

Grace: Navigating Our Past, Present & Future

Unchanging Identity

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Ephesians 2:1-22

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Initial Insights

Our New Identity As Spelled-Out In Chapter 1:

1. **Faithful** - believing in Jesus!
2. **Spiritually Blessed**
3. **Chosen** - called out
4. **Holy** - sanctified, set-apart for special use
5. **Blameless** - without defect or blemish
6. **Adopted Sons** - with all of the rights and privileges
7. **Redeemed** - bought back, purchased
8. **Forgiven** - to let go, release from debt
9. **Sealed** (protected) by the Holy Spirit

After going to such great lengths to illuminate the Ephesian's identity in Christ in chapter 1, why does the Apostle Paul begin chapter 2 by reminding them of their past?

1. To draw his readers into a posture of humility and gratitude
2. To confirm that their old life wasn't working!
3. To remind them of what life was like without Christ
4. To establish unity by affirming that both Jews & Gentiles were lost/fallen

[Ephesians 2:1–22](#) (NASB95)

- 1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
- 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.
- 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
- 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
- 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
- 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,
- 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
- 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;
- 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
- 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
- 11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” *which is* performed in the flesh by human hands—
- 12 *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.
- 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into one* and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is the Law of commandments contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace,

16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;

18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Remember that Paul is writing from prison!

We were dead, deceived & enslaved (verses 1-3).

We view physical death as worse than spiritual death. But the Bible takes the complete opposite position! Because spiritual death leads to eternal death!

As much as we might feel like we're making our own decisions before we come to faith in Christ - it's a delusion! We're literally the pawns of the evil one.

*Deceived: Our golden retrievers drinking sea water! Louis doesn't fall for it

For the problem with people is not just that they commit sins; their problem is that they are enslaved to sin. What is needed, therefore, is a new power to break in and set people free from sin—a power found in,

and only in, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Douglas J. Moo

We were enslaved to our lusts and passions, with no real power or motivation to live otherwise.

We were separated, excluded, strangers, without hope & without God!
(verse 12)

Separated = literally “*without*”

“As long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us.”

Timothy George

Excluded = “Alienated, estranged, to be shut out from one’s fellowship and intimacy.”

Excluded from citizenship

Strangers = “Foreigners, outsiders” to the covenants of promise/blessing / relationship

Sin excludes us - shuts us out from God’s blessings. A relationship with God through Christ opens the door (floodgate) to God’s blessing and opportunity!

God without man is still God; man without God is nothing. John
Blanchard

“**But God!!**” verse 4

“**But now in Christ...**” verse 13

“**Made us alive**” verse 5

“**Raised us up**” verse 6

“**Seated us with Christ**” verse 6

The Christian really operates in two spheres: the human and the divine, the visible and the invisible. Physically, he is on the earth in a human body, but spiritually he is seated with Christ in the heavenly sphere—and it is this heavenly sphere that provides the power and direction for the earthly walk.

Warren W.

Wiersbe

“We’ve been brought (become) near” verse 13

Jesus—because he is the great high priest and on account of the superiority of his sacrifice—has entered the actual presence of God on our behalf and has now brought us near to God.

Dr. Richard Albert Mohler Jr.

“Created (made) new!” verse 15

“I no longer live” means that the “old I,” the “I” enslaved to sin and the law, has been done away with, to be replaced by a new “I” whose existence is determined by the indwelling Christ.

Douglas J. Moo

“Reconciled” verse 16

“To change, exchange coins for others of equivalent value to end-up with a common currency.”

Compare [Ephesians 2:12](#)

Ephesians 2:12 NLT

¹² In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

[Ephesians 2:19](#) (NLT)

¹⁹ But now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family.

Ephesians 2:7 NLT

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.

Ephesians 2:10 NLT

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.

Verses 14-18 - both groups (Jews & Gentiles) have received peace, reconciliation and access! And both have been created into one new person!

Access = to summon, to approach the bench!

Closing Comments[Mark 13:1-2](#) (NLT)

¹ As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said, "Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the impressive stones in the walls. ² Jesus replied, "Yes, look at these great buildings. But they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!"

Foundation: The smallest stones that comprise the temple mount are between 2-5 tons! The largest stone in the temple mount foundation is 44' long and weighs 570 tons!!

The walls are an average height of 40' with a thickness of 8'. The western wall is 1601 feet long, the eastern wall is 1540', 1033' on the north and 920' on the south. This is approximately 150,000 square meters (1,614,585 ft²), or 37 acres!!

The dimensions of the Temple King Solomon built: "90 feet long, 30 feet wide and 45 feet high" ([1 Kings 6:2](#)).

Destruction of the Temple (13:1-2)

The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Abridged: New Testament (1. Prophecy of the

Great though the temple buildings were, they would be completely destroyed. This prophecy was fulfilled in A.D. 70, when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Roman general Titus. All the buildings on the temple platform, including the temple itself to which the prophecy

refers, were utterly destroyed. So completely were they destroyed that no trace of them remains today. Even their exact location on the temple mount is disputed.

The church is built upon a *rock*; a firm, strong, and lasting foundation, which time will not waste, nor will it sink under the weight of the building.

Matthew Henry

When we put our faith in God and trust Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord, we are placing ourselves on the sure, firm foundation that never falters and never fails. We are placing ourselves on a foundation that does not shift, crumble, or crack. We are placing ourselves on a foundation that is eternal and unchanging.

Charles Stanley