

The sacred text being analysed is Ephesians 2:1-10, which was written by Saint Paul the apostle. Saint Paul's original name or birth name was Saul. He was born in the town of Tarsus in Cilicia in 4BC and died in Rome. Paul is the author of many letters throughout the New Testament which he wrote in the literary form of 'epistles' or the Letters because he was in jail at the time and could not be physically present to whom he was writing the letters for. When Paul was writing the letter to the Ephesians, he was writing to not only the church of Ephesus but also the other churches and the small Christian communities that he founded while on his travels around Asia Minor (Meaning in Eph 2:1-10 R.E. booklet pg. 5-7). ①

The Book of Ephesians displays the powerful impact of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the individual and corporate life of believers. In this specific sacred text being analysed, Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul writes a vividly clear description of 'salvation' and of God's mercy and grace (foundationsforfreedom.net, 2015). The Book of Ephesians was written before the epistle of Philippians and after Galatians. All three of these letters were written while he was in jail. The Philippians includes the concepts of love; knowledge and peace while the epistle Galatians addresses the question of whether the Gentiles in Galatia were obliged to follow Mosaic Law to be part of the Christ community. Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians in an attempt to persuade the Ephesians in putting their faith in the hands of God (Wikipedia, Paul the Apostle, 2015). Ephesians 2:1-10 speaks of how God sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to save us from our sins and trespasses. If we break down this sacred text down verse by verse we are able to identify the ideas of Christ as our saviour and God's mercy and grace. ②

Paul writes of the spiritual state that the people of Asia Minor were in before and after their coming to faith in Christ in the first three verses, Ephesians 2:1-3. Through the use of interpretation methods such as 'historical criticism' and 'redaction criticism', which is both the use of literary and historical context, we are able to find and identify different meanings within the text that Paul has written (Meanings in Eph 2:1-10 pg. 8-9). ①

In verse one, it says "you are dead through the trespasses and sins", Paul is saying that we are spiritually dead (not physically) due to our sins and trespasses, and have not truly lived in the eyes of God. The Greek word for dead is 'nekros', meaning corpse or dead body, but we know that Paul is not speaking about physical death (VersebyVerseMinistry, 2010). He speaks of the actual spirit state or nature that a non-believer is in. This state is compared to a corpse or dead body, meaning that the nature of a non-believer is dead and cannot be revived until they are saved through Jesus Christ (Swain, L. 1980; Ephesians, New Testament message 13. Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications). ②

In verses 2-3, it says "in which you once lived, following the course of the world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient". "All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else". In these verses, it says that we are in this 'dead' spiritual state because of the "course of the world" we live in. He says that every man and woman in this course of the world is spiritually dead from the time we are born. He says that we are spiritually dead when we were born because of the 'sin of Adam and Eve' which we all inherit at birth "we are by nature children of wrath". ②

When Paul writes "like everyone else" (VersebyVerseMinistry, 2010) he could be saying that we are in the same spiritual state as non-believers, and will continue to be in that state unless we allow the work of God to revive our spirit. Just like the sin of Adam and Eve, we can find Satan at the source of spiritual deadness because he was the first to fall, and ultimately he influenced the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. ③

Paul explains that all humanity shares the same starting point as "children of wrath". No one is born a Christian. He then continues on to the next verses to explain how people are saved from this 'dead' spiritual state through Christ (Wikipedia, 2015). ②

Verses 4-5 say, "But God, who is rich in mercy, out of mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us" "even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ-by grace you have been saved-", Paul speaks of how God is "rich in mercy" and how we are rescued from this state of spiritual deadness. He says that due to God's "great love", he acted to save us. God saves us not because we earned it but because his reason for saving us was entirely His own (Swain, L. 1980). Paul then continues to explain ②

how God makes us “alive together with Christ” when we were “dead through our trespasses”. Again he speaks of how we (the people of Asia Minor) are in this state of spiritual deadness because of our trespasses but because God makes us alive (spiritually) through Jesus Christ. Because man does not normally seek God, said in Romans 3:10-11, it is God who must act first to save us from our sins and trespasses (VersebyVerseMinistry, 2010). Again the word dead ‘nekros’ is used to suggest that we cannot save ourselves because we are like dead corpses who can only be revived by God. Paul says it is God who made us ‘alive’ again.

Verses 6-7 say... Paul explains to us how we are raised up with Christ, just like how Jesus rose from the dead, we are now raised up from our state of spiritual deadness. Paul writes that Christ has “seated us with him in the heavenly places”, meaning although we may be physically alive here on earth, Jesus Christ has assigned a place spiritually at the right hand of God. Paul explains that being saved is not only a physical thing but more importantly, we are saved spiritually. Salvation is a change of our former selves which were dead in sin to a state where we are alive by God through Christ. That is why Paul writes that we are seated with Christ, because this spiritual state we are now in is irreversible. Verse 7 speaks of how we have become God’s anointed audience, who will receive God’s grace, kindness, and love. Paul explains that because of this we may glorify Him for it in the years to come (VersebyVerseMinistry, 2010).

Verses 8-10 say... Paul sums up or completes his teaching of Salvation and how God saves through grace (Swain, L. 1980). In verse 8, Paul explains how and why we are saved, that is because of grace and our faith. Paul says that it is by grace we have received faith.

We need to understand that it is not by our own efforts that we have left that state of spiritual deadness but instead it was a “gift of God”. Paul further explains that it was not by our own efforts, in verse 9 when he says “not the results of works, so that no one may boast”. This means that no one can claim that they themselves have saved them from being in a state of spiritual deadness and no one should ever “boast” that they have, instead they should thank God because it was a result of his love and mercy. Paul says that salvation has fallen upon them all due to God, because we are like “dead corpses” which cannot do anything unless we are revived by God’s grace. Paul also says that a person is born twice in their lifetime; the first is when you are physically born and second, is when you are saved by God through his grace and raised from your former state of spiritual deadness. It is through God that he has given us the “gift of God”, the gift of faith (Swain, L. 1980). Paul states that we are “what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works”, meaning we have become what we are through the works of God. Paul says that God’s acts may have been done so we might do his “good works” because we are “created in Christ Jesus” (Sparknotes, 2015). These three verses give the answers to why we are saved and who saved us, it was by God through his grace and Christ.

Overall, the Letter to the Ephesians explains what Paul believes is the reason why the people of Ephesus and Asia Minor should put their faith in the Lord God, because God is the one who saved us from our “sins and trespasses”. Paul also writes in the Letter to the Ephesians to convey to us the idea or point that it was not by our own efforts that we were saved from this state of spiritual deadness, but by the works of God. He wants us to know that “we are what he has made us” we are what God has made us. We are called to God because it was by his grace that we were saved and because of the gift of faith he gave to us was a result of his grace. In the Book of Ephesians, Paul clarifies the teachings of Christ, the church, and Salvation brought by God through Jesus Christ.