

AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF EPHESIANS 2:1-7

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The Context and Connections of Ephesians 2:1-7

Ephesians 2:1-7 focuses primarily on the believer's previous lifestyle in the flesh and his present life in the faith as a result of redemption in Christ. The text vividly describes the unbeliever's standing before God as evidenced by his ungodly walk through the world. In continuation from chapter 1 of Ephesians, the text presents God's willingness and ability to extend grace to change the nature, standing, and purpose of the born-again believer (1:3-10, 17-20). In the section immediately preceding (1:15-23), the apostle's prayer described the wisdom and power of God in salvation that becomes effectual through Jesus Christ in chapter 2 (2:5-6, 8-22). The passage fits into Paul's main doctrinal argument in the letter from verses 1:15-3:21.¹ Paul's prayer in 1:15-23 intends to soften the hearts and open the eyes of the Ephesians to the teachings that follow in 2:1-7. It is this prayer that sought to "prime the pump" of their understanding by explaining the glory of their inheritance as children of God. He desired for them to revel in the power of Christ's gospel before he explained the prior and present spiritual standing of the Ephesian reader before God. The introduction of the concepts of Christ's resurrection from the dead, His placement in heavenly places, and His authority over all things was instrumental in the development of Paul's argument that believers are quickened, raised, and seated with Christ. The passage identified further the blessings of one's position "in Christ" (1:1, 3, 10, 12, 20; cf. 2:10, 13) and prepared the reader for deeper discussions regarding the consequences of worldly living in subsequent passages (5:1-14). Over the expansive discussion of the book, the spiritual blessings that stemmed from one's union with Christ hinged on the pivotal text of 2:1-7. The passage explained the basis of this unity as a result of God's grace,

¹ Arp, Dr. William. "All Grace and Grace Alone." *Reformation and Revival* 6.4 (1997), 28

mercy, and kindness rather than on the basis of works. The basis of works-salvation is void because of the separation experienced as a result of trespasses and sins. The resultant ungodliness presented a deplorable contrast to the righteousness found only in God. The teachings of 2:1-7 facilitate the enhanced discussion of the demolition of all spiritual barriers for man to spirituality connect with God through Christ (2:11-22) as well as the demolition of the cultural barriers between the Jew and the Gentile (3:1-13).² Also, the teaching of salvation by grace is introduced in 2:5 and further explained in 2:8-10. The two sentences comprising 2:8-10 summarized Paul's teachings in the first seven verses that the means of salvation is grace; that the purpose of salvation is good works; and that transformation of salvation is certifiable.³ The overall conclusion of the passage should cause the readers to realize that a sinner stands condemned to the wrath of God. Christians should appreciate the grace of the glorious God to redeem them from a degenerate lifestyle.

The Exegetical Analysis

Paul introduces a discussion which compares the past and present lifestyles of the believer in 2:1. The comparison describes those who are "alive" with those who are "dead." These concepts receive greater amplification in verses 2 and 3, but a foundational understanding of the two key words of "quicken" and "dead" is integral to Paul's continued presentation on the topic. First, the concept of "quicken," or to "make alive," is clearly a contrast with the state of being "dead in sins" (also seen in verse 5 where "trespasses" are mentioned as a part of the "death" in verse 1). The subject matter of the passage explains that quickening is an aspect of

² Black, David Alan. "The Peculiarities of Ephesians and the Ephesian Address." *Grace Theological Journal* GTJ 02:1 (1981): 62

³ Talbert, Charles H. 2007. *Ephesians and Colossians*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2007. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), 89

the redemptive work of Christ as well as an explanation of the standing of those who are unbelievers. Although Paul does not use this word again in the book of Ephesians, he does, however, use this exact word in the book of Colossians. In that book, it is used similarly to Paul's usage in Ephesians. The context of the passage in Colossians is that of salvation, the work of Christ, and the resultant positional change of the believer. The words "sins" and "trespasses" are utilized just as with the passage in Ephesians. Additionally, the word is translated "quicken together" in Colossians as well. Other similar themes in Colossians include faith in God, forgiveness, and the cross of Christ. The Colossian context helps solidify the meaning of the term in the Ephesians text. The historical-cultural implications of the term "quicken" would resonate with the Ephesians. Understanding the intention of Artemis worship helps the interpreter to discover that appeasement was the main motive of the idolater.⁴ Conversely, salvation by grace through faith in Christ had the power to make one "alive." The massive difference in the reasons and results of the two modes of worship would have provided a sharp contrast in the Ephesian mind. With these viewpoints in mind, one could conclude that the new "quicken" state of the believer put the believer "together" with Jesus. God took action to make the separated sinner become alive and, as will be expounded upon in the following verses, raised and placed in heavenly places.

