

## **The Book of Ephesians – Part 3**

### **Introduction:**

Remember when we got started on this series, we said that in Chapter One, God authored the plan of redemption.

In Chapter Two, Jesus executed the plan, and in Chapter Three, the Holy Spirit revealed the plan to the church.

In Chapter Two, which we're going to cover today, we discuss how God found us and how Jesus removed the barriers between Jew and Gentile and between God and Man.

### **I. How God Found Us (Ephesians 2:1-10)**

When God found us, after the fall, we were lost and without hope. We were dead in our sins and unable to do anything to help ourselves.

Remember God saw all this before the fact, before the foundation of the world, and planned the answer through the blood of Jesus.

In Chapter 2:1-3 God finds man under a triple curse.

- 1) He is under the curse of sin and its penalty, death.
- 2) He is under the influence of this world system, ruled and dominated by Satan and his kingdom.
- 3) He is dominated by the flesh and the unrenewed mind.

### **Ephesians 2**

**<sup>1</sup>And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;**

- The Greek word for trespasses is *paraptoma* (blunder). This is a reference to unintentional or unknown sin. The Greek word for sins is *hamartia* (known sin).
- Not only is the sinner lost in the sins he knows about, he is lost in the sins he doesn't know about.
- But praise God, through the blood of Jesus, we have been redeemed from both the sins we know about and the ones we don't know about!

**<sup>2</sup>Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:**

- The Greek word for air is *aer* (the atmosphere around the earth). Satan is described as "the prince of the power of the air".
- Remember, Satan and his demon spirits are not all in Hell as some suppose. At least not full time.
- They inhabit the atmosphere around the earth and they influence the "the course of this world".
- And that same "spirit of the world" manipulates and influences the hearts of men.

**<sup>3</sup>Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**

- Notice that the spirit is not mentioned in the above scripture. The reason for this is simple. The sinner, unless he is demon possessed, is not controlled by his spirit but by the desires of

his flesh and his mind. His spirit is dead and separated from God.

- The sinner sins because it is his nature to do so.
- The believer is able to live right because it is his nature to do so, provided he is led by the Spirit of God.
- The sinner requires a change of nature to be able to stop living in sin.
- In chapter 5, we will see that the believer who is out of fellowship with God acts just like an unbeliever.
- While he is in that condition he cannot be led by the Holy Spirit but will be led by his mind and his flesh.

### **Romans 8**

**<sup>6</sup>For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**

- You can be a Christian and still be producing things of death in your life. This is why it is so critical for the believer to stay out of sin and to stay in fellowship with the Lord.
- When your mind sides with the flesh, it produces death. When your mind sides with the Spirit, it produces life.
- To summarize what we have learned so far, verses 1-3 tell us how God found us.
- Man was under the curse of sin, influenced by the prince of this world, and controlled by the desires of his flesh and his mind.

- But in verse 4, we come face to face with the love of God. His great love and mercy were the answer to man's dilemma.

#### **<sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,**

- We were hopelessly lost in our sins and death reigned in our lives, *but God!*
- Sometimes we have to *get our butts in the right place*.
- Don't say "I know the Bible says this, but my circumstances say something else."
- Instead, say "I know what the circumstances say, but God's Word says this."
- The Greek word for rich is *plusios* (filthy rich). Pluto was the Greek god of wealth.
- This is where we get the English word *plutocrat* from. It means someone who is so wealthy that he is able to influence the affairs of others.
- God is so rich in mercy that he is able to influence us to choose Him. Mercy is God's grace in action and He richly bestowed it upon us because of His great love.

### **John 3**

**<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

**<sup>17</sup>For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

**<sup>5</sup>Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)**

**<sup>6</sup>And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:**

- Verse 5 and 6 illustrate the point again that God saw all of this ahead of time. He saw us dead in sins but at the same time He saw us quickened (made alive) in Christ.
- At the end of verse 5 we see that all of this was done by God's grace. None of it was deserved.
- The traditional definition says that God's grace is his unmerited favor but I believe it is much, much more than this.
- It is not only his unmerited favor but it is his willingness to commit all his resources on our behalf.

