

## EPHESIANS: GOD'S GLORY IN THE CHURCH (study 3)

# Our Hope: Heirs of Heaven

*I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know THE HOPE to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints ... you were called to ONE HOPE ... -- EPHESIANS 1:18; 4:4 (NIV)*

### Study 3a: ARE YOU DEAD or ALIVE? (2:1-5)

#### 2:1-3 How may we know we have been saved? (1:19,20; 1 John 3:1-10)

Spiritual death is a separation of soul and spirit from God and is the common heritage of all, unless, through divine grace, they experience regeneration by the Spirit of God. [Chafer 68]

In Scripture the word life is the term commonly used to express estate of union with God, and death a state of alienation from him. [Hodge 96]

[2:1] As spiritual death is nothing else than the alienation of the soul from God, we are all born as dead men, and we live as dead men, until we are made partakers of the life of Christ, – agreeably to the words of our Lord, "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." (John v.25.) ... Let this, then, be held as a fixed principle, that the union of our soul with God is the true and only life; and that out of Christ we are altogether dead, because sin, the cause of death, reigns in us. [Calvin 219,220]

**"spiritual death is nothing else than the alienation of the soul from God"**

– John Calvin

#### 2:4-5 What 3 attributes of God do we deny if we scorn assurance of present salvation? (1 John 3:1)

We need, I think, to be more grateful to God for his wrath, and to worship him that because his righteousness is perfect he always reacts to evil in the same unchanging, predictable, uncompromising way. Without his moral constancy we could enjoy no peace. ... neither education nor legislation can rescue human beings

**"A radical disease requires a radical remedy"**

– John Stott

from spiritual death, captivity or condemnation. A radical disease requires a radical remedy. [Stott 76-79]

### Study 3b: The PURPOSE of GRACE (2:6-10)

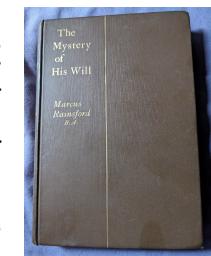
#### 2:6-7 How do our privileges in Christ extend far beyond the present life? (3:20-21)

With full recognition of the depths to which man has fallen, it is nevertheless declared that there is abundant salvation for all who *believe*: a salvation which so far exceeds the ruin that it not only reverses all that man lost by the fall, but it lifts him up far above his original unfallen state to the highest conceivable position in heaven, there to share forever the fellowship and the glory of the Triune God. [Chafer 71]

And why was it all done? Assuredly, as we have seen, for pure love to us, but also so as to secure God's own glorification in His creatures' view for ever; for He, being what He is, cannot but work for the infinite end of His own glory. [Moule 76]

#### 2:8-9 Is it by our own will that we have achieved faith? (John 6:37,39,44)

There are multitudes of professing Christians who do not trust, or know, or believe that they are accepted in Him, and who do not enjoy the blessedness and rest of looking up into their Father's face and recognising the love bestowed on them in the Father's Beloved, and the security that love has surrounded them! They think they are only accepted according to the measure of their prayers, their merits, their good works, and their faith, instead of according to the measure of the Father's everlasting love for His Son. Yet His life on earth, His temptations, His conflicts. His suffering death, and then His resurrection and ascension, were only the outflow of the everlasting love that gave us a place and a name and acceptance in the Beloved. [Rainsford 37]



## Dead – and not just figuratively!

The death to which Paul refers is not a figure of speech, as in the parable of the Prodigal Son, "This my son was dead"; it is a factual statement of everybody's spiritual condition outside Christ. And it is traced to their *trespasses and sins*. ... we are "dead" or "alienated from the life of God" (4:18). For true life, 'eternal life', is fellowship with the living God, and spiritual death is the separation from him which sin inevitably brings: "Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you so that he does not hear." (Isa.59:2) Lots of people who make no Christian profession whatever, who even openly repudiate Jesus Christ, appear to be very much alive. One has the vigorous body of an athlete, another the lively mind of a scholar, a third the vivacious personality of a filmstar. Are we to say that such people, if Christ has not saved them, are dead? Yes, indeed, we must and do say this very thing. For in the sphere which matters supremely (which is neither the



body, nor the mind, nor the personality, but the soul) they have no life. And you can tell it. They are blind to the glory of Jesus Christ, and deaf to the voice of the Holy Spirit. They have no love for God, no sensitive awareness of his personal reality, no leaping of their spirit towards him in the cry, 'Abba, Father', no longing for fellowship with his people. They are as unresponsive to him as a corpse. So we should not hesitate to affirm that a life without God (however physically fit and mentally alert the person may be) is a living death, and that those who live it are dead even while they are living. (Cf 1 Tim. 5:6) [Stott 71-72]

## 2:10 What actually has God predestined, making necessary our salvation? (1:3-6,11-12)

You see then that this word 'create' is enough to stop the mouths and put away the cackling of such as boast of having any merit. For when they say so, they presuppose that they were their own creators. [John Calvin in Stott 84]

This metaphor of 'walking' or 'going' is not Greek, but Hebrew in its origin. It is in harmony with the fact that from the first Christianity was proclaimed as a Way (Acts ix 2, xviii 25,26). [Robinson 153]

Thus the paragraph ends as it began with our human "walk", a Hebrew idiom for our manner of life. Formerly we walked in **trespasses and sins** in which the devil had trapped us; now we walk in **good works** which God has eternally planned for us to do. ... True, the **only hope** for dead people lies in a resurrection. But then the living God is the God of resurrection. He is even more than that: he is the God of creation. Both metaphors indicate the indispensable necessity of divine grace. For resurrection is out of death, and creation is out of nothing. That is the true meaning of "salvation". [Stott 85, emph. added]

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## Salvation is of God – from start to finish!

Hence we see, that the apostle leaves nothing to men in procuring salvation. In these three phrases, – *not of yourselves*, – *it is the gift of God*, – *not of works*, – he embraces the substance of his long argument in the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians, that righteousness comes to us from the mercy of God alone, – is offered to us in Christ by the gospel, – and is received by faith alone, without the merit of works ... Some room must always remain for man's boasting, so long as, independently of grace, merits are of any avail. Paul's doctrine is overthrown, unless the whole praise is rendered to God alone and to his mercy ... What remains now for free-will, if all the good works which proceed from us are acknowledged to have been the gifts of the Spirit of God? Let godly readers weigh carefully the apostle's words. He does not say that we are assisted by God. He does not say that the will is prepared, and is then left to run by its own strength. He does not say that the power of choosing aright is bestowed upon us, and that we are afterwards left to make our own choice. Such is the idle talk in which those persons who do their utmost to undervalue the grace of God are accustomed to indulge. But the apostle affirms that we are God's work, and that every good thing in us is his creation ... [Calvin 228,229]