Man must be quickened because he is "dead in trespasses and sins." In examining the term "dead," one must start by discovering the meaning(s) behind the English and Greek words.⁵ The semantic ranges of both the English and Greek words are broad, but the overlap allows the interpreter to conclude that the definition of "dead" is *destitute of life*, though it can take various

⁴ Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *St. Paul's Ephesus: Texts and Archaeology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008

⁵ Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word*. 3d edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012, 39-50.

forms and be either literal or figurative. In order to determine the meaning of the word in this text, the interpreter must note some examples throughout Scripture and specifically in other writings of Paul. First, the term is used throughout the New Testament as descriptive of those who were physically destitute of life (Mark 9:9; Colossians 1:18) as well as descriptive of those who were spiritually dead (Ephesians 5:14; Colossians 2:13). The latter definition applied most directly to the nearest context of Ephesians 2:1. In the broader context of the book of Ephesians, Paul used this word four times (1:20, 2:1, 2:5, 5:14). In 1:20, Paul used the term in the literal sense to explain Christ's physical resurrection from the physical the death which He experienced on the cross. In the remaining uses in Ephesians, Paul employed the term in its figurative sense. The word was used twice in the context of Christ's redemptive work from the unbeliever's lifestyle of ungodliness (vv. 2:1 and 5). The same context is repeated in Ephesians 5 as Paul explains the unfruitful works of darkness from which one must be reprovved by the light in order to "arise from the dead." Paul used the word in 5:14 in connection with a figure of speech which could be interpreted as an explanation to cease from "unproductive" (dead) behaviors. Such an interpretation for 2:1 is reasonable since Paul used the same word in a similar manner in his other writings. Nevertheless, the proximity of Paul's use of "dead" in verses 2:1 and 2:5 is the most important aspect to properly define the word in its immediate context. In Ephesus, the people worshipped the goddess Artemis.⁶ Though her temple served as a focal point, the goddess was believed to be everywhere in nature.⁷ It would have been easy for Ephesians to have believed that they were in constant connection with their goddess. Since humans are a product of nature and their goddess portrayed "omnipresence," it was reasonable for the

⁶ Orr, James, M.A., D.D. *Entry for DIANA; ARTEMIS in International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdsman Publishing Co., 1979.

⁷ Ibid.

Ephesians to conclude that they were never separated from their goddess. Paul taught that their “trespasses and sins” (that is to say, their lawlessness and unrighteousness)⁸ would separate them from the True God. This was a dramatic contrast to their idolatrous views. Their spirit was functioning as evidenced by their faith in Artemis, but their faith was placed in the wrong object. When the object of their faith changed to the Lord Jesus Christ, they were no longer separated (dead) in trespasses and sins, but brought close to God through the blood of Jesus. This previous “deadness” disabled the unbeliever from realizing God’s promises due to the lack of access into His presence (Ephesians 2:12-13; Romans 5:1-2) and due to their ill position in darkness (Ephesians 2:1, 5; 5:14). Conclusively, the subject matter of the passage explained an aspect of the redemptive work of Christ and the state of those who are unbelievers.

The concepts in verse 1 served as the “springboard” to Paul’s detailed exposition on the continued contrast between the lifestyles. Paul presented first the lifestyle of the believers *prior* to salvation, or simply the life as an unbeliever. In “times past” believers “walked according to the course of this world.” The walk of the unsaved sought to capitalize on the carnival of worldly lusts. The implication of the word “walked” reveals a subtlety that the unbeliever is believed to make progress through the world. By the world’s standards, such a lifestyle of licentious pleasure and rebellion were the norms and were commendable by those who similarly practiced such sinful habits. Paul declared directly that sinners shared this sinful sentiment according to Romans 1:18-32. In the Ephesian text Paul identified the cause and effect principle: walking according to the world yields disobedience to God. Disobedience is instigated by the “prince of the power of the air” and a stubborn “spirit” in unbelievers. The reference of the “prince” is none other than Satan himself, who works in his spiritual children who emulate their

