

Ephesians 2:1-10

Salvation of Individuals by Grace

1. Paul begins this passage by saying “as for you.” In other words, as he continues writing his letter, he now changes attention from “someone else” to us. Who is that “someone else”?

2. In verse 1 Paul says the Ephesians were formerly “dead in [their] transgressions and sins.” Is it proper to label each and every unbeliever in this way?

What about those unbelievers who do good deeds, e.g. Acts 28:2? (cf. Canons of Dort III/IV,3 and 4)

In order for something to truly be a good work in the eyes of God, what criteria must it meet? (1:9; cf. Heidelberg Catechism 33 Q&A 91)

3. Why is Satan called “the ruler of the kingdom of the *air*”? (cf. the mention of “heavenly realms” in 6:12, 1:3).

4. In verse 2 Satan is identified as “the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.” What does this say about how Satan works in this world? (cf. Revelation 16:13 where evil spirits are associated with false prophets who spread false teaching.)

In what ways do we see that spirit at work in our own day?

5. Should we see all unbelievers as “objects of wrath”? (v. 3) What about their children? How should that affect our treatment of them? (cf. Belgic Confession 15)

6. Given our condition as explained in verses 1-3, why would God yet love us? (cf. Deuteronomy 7:7-8; John 3:16)

7. Read Canons of Dort, Chapter III/IV, articles 1-5.

a. What did Pelagius maintain or teach?

b. What did Arminius teach? (Canons of Dort are written against him.)

8. What do the following terms mean? (vv.4,5)

God’s love

God’s mercy

God’s grace

9. In verse 6 Paul says that we have been “seated [note the past tense!]... in the heavenly realms.” What does that mean? (cf. 1:3)
10. What does our election to faith and salvation reveal to us about God’s character or disposition (nature)?
11. Verse 8 says “by grace you have been saved through faith.” What is “faith”?
If faith is a gift of God (v. 8), is it still our responsibility to believe? Prove and explain your answer. (cf. Canons of Dort I,5)
What do you think about the invitation sometimes heard, “Just invite God into your heart so that he can begin to work in you”? (Acts 18:8, Hebrews 5:12-14)
12. What does it mean that we are “God’s workmanship”? (v. 10)
13. Is it right to say that we have been saved in order to do good works? If the answer is “yes”, how does that fit with the fact that we have been saved “apart from our works”? If the answer is “no”, why have we been saved?
14. Is it significant that Paul says we have been saved to do good works rather than “good work” (singular)?

For further discussion:

15. Does verse 7 suggest that God saves us ultimately for the sake of the display of his own glory? If so, is God not selfishly motivated?
16. Some people suggest that in the life hereafter we will not be able to remember anything about what happened when we lived in this broken world. Does that fit with verse 7 in which Paul says that in the life hereafter God will show us the “incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus”? If we will remember what happened to us on earth, including all the negative things that we did and that happened to us, will we be truly happy in the life hereafter? Discuss.

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