

# Ephesians 2:1-10

AMAZING GRACE

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- ▶ One of the most debated religious question is, “How does a person make it to Heaven?” How would you answer that question?
- ▶ If you had to explain grace to a child, what would you say?
- ▶ To paraphrase the words of C.S. Lewis, we are not basically nice people who need only to clean up our act a bit; rather, we are rebels who need to lay down our arms. Because of sin, we are spiritually dead. It’s only when we respond to God’s gracious overtures, admit our sinfulness and helplessness, and humbly receive Christ’s offer of forgiveness and eternal life that we find life.

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- ▶ Grace
  - ▶ The grace of Christ is God's free and sovereign act of love and mercy in granting salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus, apart from anything men are or can do. It is absurd to accept a gracious salvation and then endeavor to maintain righteousness through human efforts, ceremonies, and rituals.
- ▶ Paul reminds us how formidably God's power has influenced our lives and how truly transformed we are in Christ Jesus.

# Ephesians 2:1-10

- ▶ 2:1 Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins.
- ▶ 2:2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.
- ▶ 2:3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else.
- ▶ 2:4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much,
- ▶ 2:5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)

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- ▶ 2:6 For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.
- ▶ 2:7 So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.
- ▶ 2:8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.
- ▶ 2:9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.
- ▶ 2:10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

# Ephesians 2:1-10

- ▶ 2:1 Once you **were dead** because of your disobedience and your many sins.
  - ▶ Man does not merely need a guide or a teacher; he is spiritually and morally dead and needs someone able to resurrect his spirit and transform his moral essence.
  - ▶ Total depravity and lostness resulting in an utter inability to know or please God.
  - ▶ Mirror: Picture where God found us. We were in a death trap of inferior lifestyle, constantly living below the blueprint measure of our lives.

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- ▶ 2:2 You used to live in sin, **just like the rest of the world**, obeying the devil—the **commander of the powers in the unseen world**. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.
  - ▶ “course of this world” – A reference to the ungodly world structure, that system of entities and mind-sets that sets itself up against God and his rule.
  - ▶ The mood and manner of society is shaped by “the commander of the powers in the unseen world,” a title for Satan as he exercises influence globally and within each culture.

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- ▶ 2:3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and **inclinations** of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were **subject to God's anger**, just like everyone else.
  - ▶ Inclinations – Literally “a thinking through.” The word suggests understanding, insight, meditation, reflection, perception, the gift of apprehension, the faculty of thought. When this faculty is renewed by the Holy Spirit the whole mindset changes from the fearful negativism of the carnal mind to the vibrant, positive thinking of the quickened spiritual mind.
  - ▶ Subject to God's Anger – The inevitable end of “those who refuse to obey God” is to come under the condemnation of God's righteous anger, a justifiable judgement by having violated known boundaries of spiritual and moral duty. (Romans 1:18-21)



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- ▶ 2:4 - But God is so **rich in mercy**, and he **loved us so much**,
  - ▶ Rich in Mercy – God lavishes compassion and pity on those He loves, despite their abject sinfulness
  - ▶ Mercy – Meaning compassion, tender mercy, kindness, or outward manifestation of pity.
  - ▶ Loved us so much – (Agapao & Agape) Unconditional love, love by choice and by an act of his will. Denotes unconquerable benevolence and undefeatable goodwill. Will never seek anything but the highest good for fellow mankind. It doesn't need a chemistry, an affinity, or a feeling. This love only belongs to the Christian community.

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- ▶ 2:5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he **gave us life** when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's **grace** that you have been **saved!**)
  - ▶ Gave us life – A reference to the supernatural act of regeneration, but also with the added nuance of sustaining and preserving life.
  - ▶ Grace – Signifies unmerited favor, undeserved blessing, a free gift.
  - ▶ Saved – Meaning to save, heal, cure, preserve, keep safe and sound, rescue from danger or destruction, deliver. Saves from physical death by healing and from spiritual death by forgiving sin and its effects. “To give new life” and “to cause to have a new heart.”
  - ▶ Mirror: We had no contribution to our salvation! God's master-plan unfolded in the mystery of the gospel declaring our joint inclusion in Christ's death and resurrection; God found us in Christ before he lost us in Adam! In the economy of God, when Jesus died we died. God saw us in Christ, in his death and resurrection before we saw ourselves there! He declared our co-resurrection with Christ 800 BC (Hos 6:1)!

