

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS



3. God's Plan of Salvation

Introduction

God has a wonderful inheritance for his people. We looked at the riches of this inheritance in our previous studies. Paul continues his letter by explaining these riches in greater detail and shows us that everything God has done is because of his grace.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

In these verses Paul contrasts our old life with the new life we have received.

- † List the 6 things Paul says about our old life in verses 1-3, 5.

(v1 *We walked in trespasses and sins.*
V2 *We followed the ruler of the Kingdom of the air.*
V3 *We gratified the cravings of our sinful nature.*
V3 *We followed the desires of our body and soul.*
V5 *We were dead in our trespasses.*

- † What does it mean to 'follow the ruler of the Kingdom of the air?' v2

(The ruler of the kingdom of the air is Satan. It means we are following his desires, not those of Christ.)

- † What are the desires of our sinful bodies according to Galatians 5:19-21?

(These are the works of the flesh and stem from man's pride and selfishness.)

- † Even though we were dead in transgressions, what did God do for us and why? V4-7

(v5 *He made us alive with Christ.*
V6 *He raised us up with Christ.*
V6 *He seated us in heavenly places.*
V4 *He did this because of his great love and mercy.*
V5 *He did this because of his grace.*
V7 *He did this because of his kindness.)*

- † What does it mean to sit with him in heavenly places? Also see Colossians 3:1-4. How can we experience this in our daily lives?

- † We are not saved 'by good works' but 'to do good works'. What is the difference?

(Man often wants to earn his own salvation because he is proud. However salvation is a gift given by God, but once we have received that gift, the fruit will be good works.)

† What do most people think 'good works' are? Discuss.

(Most people in the world think of good works as helping the poor and needy – helping others in practical ways.)

Certainly good works in the Bible refers to helping the poor. An example of this is Tabitha who spent her time doing good and helping the poor. (Acts 9:36) However when it speaks of good works in the Bible it has an added meaning.

† What can we learn about good works from the life of Jesus? See John 4:34, John 17:4, Acts 10:38

(Jesus's life was one filled with good works. He healed the sick and set people free, and his greatest work was going to the cross. Good works is doing the will of our Heavenly Father.)

† How can a person fulfil the 'good works' God has prepared for them? John 15:5, Hebrews 10:24

(It is only possible when we abide or remain in Christ day by day, and everything is done in love.)

† Why is it so important we produce the fruit of good works in our lives? 1 Peter 2:12, Matthew 5:16

(So that others who see us will glorify God and praise him.)

Conclusion

We cannot earn our salvation by doing good things. It is only because of God's grace and our response of faith that enables us to receive this gift of salvation. However when we do, good works will follow, as our desire will be to do God's will. The important thing is: stay connected to Jesus!