

] The Children of Disobedience [

Ephesians 2:1 – 2

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~ As our Spiritual Safari arrives at chapter two of the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul is continuing to record his thoughts from chapter one. This chapter opens with the conjunction “*and*” – which means it gathers up everything that has come before it, and makes it part of a new topic. It has required ten full-size safari reports to get this far in Ephesians, so, that’s a substantial amount of information to consider. The same tremendous power that raised Jesus from the dead is the power that has made us alive in Christ today, friends. That’s what we’re going to hear the Spirit of God speak through Paul to us in this report. That’s the power that makes us children of God.

It is also the same power that has lifted us out of the Roman prison, where Paul is being housed at the time in which we are studying, and has rocketed us into the Heavenly places! There’s a whole lot of power in resurrection; and so many of God’s children have desired to experience what we are talking about in this passage. Well, God will release this power and reveal it to anyone and everyone who will turn to the Lord Jesus Christ today in love for the Word of God, and accept His redemptive work wrought for us on the cross. God wants to lift us out of spiritual despair, discontentment and debt — and bring us to spiritual life. Frankly, most Christians today are in abject spiritual bankruptcy; and that takes even more tremendous power to overcome.

God seems reluctant to relinquish power to man today; and we should thank Him for that. Just think of all the centuries that went by before man even had basic electricity. That was a revolutionary discovery; but then, God also allowed man to discover atomic power — and the world was completely changed again overnight — but not for the better. Atomic power made our contemporary world and this modern age a frightful time and place to live in. Today, man literally holds the power to destroy this planet instantly. The power that had been locked up in the little atom remained unknown for a very, very long time – but the understanding

thereof hasn't done anything in the world except make man as dangerous as a ravening monster.

Frankly, mankind is living like an ostrich with its head in the sand by thinking that the foreign nations who have atomic weapons wouldn't start bombing others in a New York minute if they thought they could get away with it. Don't kid yourself, friends. Seriously, nations like North Korea and Iran — and even Russia — would start decimating world cities today if they could conceive a plan to beat everyone else to the punch, as it were — and manage the campaign. Russia already tests the boundaries of international acceptance concerning killing and mayhem. Man is to be neither trusted nor believed when talking about restraint in the use of any physical power capabilities whatsoever. I'm sure there is even more sinister and exponentially greater power yet undiscovered in some other source, too, by the way; but I digress. Of course, Christ is the overruling power; and rejecting Him is where the philosophical and theoretical motivational ploys all break down for the lost man's philosophy.

Well, thus far, in this leg of our expedition through chapter one of Ephesians, we have examined the body of Christ as it functions in the world presently. Our bodies are what we use to express ourselves; and the Lord Jesus expresses Himself in this world through His church. In chapter one, we examined how God the Father planned the church from before the foundation of the world, how He elected us, and predestinated the church; and we considered how Christ built the church and paid for the church with His Blood — and how the Holy Spirit protects the church in our present, evil world. That's vast quantities of doctrine presented in minutely small statements.

In this chapter, we are going to consider the church body as a temple. I am fully convinced that the church body corresponds to the wilderness tabernacle, and the temple in Jerusalem in the Old Testament, also; however, let's not push that beyond a comparison that is self-evident, or beyond a contrast that is sharp and striking — because the church and Israel are certainly not similitudes in Scripture. We must make this differentiation. It is critical to understand; because many people do not

understand it and, as a result, they become hopelessly confused in their overall Biblical theological interpretations.

The tabernacle, for example, was constructed from living Acacia trees that were then hewn into dead boards; however, the church is taken from dead materials and made into a living organism! The tabernacle and temple were both places for the glory of the True and Living God to meet with man; but the church is the place for the indwelling of believers by the Person of the Holy Spirit. The tabernacle and temple were designed for the performance of a ritual, including the repetition of animal sacrifice for the covering of sins; the church is established upon one historical past sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross for all — for sins — never to be repeated again. The Book of Hebrews makes all of that more than clear. There is no *required* ritual whatsoever in a properly functioning church. The Holy Spirit moves in the church through the Living Stone – Christ Jesus.

