

CHAPTER 3 – UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8–9, NIV)

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Ephesians 2:1–10

God saves! In one concise passage the apostle Paul draws together essential elements of the theme of salvation that is present on every page of the Bible. Please read Ephesians 2:1–10.

1. Prior to our new life in Christ, death, paradoxically, is the state in which we live. What are the elements of spiritual death (vv. 1–3)?

2. By nature humans are “dead in transgressions and sins”—which means that humans are both rebels and failures and therefore under God’s wrath. If you could enter a conversation with the apostle, would you readily agree with this statement or would you want to discuss it further? How and why?

3. Reread verses 1–3 slowly and picture yourself in each line of the verses. What does it look like to be spiritually dead?

4. Traditionally it has been said that the Christian has three enemies, the world,¹ the flesh,² and the devil; all three are referenced in these verses. List or discuss a few ways you see these three deathly enemies active in your life and in the world around you.

1. *The world* is a reference to human culture organized and conducted in a way that excludes God.
 2. *The flesh* is a reference to the human psyche organized and constructed in a way that excludes God.

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5. Compare and contrast verses 1–3 and 4–6, noting the differences between being spiritually dead and spiritually alive.

6. What is God's motivation and Christ's role in moving us from death to life (vv. 4–10)?

7. Reread verses 4–10 slowly. Imagine God reaching down and bringing you from lying dead in a coffin to active life. What is changing as you receive and embrace life?

8. What is God's role and what is the human role in moving from death to life?

9. *Faith! Christ! Grace!* are words that came alive to the leaders of the revival and renewal of the church during the Reformation. What light does this passage bring to their enthusiastic emphases?

10. Verse 10 could be paraphrased as "Christians are God's works of art created in Christ to accomplish good deeds that God wants us to do." How might this statement enrich and expand your understanding of salvation?
