

The Book of Ephesians
Ephesians 2:1-3
Session Eighteen: Our Time Past Condition

Ephesians 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
² 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: ³ 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.

Before we were justified unto eternal life (JUEL), we were dead in trespasses and sins; that was our standing before God. What made us spiritually dead is that we had no connection with God. Being spiritually dead does not mean that our human spirit was dead; it was just dead to God. Do you know what your human spirit is for? It is for connecting to other spirits. That means our human spirit was naturally able to connect with the spirits of other people and any other spirit creature such as Satan or any of his minions. That is a real advantage for Satan! He has unfettered access from our childhood onward; plenty of time to build up strongholds in us.

Therefore, we walked in ways that were contrary to God. One of those ways is that we walked according to the course of this world (CotW).

What is the course of this world? The course of this world is the moral direction in which our society is moving as it influences the conduct and behavior of people. To live according to the course of this world is to live in conformity with the cares, temptations, desires, customs and manners of the culture at large.

The CotW seeks to dictate what is “normal and acceptable” and conform everyone to that behavior. But since the sinful course this world is taking is constantly moving further away from God, what is considered “normal” is increasingly ungodly.

The course of this world dictates the norms for living in any society. It will put pressure on people to conform to its standard. As believers who are involved in a sonship education, we will be judged by how we spend our time, what things are important to us, the way we conduct ourselves, and our motives.

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There are three phrases in vs. 2, separated by commas. I see these three as all referring to the same thing, not describing different things that influenced us back then. In other words, I do not see this as saying that we were influenced by the world, and the devil, although that is certainly true. But what I see this verse as telling us is, the way we walked prior to our salvation was according to (phrase 1) the CotW.

In turn, the CotW is according to (phrase 2) “the prince of the power of the air.” Instead of giving us a separate thing, I believe Paul is telling us where the CotW comes from, or who is behind it.

And lastly, we see a further description of Satan’s work as he is said to be (phrase 3) the spirit which works in the children of disobedience. Who are the “children of disobedience?” I believe this is referring to lost people.

Satan, who is at work in every spiritually dead person, works to create the CotW; the defining character or mood of a particular period, especially as reflected in the prevailing ideas, beliefs, and attitudes of the time.

The CotW is contrary to God. Satan devised the CotW to reflect the prevailing ungodly ideas, beliefs and attitudes of the lost, while at the same time, shaming the saved into silence or intimidating the saved into conformity with the world.

According to Ephesians 2:1-3, Satan is the one charting the course of this world.

Ephesians 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
2 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:

His purpose is to hold on to his usurped control of this world.

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2 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 man who has not been “quicken” cannot help but be influenced and controlled by the world, as he is dead in trespasses and sins. He does not know God or God’s ways.

This is why our apostle has written for us, not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind by the word of truth (Paul’s doctrines and exhortations).

As Paul introduces Satan as “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience,” this is a good place to talk some about devil possession.

First, let’s look at the specific terminology.

The word “possessed” is used 15 times from Matthew’s gospel to 1 Corinthians. After that, the word does not appear in the remainder of the New Testament (NT). Of those 15 mentions, two of them are not about unclean spirits at all.

Of the remaining 13 times, the phrase “possessed **with** devils or unclean spirits is mentioned 11 times.

Matthew 4:24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were **possessed with devils**, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

Matthew 8:16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were **possessed with devils**: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

The phrase “possessed **of**” devils or unclean spirits is only mentioned two times. The thing to notice is that the bible never uses the phrase “possessed by devils.” If you are possessed “of” something, it merely means that you have it, not that it owns you. For example, a man might be possessed of great riches. But it is him who has the ownership, not the other way round. The point I am making is that being “possessed of devils” or “possessed with devils” is different than being “demon possessed.” That last phrase indicates something a little different than what the bible is talking about.

Here is the second issue about possession. A man may invite Satan or his devils to come into his life and I think they will do that. I think that gives them a maximum amount of control over the man. We would say he is possessed of devils.

It is impossible for a saved person to be possessed “of” or “with” devils. Why? Because the Spirit of God has taken up residence in the human spirit of the believer. When we trusted Christ as Savior, the person of the Holy Ghost was given unto us, and He is not sharing space with the Adversary.