⁸ Larkin, William J. 2009. *Ephesians: a handbook on the Greek text* / William J. Larkin. n.p.: Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, c2009. Harvard Library Bibliographic Dataset, 184

“father” by fulfilling their own lusts (John 8:44). Disobedience is the obstinate opposition to the divine will due to a wicked relationship with the world and evidenced by the fulfillment of ungodly lusts in the carnival of life. Furthermore, the concept of walking in the world is later contrasted by a godly Christian walk, a discourse that dominates chapters 4-6 of the letter to the Ephesians. The godly walk is characterized as one that is worthy of God’s calling (4:1-32), one that forsook uncleanness and unfruitfulness (5:1-14), and one that is full of the Spirit’s power (5:15-6:22).

The emotional and negative tone continued with the amplification of one’s deadness in trespasses and sins in verse 3. Paul indicted all people when he stated that “we all had our conversation in times past in the lust of our flesh.” This condemnation is characteristic of everyone at some point in their life. Their conversation, or lifestyle, revolved around the fulfillment of one’s sinful desires. The carnality of the flesh and the mind are emphasized in this verse, a progressive parallelism from the previous verse. The condemnation likewise is intensified as the children of disobedience are also identified as the “children of wrath.” Classification as such a child demonstrated that an unbeliever was worthy of the wrath of God.⁹ Not only was this true as a result of a disobedient lifestyle, but also by the “nature” of the unbeliever.¹⁰ The sin-nature of man is a result of heredity passed on from Adam (Romans 5:12). As a result, the sinful corruption of mankind places them in a condition which warrants the wrath of God (cf. John 3:36).

Nevertheless, an interchange began in verse 4 which contrasts God’s character and conduct which was portrayed against that of the prince of the power of the air. Although the

⁹ Turner, David L. "Ephesians 2:3c and "Peccatum Originale"." *Grace Theological Journal* GTJ 01:2 (1980): 200

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Father was betrayed by these children, He still expressed mercy, grace, and kindness through the offer of salvation. The tone of the text suddenly changed to become positive and full of praise. The negative emotional terms were replaced with those that reflected the love and grace of the Savior. The attitude and action of God were emphasized as Paul stated that the Lord both possessed love and acted lovingly toward the children who were separated from Him because of their sins. God's character was highlighted as One who was abounding with good will toward those who were miserable and afflicted by the prince of the power of the air. The greatest expression of His love toward sinners was found in the gift of His Son (John 3:16). The sentiments of God's love in the phrase "even when we were dead in sins" (2:5) alluded to Paul's teaching in Romans 5:8, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." When one placed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he was "quickened" and saved by grace. Salvation became synonymous with a spiritual quickening that lists benefits which were enumerated in 2:5-6. The sinner was now "quickened," "raised," and "made to sit" with Christ. The emphasis was placed on the work of God in salvation apart from man's work. Salvation could not be earned by any deed of man. Man could not muster a holy nature or holy behavior due to their sinful heredity and propensity to yield themselves to the ungodly lusts of their flesh and mind (2:1-3; Hebrews 12:14). Thus, only the mercy of God resulted in salvation (Titus 3:5). Upon seeing the faith of man redirected from oneself to the Savior, the Lord dispensed mercy and grace in order to justify the sinner, reappoint his position before God, and redirect his walk entirely (2:7-10; 4:1; Romans 5:1).