### **Psalm 84 (Amp)**

**<sup>11</sup>For the Lord God is a Sun and Shield; the Lord bestows [present] grace and favor and [future] glory (honor, splendor, and heavenly bliss)! No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.**

**<sup>5</sup>Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)**

**<sup>6</sup>And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:**

- Notice that the word "together" is used three times in verses 5 and 6. This is no accident. This illustrates that all these things happened to us because of what Jesus did.

- We were quickened, raised up, and made to sit in heavenly places *together with Christ*.
- One point that is often overlooked is that in spite of God's great love for us, he could not die for us because he is a spirit, and he cannot be killed.
- It had to be a man, and it couldn't be just any man. God chose his son Jesus, who existed with him in eternity in the form of the Word of God.
- This Word became flesh (John 1:1, 14), became a man and lived a perfect, sinless life. He died and shed his blood for us and God raised him from the dead.
- Again God saw all of this ahead of time.
- When he saw Christ quickened, he saw us quickened, when he saw Christ raised, he saw us raised, and when he saw Christ seated with him in heavenly places, he saw us seated with him in heavenly places.

**<sup>7</sup>That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.**

- This verse tells us that God's grace is not only available for us here on the earth but it will be available for us throughout eternity.
- Most of us believe he has a plan for our lives here on the earth but many of us don't realize that he has a plan for us in eternity.
- This plan includes "exceeding riches of grace" that will be poured out on us through the ages to come.

- Again, his kindness and love will be extended toward us through Christ Jesus.

**<sup>8</sup>For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:**

**<sup>9</sup>Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

- Verse 8 makes it clear that we are saved by his grace through faith. As we have already said, everything we received and everything we will receive from God was/is because of his grace.
- But notice that it was by grace through faith. Faith plays a key role in activating God's grace.

## **Romans 5**

**<sup>1</sup>Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**

**<sup>2</sup>By whom also we *have access by faith into this grace* wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

**<sup>8</sup>For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:**

**<sup>9</sup>Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

- Verse 9 makes it clear again, that none of this happened because of anything we did. It was all because of what Jesus did.

- Notice in verse 8 that not only was his grace given to us but *even the faith that was necessary to activate that grace was given to us by God.*
- We played no role at all. We did not reach out to God, but he reached out to us.

## **Roman 12**

**<sup>3</sup>For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.**

**<sup>10</sup>For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**

- The Greek word for workmanship is *poema* (a special poem created by God). Think about it, when you read a beautiful poem, the glory doesn't go to the poem itself but to the author of the poem.
- We are his masterpiece, his poem. That's the way God made us and that's the way he sees us.
- He created us special and unique and he created us for a special purpose. We each have a plan for our lives which was ordained by God. He wants us to walk in the good works that he prepared ahead of time for us to walk in.
- You were created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*. This again illustrates the point that good works result because you were created in Christ Jesus, you were born again and your nature changed.

- Good works do not produce a good nature but a good nature produces good works.

## **Summary:**

So to summarize verses 1-10, essentially the First Half of Chapter Two, we see that God found us in a hopeless state; then Jesus executed the plan of redemption, delivered us out of it all, and set us back on the right path.

## **II. Jesus Removed the Barrier (Ephesians 2:11-22)**

The last half of Chapter Two describes how Jesus, through the finished work of the cross, removed the barrier between Jew and Gentile and between God and man.

**<sup>11</sup>Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;**

- Not only did the cross remove the barrier between God and man but it also removed the barrier between the races.
- The author of racial prejudice is Satan. Unfortunately, it has always existed and always will exist as long as the hearts of men are influenced by this world system.
- There is one true place of equality, however, for all men. That place is in Christ Jesus through the new birth.
- When you become born again, you have the ability to see others the way God sees them, no longer concerned with outward appearance but looking at the heart.

## **Galatians 3**

**<sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.**

- In the heart of the Father God there are no racial distinctions, no social distinctions and no sexual distinctions.
- We are all one in Christ Jesus and our Father God loves us all the same. These barriers were removed at the same time the sin barrier was removed by the shed blood of Jesus.
- Before I leave this point I want to make one thing clear. There are large numbers of born again people of all races who do not have this revelation.
- This is why I believe it is so important for believers to be filled with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost brings revelation to our hearts and guides us into all truth (John 16:13).
- It has been said that Sunday morning church services are the most segregated hour in America.
- That may be true of most churches, but if you look at the Holy Ghost churches in America this is not what you see.
- It's no accident that where the Holy Ghost is free to move, people of all races worship God together.