You might still be fighting the old flesh patterns in your soul, but the issue in your spirit has been resolved once and for all. And it must be that way or else you could never be conformed to the image of God’s Son. The removal of any connection to Satan in your spirit is part of the “old things” which are passed away, and the Spirit of God living in you is part of the “things” which are become new.

But, a man does not have to invite Satan into his life in order to be manipulated or influenced by Satan. In fact, Satan is influencing every unsaved man and woman in the world. Satan seeks to exert this influence by using the world (CotW), and by planting certain thoughts into the mind. These thoughts are always disguised as our thoughts and never does Satan reveal they are from him. The lost man likely has no idea just how much he is under the control of Satan. He may not be participating in satanic rituals and blood sacrifices and oaths, but his thoughts and behaviors are very much under the influence of Satan.

Christ came to destroy the works of Satan, not only in the prophetic program with Israel, but also in the lives of those who trust in Christ as Savior in this dispensation of Gentile grace (DoGG).

Now, I want us to take a look back in Israel's program at what Christ was doing with them to destroy Satan's works.

Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.²⁴ And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

Devils are spirits. Lost people are dead spiritually in that they have no connection with God; they are separated from Him. They cannot function in accordance with God. But they can function in accordance with other spirits. When Adam fell, what he passed on to his children was his separation from God. Therefore, when you get saved, the first thing God heals (saves) is your spirit. You are a tripart being: spirit, soul and body.

Looking at the Matthew passage, look at the three ways that Jesus heals them. He healed:

- Those possessed with devils (in their spirit)
- Those who were lunatic (crazy in their mind, which is your soul)
- Those that had the palsy (like cerebral palsy; your body is affected)

So, the Lord is healing their spirit, soul and body. This is why the Gadarene, after he gets saved is seated, clothed and in his right mind.

Now, what about us as members of the body of Christ? Our spirit is immediately saved upon our trusting Christ. That is our justification and the start of the adoption process by making us children of God.

Just as the Lord Jesus casted out any devils in the spirit of an Israelite, when we trust Christ, any spirit other than God's Spirit is cast out of our human spirit. And that is a permanent condition

which means we can never be possessed by any devil or unclean spirit in our human spirit. Why? Because now you belong to Christ!

Our soul is being saved daily as He delivers us not only from the penalty of sin, but from the power of sin. That is our sanctification and the continuation of the adoption process whereby we are educated to labor with our Father in His business.

Whatever we lack in this process, at the end of our life on this earth, it will be completed at the JSOC and our continuing education in the heavenly places (Philippians 1:6).

And, since we are sealed until the day of redemption, we do not have to worry about how far along we are in the sanctification process, as we will be presented blameless before the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This ongoing, sanctification process for our soul is what Paul is referring to in Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

This is that daily renewing that goes on in our minds (our souls) as the word works to conform us to the image of God's Son.

Finally, one day, He will redeem our bodies, which will be the eternal vehicle for our soul and spirit. That is our exaltation and the culmination of the adoption process.

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This is the way we lived our lives when we were dead in trespasses and sins. We were by nature, the children of wrath in the sense that we had not yet been justified in the eyes of God; therefore, we were still under the threat of His wrath.

So, what is the difference between the lusts of our flesh, the desires of our flesh and the desires of the mind?

The "lusts of our flesh" are "excessive desires," which go beyond the normal desires which God has placed in us for our own good and survival. For example, our excessive appetite for anything which is needful. When we entertain these excesses, they lead to sin.

The “desires of the flesh” are about our willfulness for things which are opposed to God, our insistence to have our own way. God desires for us to be submissive to His will, not to pursue our own will.

The “desires of the mind” refers to those things which we occupy our mind with, especially as they oppose godliness. This is why we are exhorted to guard our minds. We are to discern what we allow into our minds in terms of edifying. Philippians 4:8 gives us a list of things to think about.

Looking at the first three verses in Ephesians 2, Paul is painting a picture of who we were before we were quickened in Christ.