The important list of 2:5-6 warrants more attention due to its doctrinal and ethical implications. First, the new "quickened" state of the believer put the believer "together" with Jesus. Though his previous "deadness" disabled the unbeliever from obtaining God's promises,

the redemptive work of Christ provided a new standing by grace through faith. Paul parenthetically broke from his discussion in order to insert the pertinent point that salvation was by grace alone through faith alone. However, the caveat briefly captured in verse 5 received direct declaration in 2:8-10. In conjunction with salvation, the new believer was also “raised up” from the separation caused by sin. God performed this same operation on His own Son that Christians might walk in the newness of life (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:4). Though not directly stated in the Ephesian text, the implication of this statement was such that the new believer should have known that the old nature was crucified, that he could reckon his body to be dead to sin, and that he could yield himself in obedience as a righteous instrument for God’s glory (Romans 6:6, 11, 13). Simultaneously, the new believer was made to sit in heavenly places. Culturally, there was a two-fold implication. First, Paul desired to counteract the idolatrous teaching that the goddess Artemis, whose cult was based in Ephesus, was to be worshipped in all areas of nature.¹¹ Paul previously noted the fact that believers are blessed in “heavenly places” (1:3), and he reiterated this principle in 2:6. He emphasized that true worship is not directed toward nature, but toward Christ who dwells only in the heavenly realms. The redirection of Paul to the heavenly world affected the Ephesians since their previous idolatrous focus kept their spiritual vision centered on the world around them. Secondly, 2:6 was a prelude to Paul’s expanded teaching on heavenly citizenship as explained in 2:11-20. Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia, and the Roman citizenship it offered came with many privileges.¹² Despite the numerous benefits offered with Roman citizenship, such benefits were not worthy to

¹¹ Murphy-O’Connor, Jerome. *St. Paul’s Ephesus: Texts and Archaeology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008

¹² Kostenberger, Andreas J., L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles. *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009. 579.

be compared with the benefits of placement in heavenly places with Christ. The world could never duplicate the blessings afforded by Christ in heavenly places. Every Christian was afforded the opportunity to receive the grace of God and to inherit a new standing before God. This amazing promise stood in stark contrast to the results of dead living and the experience of carnality due to the lust of the flesh and of the mind. The unconverted experienced only the wrath of God, but the saved became recipients of grace and mercy. The truth of these verses should cause the believer to rejoice for the amazing grace bestowed upon them!

The sentence which ranged from verses 4 to 7 culminated with a statement of purpose for the transformative quickening in Christ. Paul stated that one of the intentions of the Lord in salvation was to show the “exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Those redeemed from the death of trespasses and sins have undergone a radical transformation. They have been delivered from the power of darkness through the blood of the powerful Son of God (Colossians 1:12-14; Romans 1:4, 16). Christians are testimonies of the saving grace of God that is evident through salvation. The full contrast of God’s riches of grace stood tall against the “prince’s” influence of sinners. In a new role, man became the object of God’s riches and was put on display for the world to behold. Although the world commended rebellion, such behavior produced only the testimony unfruitful despair. For the believer, such behavior was in “times past” and was never to be commended again (2:2-3). Presently, and for the ages to come, the believer would testify of the grace, mercy, and kindness of his Lord and Savior.

The Chiastic Structure

An intriguing literary technique that Paul used in this text was a chiasmic structure.¹³

Within the text of 2:1-7, there were two chiasms that presented parallel ideas in sections 2:1-3 and 2:4-7 as follows:

Ephesians 2:1-3:

a. And you

b. hath he quickened (2:1)

c. who were dead in trespasses and sins (2:1)

d. Wherein in time past (2:2)

e. ye walked according to the course of this world (2:2)

f. according to the prince of the power of the air (2:2)

f'. spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience

e'. Among whom also we all had our conversation (2:3)

d'. in times past (2:3)

c'. in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind (2:3)

b'. and were by nature the children of wrath,

a'. even as others (2:3)

In this chiasmic arrangement “and you,” as noted in *a*. is parallel to the last item, “even as others,” as noted in *a'*. The focus of this parallel was on the individual person. Next, “hath he quickened” in *b*. is parallel to “and were by nature the children of wrath” because they both focus on the nature of mankind. For the “quickened” the new nature of godliness was imparted. For the “children of wrath” the sin nature of Adamic heredity was still predominant. The focus shifted from the nature of man to the sinful conduct of man in the next parallel “who were dead

¹³ Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word*. 3d edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012, 100-102, 104.

in trespasses and sins,” as noted in *c*. and “in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,” as noted in *c*’. The timing of these events is viewed in parallel as well in *d*. and *d*’. For the believer who was quickened, the old nature was in “time past.” The ungodly lifestyle, or conversation, was focused upon in the next parallel of *e*. and *e*’. Finally, the chiasm climaxed with its central focus on the influencing agent for the wicked lifestyle, the prince of the power of the air whose spirit was apparent in the lives of the children of disobedience.

