



**“By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).**

## **The Way of Salvation**

**Truth:** Salvation is wholly by grace through faith.

Text: Ephesians 2:1-13

“We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly by grace through the mediatorial office of the Son of God. By the appointment of the Father, the Son freely took upon himself man's nature, yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for sins. Having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven. Uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior” (Cobb's Baptist Church Manual, page 76).

All human beings are lost, but all hope is not lost. *“God hath concluded them all in unbelief”* for the gracious purpose *“that he might have mercy upon all”* (Romans 11:32). He has a loving concern for mankind. He *“will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”* (I Timothy 2:4).

Ephesians 2 is one of the finest passages in the Bible on the subject of the salvation of sinners. It sets forth man's need of salvation, God's provision of salvation, and man's response to the salvation God has provided. The first portion of the chapter is the text for this study. Read it over and over as you continue with the lesson comments.

### **I. MAN'S NEED OF SALVATION (Ephesians 2:1, 2)**

**A. Man needs salvation because he is dead in sin** (verse 1). Take care about that term *“dead”* when it is applied to spiritual things. The meaning of

death is separation. To say a person is dead in sins means his sins have separated him from God. God warned, *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die"* (Ezekiel 18:20); *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23); *"Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death"* (James 1:15). He could not say it more plainly than that, could He? Sin separates you from God with dread and eternal consequences.

**B. Man needs salvation because he follows by nature the course of this world** (verse 2). The Bible commonly uses the term *"world"* to refer to human society, the world of mankind. It informs us that Satan is "the god of this world" whose work is to blind the eyes of lost men and women, *"lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"* (II Corinthians 4:4). The one who is a friend of this world system is the enemy of God (James 4:4). When one walks *"according to the course of this world"* (Ephesians 2:2) he is walking in rebellion against God. One who follows such a course is in dire need of salvation in Christ.

**C. Man needs salvation because he is under the control of the devil, "the prince of the power of the air"** (verse 2). Sinners are in *"the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will"* (II Timothy 2:26). He is their father (John 8:44) and they obey the same motives which move him. The children of God are clearly distinguished from the children of the devil by their deeds and attitudes (I John 3:10). Having submitted himself to the control of the devil, the person without Christ becomes the bondsman of Satan (Romans 6:16). Such a person needs deliverance.

**D. Man needs salvation because he is controlled by the passions of the flesh, "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind"** (verse 3). God has warned, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). It is God's purpose to save the sinner, *"that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God"* (I Peter 4:2). One who lives under the domination of the passions of his flesh nature needs redemption in Jesus Christ.

**E. Man needs salvation because he has inherited a depraved nature, being "by nature the children of wrath, even as others"** (verse 3). We call that "indwelling sin" or "total and inherent depravity." It means the whole of human nature is warped and weakened toward sin. Romans 2:1-19 describes the lifestyle such a nature prefers. Galatians 5:19-21 lists the works such a nature produces. That is not human nature at its worst, but human nature as its normal self.

Man needs to be saved from sin. And man needs to be saved from himself. There is something wrong with him and with what he does. Only

Jesus Christ can make him a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17).

It was man's need of salvation which called forth the demonstration of the love of God in Jesus' sacrifice for sinners. *"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

## II. GOD'S PROVISION OF SALVATION (Ephesians 2:4-9)

**A. Salvation begins in God.** As the Bible says it, *"Salvation is of the LORD"* (Jonah 2:9). It is His gift, not man's attainment. Three words in verses 4, 5 indicate God's motive in saving sinners. They are mercy, love, and grace. They show God's attitude toward guilty sinners.

1. *Mercy* is God's response to the need of sinners. The word indicates the outward manifestation of pity. It assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of Him who shows it. His mercy toward us effects our salvation (Titus 3:5). It is inexhaustible, every morning seeing a new supply (Lamentations 3:22, 23). God *"pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression. . . . because he delighteth in mercy"* (Micah 7:18).

2. *Love* is God's concern for the welfare of us who are entirely unworthy. He has a deep and constant interest and concern for us. His love moves Him to supply our need, even at great sacrifice to himself (Romans 5:8; I John 4:9, 10). The love of God is *"an everlasting love"* which will not pass away or be transferred to another (Jeremiah 31:3).