Now, I understand that there are some people who believe the church has been given a ritual whereby it opens with a Doxology, followed by a prayer, and then the singing of all sixteen stanzas of hymn number two hundred sixty-eight follows with a quick and monotone Scriptural reading in Matthew; thereby dubbed “*the church service*.” Well, that doesn’t mean you have worshipped; all that means is that you went through a ritual. I’m not saying we’re not to do that, because I don’t know how else we could do it; but the point is: an oral exercise of lip-service has become utterly meaningless to a whole bunch of people in a whole bunch of churches today. A church worship service needs to have meaning; and it can have meaning when a proper love for the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God is expressed in it. See how it all comes back to that, friends?

The most impressive fact of this modern-age is that God is not dwelling in a temple made with hands; but, rather, He dwells in the hearts and lives of individual believers. In Acts chapter seventeen, Dr. Luke said, “.... *God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before*

appointed, and the bounds of their habitation....” Paul said, “know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, and you are of God that you are not your own?”

There was a liberal lecturer at Vanderbilt University who once said, “.... *the Israelites had a primitive viewpoint of God, as they believed God lived in a building.*” Well, that only reveals one who has a primitive view of the Bible; and when I say “*primitive*” I mean “*Biblically illiterate.*” See, even in the Old Testament, God didn’t dwell in the tabernacle or in the temple. When Solomon built and dedicated the temple, he said, “.... *but will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee, O, Lord; how much less this house which I have built.*” That’s second Chronicles chapter six verse eighteen. Every instructed Israelite understood God wasn’t restricted to living in a golden box. That’s where God met with the children of Israel, and they had a ritual for that meeting, including animal sacrifice; but the church has none of that today.

There is another very sharp contrast between the spiritual temple and the Old Testament temple; and it is in regards to the position of the Gentiles. The Gentiles were proselytes, and the temple had a specifically designated court area for Gentiles. If you can find a diagram of the temple in the days of Herod – meaning the days of Christ – you’ll see that Gentiles were kept WAY off to the left as you look into the temple from the front. Gentiles didn’t get anywhere near anything in there! Paul says in this epistle, “.... *ye Gentiles, that were sometimes afar off are now made nigh by the Blood of the risen Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.*” Us Gentiles have been brought in so close that we are now seated in the Heavenlies in Christ. That’s as close as we can get....

1 And you hath he made alive, 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:

~ Let's try verse one and two like this: *".... and you, being dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the spirit of the age in a lifestyle, the way of the principle of this world, in their secular course on the earth; that is, according to the power of Satan, the demonic spirit that now energizes and worketh in the children of disobedience in this present evil world...."* And I would break off the reading there because the devil is capable of taking the dead materials of the natural flesh of man and energizing them, too, friends. Make no mistake about that. That's the reason the myriad cults and isms thrive to no end today. If you see a man teaching what is contrary to the Word of God, you'll notice *MANY* people saying *"a-men"* and supporting it financially. By contrast, if you see a genuinely sound doctrinal teaching by a man who believes God, loves God, loves the Bible, and is truly Spirit-led and Spirit-filled, then you generally won't have fifty people pay any attention to that man.

See, Satan doesn't want to be God, but the devil wants to be *like* God. Worshipped and revered – by you. The enormous popularity of modern false religion puts this little rinky-dink so-called safari to shame. People give big dollars to the intentionally distorted, and just plain wrong, teaching of Scriptural error; but they'll let me die of starvation as they shake their head and label me a false teacher. Satan is energizing those people, and the devil transforms himself into an angel of light as he appears to them. Those are the ones who constantly say things like, *".... the devil is a liar."* Yes, he is, but they cannot even begin to discern his lies; because they are living them. People say to me all the time, *".... miracles and signs and wonders are being performed by us."* They sure are, friends. And Satan is able to duplicate them, too; so, I'm not impressed. Scriptural miracles are recorded as being performed by the devil for the magicians down in Egypt – up to a certain point, anyways. Paul told the Thessalonians, *".... even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders...."* Once you get close to the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan loses his power; but in the capacity of deluding and leading people astray in a sensational, emotional, and self-serving religion of false doctrine, the devil is a master. I doubt any one of us really understands exactly how powerful, intelligent, and potent Satan truly is at deceiving this world.