The second chiastic arrangement also presented parallels that aided the interpreter’s understanding of the passage.

Ephesians 2:4-7:

a. But God, (2:4)

b. who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us (2:4)

c. Even when we were dead in sins (2:5)

d. hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved;) (2:5)

d’. And hath raised *us* up together and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: (2:6)

c’. That in the ages to come (2:7)

b’. he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us (2:7)

a’. through Christ Jesus. (2:7)

The parallels began with a focus on God Himself, in verse 4 the reference is to “God” while in verse 7 it is “Christ Jesus.” The focus remained upon the Lord yet emphasizes His riches toward the redeemed as noted in *b*. and *b*’. However, in verse 4 the riches are “in mercy” and manifested through love whereas verse 7 shows that his riches are of “his grace” and manifested through “kindness.” Through such a comparison, these virtues were essentially

synonymous with one another. The parallel of *c.* and *c'* emphasize an element of time either past or future, respectively. The use of past tense in verse 5 shows the previous state of the believer who was dead in sins, while the parallel highlights the future glory of the believer in all the ages yet to come. The focal point of this chiasm was the action of God to quicken, raise, and place the believer in a redeemed relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Examined together, the focal point of each chiasm revealed the duality of 2:1-7. The overall theme of this section focused on the believer's past and present life due to the changes that result from redemption in Christ. The empowerment for each particular lifestyle was clearly identified in the chiastic focal point. Furthermore, the focal point also revealed the loyalties of the unbeliever and the believer. The unbeliever lived to revel in the rebellion that glorified the "prince of the power of the air" while the believer lived to rejoice in the goodness of God's gracious redemption. Through the use of this literary device, Paul was able to underscore his teachings on the distinctions between the righteous and the rebellious.

Compelling Conclusions from the Interpretive Journey

As a result of the exegetical analysis, one can better *grasp God's word* as one embarks on the "interpretive journey."¹⁴ The interpreter must understand the text in the historical setting and attempt to recreate the original situation as much as possible.¹⁵ The writer has established his identity as the Apostle Paul as he introduced his letter to the Ephesian church.¹⁶ The Ephesians would have readily received his letter and applied his teaching. The Ephesians knew Paul as he

¹⁴ Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word*. 3d edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012, 39-50.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Kostenberger, Andreas J., L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles. *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009, 579

previously spent many years ministering in the city. His overall purpose for this letter was to declare reconciliation and to promote unity in Christ. Additionally, unity in Christ should be readily apparent in the church as well. Furthermore, Paul sought to counteract the major cultural problem of idolatry, and his references to heavenly places were the most outstanding polemic against such practice.

Next, the cultural “river” to cross is narrow and shallow for the modern audience despite the historical context.¹⁷ The principles of the letter were written to Christians, and 2:1-7 focused on areas that were relevant to all people, including the lost and the saved. Both the historical audience and the modern reader are under the new covenant established by the Lord Jesus Christ. For the saved, a special significance could be felt given the explanation of one’s testimony prior to and after salvation. Moreover, crossing the river via the “principlizing bridge” is possible because the main principles of the text are easily summarized.¹⁸ Ephesians 2:1-7 explained the principle that people were separated from God due to their trespasses and sins prior to salvation in Christ. This separation stemmed from their natural sinful tendencies caused by their Adamic nature. Unbelievers were classified as the “children of disobedience” and “children of wrath” because they were influenced by an ungodly spirit. However, God saved sinners according to the richness of His mercy and grace and showed His love and kindness toward them through Christ. Sinners who were saved by grace through faith obtained a new standing before God: they were made alive, raised up, and placed in Christ. As a result, Christians will testify of God’s goodness throughout all ages. The New Testament harmonizes with this text in various passages. For example, the principle that sinners are separated from God is supported by

¹⁷ Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God’s Word*. 3d edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012, 39-50.

¹⁸Ibid.