3. *Grace* is God's lovingkindness extended to us in view of our sin. We are *"justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"* (Romans 3:24). His grace has *"appeared to all men"* (Titus 2:11), indicating the scope of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Salvation is of God, based on His mercy, love, and grace.

**B. Salvation is effected in Jesus Christ.** God has *"quickened (made alive, resurrected) us together with Christ"* (verse 5). Jesus said, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10). *"Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die"* (John 11:26). His plan is that *"grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 5:21). Jesus is the key. He has *"abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"* (II Timothy 1:10).

*"Neither is there salvation in any other"* (Acts 4:12). *"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"* (I John 5:12).

**C. Salvation is received in the present life.** God has already *“raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (verse 6). That is the present position of the believer in Jesus!

Jesus said the one who hears the Word and believes on God has eternal life as a present possession (John 5:24). John further expanded that teaching in his first epistle, saying, *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God”* (I John 3:2). He lays further stress on the present possession of salvation by writing, *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God”* (I John 5:1).

No one will be given a second chance to be saved in eternity. One is saved in this present life or he is lost for eternity. That is why God calls for immediate decision, saying, *“Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* (II Corinthians 6:2). *“To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts”* (Hebrews 4:7).

**D. Salvation is consummated in the future, “in the ages to come”** (verse 7). The redemption of the body at the resurrection will be the ultimate consummation of our salvation (Romans 8:18-23; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58). Then we will receive our great inheritance as *“heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ”* (Romans 8:17). He will come in the air and we will be translated into His glory (Philippians 3:20, 21). We will appear with Him in that glory (Colossians 3:4). We will bear His image and likeness in that glorious state.

**E. Salvation is received by faith.** *“By grace are ye saved through faith”* (verse 8). The whole-matter of salvation (grace, faith, forgiveness) is all of God. We can claim credit for no part of it. We are *“justified by faith . . . through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1). Not even our faith is a deed of merit which we can claim. It is but an empty hand receiving the free gift of God.

Faith is not belief of a doctrine; it is trust in a person. We do not merely believe; we believe in Jesus. We trust Him. F-A-I-T-H means *“Forsaking All I Trust Him.”*

### **III. MAN'S RESPONSE TO SALVATION (Ephesians 2:10-13)**

**A. The saved person should value himself.** *“We are his (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus”* (verse 10). That term *“workmanship”* might be translated “masterpiece.” We are God's handiwork. We are created anew in Christ Jesus. We are *“the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints”* (Ephesians 1:18), *“created in righteousness and true holiness”* (Ephesians 4:24). As children of God, we are His beloved (I John 3:1, 2; II Corinthians 6:18). That makes us

important!

**B. The saved person should commit himself.** He was created anew in Christ Jesus *“unto good works”* (verse 10). Our union with Christ Jesus makes such a life possible. It is our joy to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1), presenting the members of our bodies as weapons for righteousness in the spiritual warfare (Romans 6:11-14). We *“walk worthy of the vocation”* (Ephesians 4:1) to which Christ has called us because *“he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked”* (1 John 2:6). *“He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again”* (II Corinthians 5:15).

**C. The saved person should remind himself of the difference Jesus has made** (verses 11-13). Remember what you were. Think of what you are now. Consider how you changed. Know that with Paul you can say, *“By the grace of God I am what I am”* (I Corinthians 15:10).

Separated by race (*“being in time past Gentiles”*), by nationality (*“aliens from the commonwealth of Israel”*), by heritage (*“strangers from the covenants of promise”*), by theology (*“without God in the world”*), and by Christology (*“without Christ”*), we were hopeless in our sin. Then Jesus came to us. Praise the Lord!

Our God is a God who loves and saves sinners. That is the marvelous gift of His mercy, love, and grace. That is the only hope for sinners. But that is the anchor of our souls, for we are trusting Him to save us and keep us. It is His doing, not our own: *“Salvation is of the LORD”* (Jonah 2:9).

1. What does Romans 11:32 teach about salvation?
2. How does II Corinthians 4:4 show man's need of salvation?
3. How is Satan “the prince of the power of the air”?
4. How does Ephesians 1:3 teach total inherent depravity?
5. What hope is given in Romans 5:8?
6. How would you define God's mercy, love, and grace?
7. What does it mean that “salvation is effected in Christ Jesus”?
8. What text teaches that salvation is a present possession of the believer?
9. In what sense is the Christian God's workmanship?
10. What difference has Jesus made in your life?