

All Believers Are Already Enthroned in Heaven

Ephesians 2:1-7

Ephesians 2:1-7 – *“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Jesus Christ, that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

Background Notes

The book of Ephesians is the only place in the Bible where we learn the great truth that believers are already ascended and seated with Christ in Heaven. Did you know that? Look at verse 6 again: God has *“raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”!* This great truth is taught only in the letter to the Ephesians.

In Romans and Colossians, the great truth of the believer’s *death and resurrection with Christ* is taught - but not the believer’s *ascension with Christ*. Look at Romans 6:5&11 and Colossians 3:1-3 – they clearly teach our death and resurrection in Christ. But Ephesians goes further and teaches us that we are ascended and enthroned with Christ. What does this mean? This is our **spiritual position** in *Jesus Christ*. We didn’t physically die with Him on the cross, but God sees us as if we were crucified with Christ. We were not physically resurrected with Him, but God sees us as if we were resurrected with Christ. And we did not physically ascend with Christ, but God sees us as if we’ve ascended with Him. This is our spiritual position in Christ.

So, when we become Christians, we receive more than forgiveness of sin – much more! Right now, we are *in Christ*. This is our position, or our legal standing before a holy and righteous God. God sees us not only as forgiven sinners, but He sees us in Christ – we are identified with Christ in His death, and resurrection, and ascension. God sees us as though we are in Heaven already. We are not literally in Heaven now, but if you are a believer, spiritually you are there - in Christ - now. That is your spiritual position. That is a great truth taught here, and only here, in the book of Ephesians.

Doctrinal Point

Believers are in Heaven already.

Here we have a true “rags to riches” story - and this is your story if you’re a believer.

1. We were dead (v1-3).

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

We were dead, spiritually dead, separated from God, with no life in God or from God. Let me ask you...can dead people bring themselves back to life? Of course not! If you’re physically dead, you’re dead. You can’t do a thing about your condition; only God can do something about your condition. The same is true of your spiritual condition. If you’re spiritually dead, you’re dead. God must do all the work of bringing you to life - and *God did do all the work of saving us.* Praise His name!

In these three verses there are three aspects of our former “dead condition” - three characteristics of life apart from God.

- Following the world (v2)

“You once walked according to the course of this world.” What does that mean - “the world”? In this context, “the world” is the system of values and attitudes that is contrary to God and His Word. For example, the Bible says *“Don’t lay up for yourselves treasures on this earth” (Matthew 6:19)*. The world says, “Get all the treasures you can on this earth.” That’s a value and attitude of this world system. The Bible says. *“If you want to be great, serve one another” (Luke 21:26)*. The world says, “That’s not the way it works. If you want to be powerful and important, make people serve you!”

The world system of values and attitudes is satanic at its roots. Satan is the master mind behind the world system. Unbelievers follow the world system of values and attitudes because unbelievers are spiritually dead. That’s our point. They have no life or power from God, and they can’t do anything but follow the world system of values and attitudes.

- Following the devil (v2).

“You once walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.”

Whether we realized it or not, before we became Christians and were made alive in Christ, we were pawns of Satan -

even if we were religious. Remember that our Lord said to the religious Jews, “*You are of your father the devil*” (John 8:44).

“*The prince of the power of the air*” and “*the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience*” that is mentioned here is Satan himself. What does this mean? At the present time, even though Satan has already been judged at the cross, Satan and his evil spiritual being are allowed to function in this space – matter - time universe. And since Satan controls this present world system of values and attitudes, unbelievers are followers of the devil - whether they realize it or not.

- **Following the flesh** (v3).

“*We all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh.*” What does that word “flesh” mean? The “flesh” is the sinful nature that we are born with, and it affects both our bodies and our minds. Verse 3: “*fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.*” Even religious people can have hate-filled or pornographic minds because of the flesh. Because of the sinful nature that each one of us is born with - the flesh - *everyone* deserves the wrath of God.

Therefore, in our lives, before salvation came to us, we all were “children of wrath,” under the judgment of God, whether we were religious or not. This is the sorry condition of everyone apart from Christ: dead and deserving the wrath of God - because we followed the world, because we followed Satan, because we followed the flesh.

2. We are alive (v4-5).

“*But God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).*”

What wonderful truth this is! Notice that we didn't make ourselves alive. We were dead. *God* made us alive. We now have life from God. You are now born again, if you're a believer. If you're not a believer, you are still in that condition that mentioned in the first 3 verses. You're spiritually dead; you're alienated from God. But the good news in verses 4 and 5 is that those of us who have come to faith in Christ – we are alive!

Why did God make us alive? He didn't do it because of anything good in us. What does the Bible say? It notes 3 things here: He makes us alive because of God's mercy (v4), because of God's love (v4), and because of God's grace (v5). What's the difference between God's grace and mercy? Mercy emphasizes *our great need* because of sin. Grace emphasizes *our great source of help*, the Lord Himself. Because of God's mercy, we don't receive what we do deserve - the wrath of God. Because of God's grace, we do receive what we don't deserve - all the blessings of heaven (v7).

3. We are ascended (v6-7).

God “*raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Jesus Christ, that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*”

This is one of the great truths concerning our spiritual position in Ephesians. “*Sitting in the heavenlies*” does not mean that we are already in heaven physically, but our spiritual position, in the spiritual realm, is that we are already enthroned with Christ. That’s the way God see us. We are already associated with our Lord in His exaltation.

That’s a pretty good insurance policy, isn’t it? If you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior, then you can’t lose your salvation because you have already risen, and ascended, and been enthroned with Christ in Heaven. This is your spiritual position!

So, when we die, there is no question as to our salvation. And there is no waiting period - purgatory is not seen in the Bible. According to 2 Corinthians 5:8, believers who die are absent from the body and present with the Lord. Because of your spiritual position in Christ, *you are eternally secure*. Believers are in heaven already.

Practical Application

We are God’s “Exhibit A” - forever!

We are God’s “Exhibit A” - *forever*. Verse 7: “*that in the ages to come, God might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*” The idea here is that forever God will display us as trophies of His grace! God will display us as the “Exhibit A” proof of His grace to the intelligent universe of people and powers. Just as in a court of law, an “Exhibit A” item is convincing evidence in a case, so we believers will forever be the proof of God’s grace.

Think of experiencing the unending kindness of God toward us - *forever!* God’s kindness towards us will never end, because God is infinite in His rich resources, and you cannot reach infinity. We will experience wonderful state of enjoying God’s kindness forever. Remember, we are God’s “Exhibit A” – forever!