Ephesians 2:12-13 and Isaiah 59:1-2. The teaching that the Adamic nature is passed on to all of Adam's progeny is directly stated in Romans 5:12. The references to the unsaved as "children of wrath" and "of disobedience" are supported by John 8:44 and John 3:36. Additionally, the teaching that Christ died for all despite the sinful tendencies of humanity is reinforced by Romans 5:8. The doctrine of salvation by grace alone through faith alone is sustained by Titus 3:5. Lastly, the doctrine that believers are risen with Christ is supported by Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12, 3:1. These New Testament principles are reflected in Ephesians 2:1-7 and are timeless truths. They are not bound by culture so they remain relevant to both the historical and the modern audience.¹⁹

As one looks to make application in "our town," the interpreter of the Scripture must create realistic situations that harmonize with the original intention yet remain viable for the contemporary audience.²⁰ Ephesians 2:1-7 was concentrated on doctrinal teaching. Although Paul's specific ethical teachings came later in the book, the principles of the text were practical for believers in today's society. Paul's desire (expressed in 1:18) for the Ephesians was for them to know the hope of their calling, to know the riches of God's glory in their inheritance, and to know the power of God toward those who believe. Based upon this pedagogical intention, Paul explained that a believer who was saved could live for the glory of God in all ages, both in their present time and in the one yet to come. Though the believer's former lifestyle was characterized by death and disobedience, his new life in Christ would be characterized by grace and faith. Good works should naturally follow the person who has been quickened, raised, and placed in Christ (2:8-10). His life should not reflect disobedient living reflective of God's wrath

¹⁹ Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word*. 3d edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012, 39-50

²⁰ Ibid.

and judgment, but should model holy living that manifested the grace of God. A modern example could be that of a man who subjugates his spouse and children using anger. Such behavior indicates that a spirit of disobedience is at work. Such a man satisfies himself by forcing his family to conform to his will. The husband and father should be filled with grace and lead by the Spirit instead of fulfilling the lusts of his flesh and of his mind. When a gentle man seeks to serve his family, he can portray the grace and kindness to his family that God has portrayed to him through salvation. In an additional application for the modern reader, the text points the believer to share his testimony of salvation by grace without works. With many lost sinners attempting to earn their way to heaven via good works, such a godly testimony from a believer who previously lived in disobedience (as all people have done) can be instrumental in the acceptance of the Gospel by an unbeliever.

Summarizing the Scriptural Study

Paul presented major arguments throughout the letter that dealt with the nature, standing, and purpose of the believer in Christ (1:3-10, 17-20) as well as the separation of the unbeliever from Christ in both position and practice. The concept of one's position in Christ (1:1, 3, 10, 12, 20) and a godly inheritance (1:14, 18) were major themes of the first chapter which set the stage for subsequent teachings. Since fulfilling such a godly purpose was only possible through Christ, Ephesians 2:1-7 serves to qualify the unfruitfulness practices of the unbeliever's life of sin. The text further served to demonstrate that fulfillment of God's eternal purpose was impossible without salvation through Christ. Additionally, Paul's development of the "in Christ" concept was contrasted in 2:1-7 with the statement that unbelievers were separated "in trespasses and sins." The only way to be placed in Christ was to be "made alive" by grace through faith.

Without faith and grace, one's position could not change, and one would only "walk according to the course of this world." Paul continued the argument in the passage immediately following in 2:11-13 as he stated that such separation from Christ due to one's trespasses and sins caused an alienation from the commonwealth of Israel and denied one's access to the covenants of promise. "Death" resisted the role of the Spirit (chapters 3, 5, and 6), negated one's opportunity to "walk" biblically (chapter 4), and disabled one's separation from uncleanness (chapter 5). As a result, the unbeliever was destitute of hope and without God. However, through salvation in Christ one could be brought close to God. Such emphasis on the positional and practical aspects of Paul's teaching positioned 2:1-7 to further distinguish one's position in Christ or in the world. When a believer lived for the glory of God his life no longer was characterized by death and disobedience, but reflected the his faith in the grace of God. Righteous living followed the person who was quickened, raised, and placed in Christ (2:5-6, 8-10). Ephesians 2:1-7 was an important piece of the Paul's discussion on the purpose of the believer. The believer was united with Christ and empowered to live in unity with the brethren of the church. The prayer of Paul can be answered by Christians today as they seek to know God and apply the principles of "grace-filled" living as afforded to them by the riches of God's glorious grace.

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