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- ▶ 2:6 For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and **seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.**
  - ▶ Seated us... - In the original Greek, the term “together” appears 3 times in v5 & 6 to note or union with Christ.
    - ▶ 1. in His Resurrection
    - ▶ 2. in His Ascension
    - ▶ 3. in His present rule at God's right hand.
  - ▶ From this place of partnership, He grants that we share in the present works of His Kingdom power.
  - ▶ Mirror – Our joint position in Christ defines us; this can never again be a distant goal to reach through religious devotion or striving, but our immediate reference.

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- ▶ 2:7 So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and **kindness** toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.
  - ▶ Kindness – Goodness in action, sweetness of disposition, gentleness in dealing with others, benevolence, kindness. The word describes the ability to act for the welfare of those taxing your patience. The Holy Spirit removes abrasive qualities from the character of the one under His control.
  - ▶ Mirror – In a single triumphant act of righteousness God saved us from the “guttermost” to the uttermost. There we are now, revealed in Christ in the highest possible position of bliss!

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- ▶ 2:8 God saved you by his **grace** when you **believed**. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.
  - ▶ Grace describes the undeserved kindness by which salvation is given, but it is also the power-word describing the Holy Spirit's operational means. Grace is a force as well as a favor, a verb as well as a noun.
  - ▶ Believed – Meaning conviction, confidence, trust, belief, reliance, trustworthiness, and persuasion. In the New Testament setting it is a divinely implanted principle of inward confidence, assurance, trust, and reliance in God and all that He says. The word sometimes denotes the object or content of belief.

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- ▶ 2:9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.
- ▶ Mirror 2:9 - If this could be accomplished through any action of yours then there would be ground for boasting.

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- ▶ 2:10 For we are God's **masterpiece**. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.
  - ▶ Masterpiece
    - ▶ Can have the meaning of a work of art.
    - ▶ The word signifies that which is manufactured, a product, a design produced by an artisan. Emphasizes God as the Master Designer, the universe as His creation and the redeemed believer as His new creation. Before conversion our lives had no rhyme or reason. Conversion brought us balance, symmetry, and order. We are God's poem, his work of art.
  - ▶ The genius of God's new creation in each believer is that He renovates the nature of His redeemed children to make good things a living possibility.

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## ▶ Mirror

- ▶ God has done everything possible to find spontaneous and effortless expression of his character in us in our everyday lifestyle.
- ▶ God has prepared a highway for us to lead us out like kings, just like the Oriental custom, where people would go before a king to level the roads to make it possible for the king to journey with ease and comfort.



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- ▶ When we accept the finished work of Christ on our behalf, we act by the faith supplied by God's grace. When a person chokes or drowns and stops breathing there is nothing he can do. If he ever breathes again, it will be because someone else starts him breathing. A person who is spiritually dead cannot even make a decision of faith unless God first breathes into him the breath of spiritual life. Faith is simply breathing the breath that God's grace supplies. Yet, the paradox is that we must exercise it and bear the responsibility if we do not.

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- ▶ Charles Spurgeon wrote: “Faith occupies the position of a channel or conduit pipe. Grace is the fountain and the stream. Faith is the aqueduct along which the mercy flood flows down to refresh the thirsty sons of men.
- ▶ Love is one of God’s intrinsic attributes, but when this love is related to sinners, it becomes grace and mercy. God is “rich in mercy” and in “grace”, and these riches make it possible for sinners to be saved.

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- ▶ Is it any wonder that the unsaved person is disobedient to God? He is controlled by the world, the flesh, and the Devil, the three great enemies of God! And he cannot change his own nature or, of himself, overcome the world and the Devil. He needs outside help, and that help can come only from God.
  - ▶ Why do sinners behave like sinners?
  - ▶ Why is it impossible for a person to overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil on his or her own?

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- ▶ Too many Christians think that conversion is the only important experience, and that nothing follows. But this is wrong. We can use the resurrection of Lazarus as an example. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He said, “Loose him, and let him go.” In other words, “This man is now alive. Get him out of the graveclothes!”
  - ▶ In what ways do Christians often “stay in their graveclothes?”

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- ▶ If God is the author of good works, is it possible for a non-believer to do good works?
  - ▶ Why or why not?
- ▶ What do you think are the greatest obstacles to accepting the good news?
- ▶ What is significant about the truth that God saved us “while we were still sinners”?
- ▶ Paul talks more about what God has done for us in Romans 5:6-11