

LIVING THE CHRISTLIFE
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Studies in Ephesians
Ephesians 2:1-3

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

—Ephesians 2:1-3

vv 1-2 – “And you were dead...”

(We mentioned on Sunday)—What does this mean? They were obviously not physically dead. Dead means “not living” – and they were spiritually dead. There was no relationship with God. This is not a peripheral concern—our spiritual condition is defining to our personhood and our eternity

Death—is the result of sin. It means

spiritual death – no relationship with God

physical death of our bodies—preceded by deterioration, disease, pain...

consignment to the second death, eternal “death”

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.—Revelation 2:11

Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.—Revelation 20:6

Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.—Revelation 20:14)

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”—Revelation 21:8

“Death” involves both a condition and a kingdom of authority, to which a person belongs: either the Kingdom of God, preached throughout the New Testament, of the kingdom of this world, over whom the devil is the ruler, identified throughout the New Testament.

There are only two kingdoms, and all people belong to one or the other.

“in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...”

These words are often used interchangeably, but here perhaps with a shade of distinction trespasses – *paraptóma*, a mis-step, a slip, going where we shouldn't.

This, here, perhaps emphasizing things that result more from sinful ignorance than from self-willed defiance

sins – *hamartia*, missing the mark

emphasizing those acts that are obvious and intentional in their defiance of God's will

This characterizes the life of a spiritual dead person, who has no knowledge or intent to walk according to God's will and in submission to Him.

It obviously does not mean that every spiritually dead person, then or now, is a psychopathic fiend who has never done a decent thing and who has no good qualities. That is also true about almost every person who is in prison for murder.

Sin matters—and doing some decent things in life cannot be leveraged against the guilt of sin such that the “charge” will simply be dropped.

“following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air...”

Was Paul crazy or foolish or superstitious or just highly ignorant and therefore susceptible to beliefs about the devil and his influence?

Was Jesus crazy or foolish or superstitious or just highly ignorant and therefore susceptible to beliefs about the devil and his influence?

The New Testament (including specific teachings of Jesus and Paul) teaches that there is a kingdom of this world and that the devil is the “ruler of this world.” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)

We have to decide if we believe this or not. It is a “yes” or “no” question.

And what we believe about this—what we *truly* believe—will have a profound influence upon or “world view.”

“the course of this world” – *aión*, age, eon, the ways in which things are influenced and directed

The “ways of the world” are highly influenced, even directed, by spiritual forces—including the presence in the world of the Church

“the prince” — *archón*, ruler

“the power” — *exousia*, usually translated “authority” or “authorities”

“of the air” – just as it reads

So “following the ruler of the authority of the air”

This is Satan, the “ruler of this world”

“the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience”

A further explanation

Spiritual influences upon those who do not have a relationship with God, who are spiritually dead

Further reinforcing that the rebellious state of the world is spiritual in its nature

“sons of disobedience”– this is not how those persons see themselves

The word is *apeitheia* — “not persuaded,” from which we get “apathy,” but it does not mean quite the same thing

It mean a refusal to be convinced of what is true, including the willful rejection of God-given conscience

They “know better”

“among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh...”

“passions” – strong desires. These entail many areas of life, not just sexual immorality—passion for power, for recognition, for acquisition... or passions of cruelty, ridicule of others, evil

“just for the fun of it”... passions of greed, snooping, gossip, envy, hatred... could go on and on

“of our flesh” – just doing what we want, unguided by the Spirit of God

“carrying out the desires of the body and the mind”

More lit. “doing the desires of the flesh and its thoughts”

Some would say this is a good philosophy for living: within certain codes (which vary)—“Give full expression to your self! Do what you want to do. Think what you want to think. Do not be skeptical about yourself, your motives, your desires. Find *your* truth. Be the person you are!”

Note: Many—perhaps most—people seem to have a sense that we should “do some good” with our lives—and they will find some way to contribute, one way or another, to a “good cause” or “causes.”^a But these “causes” will never interfere with the worldly lives they desire to lead in “body and the mind,” and they will not be causes that elevate Christ (although benefitting other “religions” may be acceptable).

“and were by nature children of wrath”

The NT teaches that there is a coming judgment upon sin—God’s wrath against sin

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them,

“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”—Matthew 3:7

And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.—1 Thessalonians 9:10

Many other passages...

“like the rest of mankind”

The NT teaches that only by Jesus can we be saved.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.—John 3:36

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”—Acts 4:12

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.—John 14:6

^a Favorite causes these days will typically be highly tied in to some type of political activism, ostensibly to benefit certain identified victims, and which will invariably include identified “enemies” to those causes who are to be blamed and punished in various ways. Such “causes” provide a way for supporters to hate others and feel virtuous at the same time.