**<sup>12</sup>That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:**

**<sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

- Verse 12 tells us three things that were true before we were born again:
  - 1) We were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The commonwealth speaks of the remnant of the nation of Israel who are true believers. No matter how wicked the nation of Israel became, there was always a remnant.
  - 2) We were strangers from the covenants of promises. This includes the four covenants made with the nation of Israel, the Abrahamic covenant, the Palestinian covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the New Covenant.
  - 3) We had no hope and were without God in this world.
- When we were born again, the blood of Jesus removed the barrier, the great gulf that separated us from God. All the things that were true in verse 12 are no longer true for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- Each of those covenants has a natural and a supernatural fulfillment and we have a part in all of them as saints of God.

### **Galatians 3**

**<sup>29</sup>And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

**<sup>14</sup>For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;**

- Jesus *is* our peace. He gives us peace but it is a peace *in him*. This is a peace that transcends our physical circumstances because it is true inner peace (John 14:27).
- He has made all true born again believers one with God. The phrase "who hath made both one" refers to God and man who

were reconciled because of the blood of Jesus. The partition or the barrier that existed between God and man was removed.

## **I Corinthians 5**

**<sup>17</sup>Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

**<sup>18</sup>And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;**

**<sup>15</sup>Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;**

- Jesus abolished the enmity (warfare) that was between man and God.
- He did not just bridge the gap, he totally demolished it. Notice that he abolished it in his flesh. This emphasizes the humanity of Jesus and reminds us that only a man could die for our sins.
- Remember though, that not just any man could qualify. Jesus qualified because he came to earth, lived the life of a man, lived a perfect life without sin, and totally committed himself to the will of God.
- What the law could not do because it was weak in the flesh, Jesus accomplished by fulfilling the law. He took the law that condemned us and nailed it to the cross.

## **Colossians 2**

**<sup>14</sup>Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;**

## **Romans 8**

**<sup>3</sup>For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:**

- When Jesus said “it is finished” (John 19:30) he was referring to the law. The law was finished and had been fulfilled completely by him.

**<sup>15</sup>Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;**

- The phrase “for to make in himself of twain one new man” in verse 15 refers to the fact that Jew and Gentile have both been made one in Christ Jesus.

**<sup>16</sup>And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:**

- This, of course, extends to all the distinctions that were previously mentioned. Not only have God and man been reconciled but all men and women regardless of race have been made one in the body of Christ Jesus. The result is the true peace of God.

**<sup>17</sup>And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.**

**<sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**

- Again, the point of racial reconciliation is emphasized in these verses. "You which were afar off" refers to the Gentiles and "them that were nigh" refers to the Jews. But through Jesus both Jew and Gentile have access to God by one Spirit.

**<sup>19</sup>Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;**

**<sup>20</sup>And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone**

- We are no longer stranger or foreigners but as saints we are all fellow citizens. When you were born again you became a citizen of heaven with all the rights and privileges of a citizen of heaven. You now belong to the household of God. God is our father and we are all members of his family.
- This household was built upon the foundation formed by the apostles and prophets. The prophets helped put flesh to the Word of God. They proclaimed his Word until, in the fullness of time, that Word became flesh. The apostles started the early church and gave us the New Testament, revealing to us plan of redemption that was now available through Christ Jesus.
- Jesus Christ was the chief cornerstone. A chief cornerstone joins two walls together. In this case the two walls were the Old and the New Covenant which were joined together and fulfilled in Christ. Remember that the Old Covenant looks forward to the cross and the New Covenant looks back to the cross. Jesus is in the middle just like a cornerstone.

**<sup>21</sup>In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:**

**<sup>22</sup>In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.**

- We are all “living stones” which together form a holy temple or dwelling place for the Lord. In the Old Covenant, God dwelt in tabernacles or in temples but in the New Covenant he lives in us.

### **I Peter 2**

**<sup>5</sup>you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

### **Summary:**

So to summarize verses 11-22, the second half of Chapter Two, we see that Jesus removed the barriers between the races and the sexes and he removed the barrier of sin and guilt that separated us all from God.

When he was lifted up on the cross, he was suspended between heaven and earth, between God and man. This is a perfect picture of his role as our reconciler and mediator.

### **John 12**

**<sup>32</sup>And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.**

### **I Timothy 2**

**<sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;**