The second thing Paul does in chapter two is show us what God has done for us. This is the theme of vv. 4-7.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, **hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)** ⁶ **And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:** ⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

For this session, we only have time to look at one component of the passage, “and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” This is about a very important issue. Remember the context. The context is who we used to be before we were saved, how Satan influenced us as children of disobedience and how we all had our conversations in the lusts of our flesh, and the desires of our flesh and mind. We were by nature the children of wrath.

But God...quickened us together with Christ...raised us up together...made us sit together in heavenly places...” This is about a furtherance of what was accomplished by Christ to undo the work of Satan.

Where is Christ seated? At the right hand of the Father. And where is that in relation to other positions of authority in the heavenly places? Christ is seated “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named...” In other words, Christ is far above every other position of authority.

And because we are “in Christ Jesus,” we are made to sit together with Him in heavenly places which means we also are far above all of Satan’s positions of authority and jurisdiction. He has no authority over us, and he has no jurisdiction to command us. In other words, his power over us has been broken. We are no longer subject to him. In Christ, he and all his realm are subject to us!

Do you recall what the disciples said in Luke 10:17? That “even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.” If that was true for Israel, why wouldn’t it be true for the members of Christ’s body?

I know this passage is often looked at, as though this is speaking of the certainty of our one day being up in the heavenly places (HP), seated with Christ, but I think it is more than that. This is about the foundation for how we break the power of the Adversary in our daily lives.

He no longer has the power over us that he once had. We are no longer at his beck and call. We have been set free in Christ.

Paul is teaching the Ephesians that, in the midst of all their trials and tribulations and sufferings, there is something that is true of them; and true of them right now! That is the context!

Take for example verse 5.

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

When were we quickened? Are we waiting for that to happen at a future date? Or is it an accomplished fact? According to Paul, we were quickened when we were “dead in sins.” And look what follows:

Ephesians 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

Verse 6 starts with an “And.” Where is the postponement to a later day? That is not the way Paul describes our being raised or being seated in heavenly places. The way Paul describes it, all of this is an accomplished fact.

Just as we “are saved” (as a past event), just as we are “quickened” as a past event, we are also “raised” and “seated” (as a past event).

We are co-crucified, co-buried, co-raised and co-seated with Christ in heavenly places right now, as it pertains to what we are subject to.

All the tenses which Paul uses in vv. 4-7 are in the past! He does not say God will quicken us, or that God will raise us or that we will be seated in heavenly places. He says this is already done as a completed event!

So how is this possible? It is possible only in Christ.

One more thing: there is an additional element that we need to think about: Ephesians 2:6 is designed to get us thinking differently about ourselves. Because we are co-crucified, co-resurrected, co-ascended, and co-seated with Christ in the heavenly places, it is kind of like God has an office up there in the heavenly places for you and your name is already on the door.

Everyone can see it and they know there will be a day when you will physically occupy that office. To us the illustrational context of a job where we are laboring with our Father, means that we are already hired, we are on the payroll, we are now officially a part of the Father's business.

The only difference is that, right now, we are working "away from our office." Can that be done? Of course it can, people do it all the time in earthly jobs.

Think of it this way, we have a seat with Christ up there, right now, and our name is on it. (By the way, a "seat" is a position of authority.)

Until we get there physically, we are supposed to be working in the same manner and in the same capacity as if we were already seated up there as members of His body. Let this idea transform you. Spend some time meditating on this idea; think about it.

This is how your Father sees you and thinks about you. Therefore, we need to start thinking about ourselves the same way. This is who we are supposed to be in our functional lives right now. Start acting, start making decisions, start talking like you are already up there, seated with Christ, because you are! You are just working away from your office. But you still represent the Father's business and you are still supposed to be involved in accomplishing it.

And right now, you are eligible for promotions!

Start living like who He has made you to be, do it in your everyday life. That is the main reason He has told you about it and what you are supposed to do with that information. You are supposed to let that transform you. Sure, be comforted by the assurance that you will be there one day, sure, lose your fear of death by the promise of resurrection, but let Ephesians 2:6 transform the way you live every single day!

When you trusted Christ, you were "Hired" for the Father's business. Here in Ephesians 2:6, you get to start living and behaving like whomever you want to be when you get up there.