "What is the chief end of man?" The answer, "Man's chief end is to glorify , and to enjoy Him for ever."
    - a. Salvation is all of God; it is all to the "praise of His glory."
    - b. "Show" means "to display or demonstrate." Grace is displayed in the believer now, and it will be displayed in eternity.

CONCLUSION: Believers were dead spiritually, but are now alive spiritually.

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