Now, to be technically correct, from verse one through verse seven of chapter two in Ephesians, we have what is known in the Greek as a *'periodic sentence.'* Classic Greek is filled with *periodic sentences*, tricky tenses, difficult to distinguish time-phrases, genitive absolutes, and wherefores and what-not's; in short, Greek is not easy to read and understand. This reveals the superior mind of Paul the apostle to write and put things on the line for his reading subjects! Our Authorized King James Version breaks this up into a sentence that ends with verse three. That is permissible, and entirely correct as far as a translation goes, because we have contrasting statements joined by another conjunction "*but*" in verse four. That's so important to understand in order for us to get at the fullest meaning of this passage. Paul is speaking on the theme of salvation and in the mighty power of God Almighty! The greatness of the power of God began back in verse nineteen of chapter one – and we're contemplating the power that makes dead sinners live.

Every person had death imputed to us in Adam at birth. Paul said, "*... wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned....*" That's Romans chapter five verse twelve. Adam's sin made you and me the sons of a fallen man, my friends. I know there is much debate in religious circles regarding whether or not little babies are born sinners. Well, they are. The difference is that there is an age of accountability that, until reached, they are not held responsible for their sins. That age differs for every one of us, too; and I also think that age is a whole lot higher — *MUCH* higher — than most people believe it to be. Either way, we all have the same old nature that Adam had; and that is a sinful and fallen nature. Mankind, naturally, has no capacity for, or inclination to, God, my friends. We were *dead* in trespasses and sins when Christ died for us and quickened us.

Frankly, when I look back upon the conversion of Andrew C. Hunt, I have to think to myself, "*... how, and why, in the world could, or would, God want to save a person like me?*" You just don't know me like I know me, friends. If you did, then you wouldn't be reading this report. However, if I knew you like you know you, then I wouldn't bother writing them for you. So, let's not be too quick to judge each other, shall we? See, I was saved at age seven, but I immediately ran away from God as fast and as far away as I

could possibly get for decades. I always knew I was saved, but I lived in open rebellion and disobedience for many moons. I have been to places and done things a Christian ought not even speak of; so, I won't. Well, God came out and got me; and He did it in the most difficult and painful way imaginable. If God hadn't done that, then the devil would have won the day, my beloved. See, it's all about Him and what God did for us. All about Christ. Consider Him.

Adam died spiritually the moment he disobeyed God. Adam and Eve weren't looking for God anymore – they were hiding from God. That's the condition of the natural man today, too. The ridiculous notion that man has a little spark of the divine, and is searching for God, is utterly and entirely wrong, my friends. Adam didn't die physically for another nine hundred years after they ate of the tree, but he died spiritually the moment he placed the forbidden fruit in his mouth. That was the instant all of mankind lost its longing for God and became separated from Him.

Of course, death means separation; physical death is separation of the spirit and the soul from the body. We cannot see the spirit and soul, of course, but we can sure see a dead body lying there. The highest level of living for the natural man is a physical and mental plane; he has no spirituality whatsoever in and of himself, and his low-level of living is passed to his offspring. It's usually passed along and down from generation to generation. Only the convicting work of the Holy Spirit of God can spark the consciousness in the individual man in this world and bring them to a spiritual understanding. And that only happens by the proper, correct and complete teaching of the Gospel.

You and I are hopeless and helpless speaking of the things of Christ to a lost and dead population in the world today. Only the Spirit of God can take the things you say or write and make them real to a dead soul. Sometimes, the Lord uses this Spiritual Safari to speak to dead people, and convict them of sin, righteousness, and judgment. When that happens, my friends, *THAT* is a true miracle. Frankly, we live in nothing but one great big cemetery in this world. The grave can't get enough. A cemetery may run out of space — but not potential tenants. Someone has made a theme of preaching that says, '*millions now living will never die*' – but – the reality is that *billions now*

living are ALREADY dead. We need to get that straight in our thinking and theology. That's the picture of mankind, according to God.

Thomas Hobbs, the infidel, said as he died, “.... *I’m taking a fearful leap into the dark today.*” Edward Gibbon, English historian and Member of Parliament, who is famed for his book “*The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*” — and who was a noted atheist — said upon his death bed, “.... *it is all dark where I’m going.*” Honore Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau, the French revolutionist, who had no room for Christ in his life, and who died of either poisoning or disease, said in his agony, “.... *more Laudanum; I cannot bear to think of eternity now.*” The Lord Jesus Christ said, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but receive everlasting life.*” Pray about that for a few minutes ~

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