

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

"Before Conversion"

Ephesians 2:1-2

Introduction

1. There is a connection between Ephesians 1 and 2. The transition relates to the person of Christ our Lord. It focuses on the word "dead" (2:1). That is how Christ was identified with us and we with Him. From that place, we have been made to sit with Him (cf. 1:20 with 2:6).
2. But more. Chapter 1 tells how God in eternity purposed to redeem. Chapter 2 tells how, in time, God is actually creating a new people for His own Name's sake.
3. The first seven verses are a long and involved sentence (cf. 1:3-14). Two leading ideas: 1) "You were dead" (v. 1); 2) "Hath quickened" which is the main verb (v. 5).
4. God provides a thorough description of the former life, the pre-Christian one. Two terrible indictments are made (cf. Rom. 1-5).

1. DEADNESS TOWARD GOD v. 1.

a. Condition

The present active participle avers the state before conversion. That state is death. It is the result of the unbroken inheritance from Adam down. We are sundered from God; our life-cord is severed. It is a state of unresponsiveness toward God, void of all true spiritual life. This state is the result of Adam's sin (Gen. 2:17; 3:3, 4; Rom. 5:12; Heb. 7:4-10). Every person, by physical birth, is alienated from God, the source of life. No one is able to claim any ability to save his own soul.

b. Expression

The nature of the death indicated is explained by two words:

1) Trespases. This represents sin as a fall, a false step, an offense. It suggests losing one's way or straying from the right road. This shows an utter inability to stand before God.

2) Sins. This is a common New Testament term which represents sin as missing the mark, a failure to measure up to God's standard. It shows inability to satisfy God.

NOTE: The manifestation of this death is evident in moral decay, spiritual blindness, and indifference to the things of God (Rom. 1:18-32; 2 Cor. 4:3, 4). The whole world is a graveyard and every gravestone reads "dead in sin."

2. DISOBEDIENCE AGAINST GOD vv. 2, 3a.

This disobedience is related to the "trespasses and sins" as the phrase "wherein" denotes. In turn, there are three areas in which this was demonstrated.

a. By Walking v. 2a

Their past life is marked by "time past." The common verb for "walked around" or conducted themselves is a verb which is used ethically here for the walk of life, the whole of one's manner of living. The very atmosphere in which they conducted themselves was "trespasses and sins" (cf. Rom. 1:18-32; 1 John 3:8-10; 5:18).

b. By Conforming v. 2b

The walking in "trespasses and sins" had a standard --the course (age) of this world (kosmos system). This phrase is virtually equivalent to "the worldly fashion of the day." This means to be swept up in its pleasures and practices. "Course" means way or spirit and "world" means the ordered scheme of material and spiritual things under Satan (cf. 1 John 2:15-17; Rom. 12:2).

c. By Ruling v. 2c

The pre-conversion experience involved the Ephesians under the power and dominion of Satan. He is called "the prince of the power (authority) of the air." Hence, here is a direct statement that the unsaved (all of them!) have lives which are determined and shaped by the supreme ruler of all the powers of wickedness. What a terrible statement. "Power of the air" speaks of the totality of evil powers. Their nature is suggested by "air." They are not corporeal (though often use men) and do not belong to the earth. They are superhuman spiritual beings ruled over by Satan (Eph. 6:12). Further, Satan is described as ruler "of" the spirit (so Greek grammar) who now works in disobedient children. The spirit of the age or the evil principle which is at work in unbelievers is controlled by Satan (cf. 1 Thess. 2:13; Phil. 2:13). "Children of disobedience" is a technical phrase referring to people whose nature and essential character is disobedience (cf. 5:6-8).

Conclusion The pre-conversion life of anyone has its marks. They are discernible in the Word. Thank God for His marvelous deliverance through Christ our Lord. Have you received Him by faith (John 1:12)?