

## Ephesians Week 3

### 2:1-10 Summary

#### **Summary of the Text**

The previous section ended with Paul praying that the Ephesians would comprehend deeper and deeper the power of God which is available to the Ephesians. He then went on to show how Jesus' resurrection and exaltation is the prime example of that power. In this section Paul begins to show how this resurrection power is already at work in the believers life. He does so by contrasting the past and the present state of believers.

In the past believers, both Jewish and Gentile Christians, were dead, living like the dead, under the rulership of the powers, enslaved to the desires of the sinful flesh, and ultimately under God's wrath which is his righteous judgement. The picture could not be any more bleak. But it was in the context of our absolute deadness that God made us alive, raised us and seated us with Christ.

Paul stresses that this was done, not due to any merit of our own - we were thoroughly dead, but because God himself is rich in mercy and great in love. And he points out that the purpose of God's rescue of us is so that our life in Christ might proclaim to the world in ages to come that God is loving and kind, in short that he keeps his covenantal promises. Ultimately, it is God's unmerited grace which shows his loving kindness. Finally, we have been restored to our original created purpose, to walk in the good works which God intended for us from the beginning; namely, stewarding God's good creation.

#### **Points of Application**

The biggest application point regards status. Too often we identify ourselves as being sinners, or simply human. Paul demonstrates this is an inappropriate description for the Christian. We once were sinners, ruled by the powers, found in the flesh, and in Adam. But, now, we are saints, ruled by Christ, found in the Spirit, and in Christ. This isn't to say that we do not sin, but we are talking about status. We have moved from the old age to the new. We have moved from death to life. We have moved from powerlessness to powerfulness - all in Christ. So we are called to be what we are - live into what God has done.

Second, this realized power in the Christian life is balanced by the need to continue to pray, like Paul, for a deepening understanding of this power available to the believers in their daily lives. We are not to become complacent or overly 'victorious' Christians, as if there was no on going putting to death of the old man or woman.

#### **Discussion**

Our main discussion was around how the terms 'Jew' and 'Israel' is redefined or used by Paul. Basically, Paul talks about Jews who have not accepted the gospel, those he calls 'Israel according to the flesh'. But he also redefines Israel, saying, in Romans, not all Jews are Jews and not all Israel is Israel. Instead, there are 'in the secret Jews' whose hearts are circumcised. And so now, Israel has been redefined to mean Jew plus Gentile believers of Christ.