



Lent 4 B Rev
Epistle

ARTICLE NO.
2006.309
Eph. 2:4-10

For by grace are ye saved through faith;
Ephesians 2:4-10

Collect

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.



But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, **Even** when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (**by grace ye are saved;**) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together **in heavenly places** in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

RSV (Ephesians 2:4-10) But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God-- not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.



Glen Miller



Much of this tract is commentary - don't take it as Gospel. It is here to encourage meditation and study. Use your gift of discernment, to find the truth.

On becoming dead to sin

This is a very personal understanding. I haven't seen any other commentary that agrees with me, so I may be wrong about the primary purpose of Torah (and my viewpoint is a very simplistic). I am sure the Jews would not agree with this. But if I hypothesize that Torah is for this purpose, and then study the scriptures in this new light, Paul's writing does seem to be more understandable. Try it yourself, let me know if it is a help to your understanding of Paul.

Even when we were dead ...

the Greek word is kai = and, also, even, so then, Here he means: And when we were dead ... (He) made us alive. For to be made alive in Christ one must first be made dead to sin. So you must not read this as implying that there may be another state from which you could be made alive in Christ. You must first and always be *dead*.

How do you become dead?

Through knowledge of the Torah, for the Torah is the book of instructions from God on how to become dead to sin.

This was Paul's argument in Romans 7. Without Torah he did not know that he was sinful. When he realized how sinful he was, he was made dead to sin through repentance, and restitution, but there were no instructions in Torah to make him alive again. He realized that Jesus brought the good news of how to be made alive. The purpose of Torah was to make man dead, and that of Christ to make man alive. Paul understood that Jews could not be made alive without Jesus.

So to Paul, Torah is good because it makes man aware of how sinful he is, and provides a way for man to become dead to sin. But Torah without Christ leaves a man in the state of death.

So Christians and Jews need both Torah and Christ. For the Christian an understanding of Torah must accompany belief in Jesus, because a Christian otherwise cannot understand fully what God considers sinful. And without a full understanding of what is sin, a Christian cannot be made fully dead to sin. Yes, God forgives all sins because of the sacrifice of Christ, but this forgiveness is held in trust for us, like money in a bank, waiting for us to request a withdrawal of forgiveness for specific sins, and to acknowledge receipt of the same.

In heavenly places is uniquely here. Assume equal to heaven. Though the Jews believed there were seven levels in Paradise, and Paul himself visited one of them, so perhaps he is referring to these levels of paradise as heavenly places. If so, not everyone would go to the same level, as one is reserved for martyrs, another for teachers, another for the poor, and so on.

dead

To have recognized **all** your sinful behaviour and thoughts through an intimate and all encompassing knowledge of God's laws, and to repent from your sins.

Midrash is commentary on Torah and references every sin in Torah.

Torah lists all of the possible sins, and commandments on how to avoid those sins. Recognition of the sins you are committing, and repenting from them, makes you *dead*. Without Torah, how do you know which sins you are committing? A Jew also has Midrash, but for Christians without Midrash and Torah, it is not possible to know all the sins. Without Torah you could never be made *dead*, and if not *dead* how could you ever be made alive in Christ.



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Eph. 2:4-10**More Insight**

It is through faith that a complete knowledge of God's eternal purpose manifested in Jesus Christ, is possible. It is through faith that we get understanding, and wisdom. This faith comes to us from God, it is a gift that if accepted by us leads on to more understanding and strengthens belief, and from this increase in belief we receive more grace. We are saved through God's grace of faith.

So you see that faith is not something of our own effort. We cannot create faith. Faith is not ignorant belief. If you say "I don't understand this, but I have faith" you are exhibiting a lack of faith, because if you had faith (from God) you would be able to understand.

It would be better to say "I don't understand fully, but I have belief in the promise of scripture, and I am preparing myself spiritually to receive God's faith, and with that faith I will be able to understand."

Now for the phrase:

"hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places ..."

With the same power that He raised Jesus from the dead, He has raised us from our state of being dead, and made us one body (the Church) to share our lives together as through Jesus Christ we perform the good works that God has prepared for us to do, and thereby experience heaven here on earth.

Paul said: In future we will be in a position to receive from God through Jesus Christ the exceeding riches of his grace.

St. Paul considered faith as the gift of God which moves us to exhibit our beliefs through works. This grace of faith is offered to us as are the other graces.

"St. Paul considers faith to be the connecting link with Christ and the mainspring of the Christian life to the end; and this apart from, though not without works..." (ITDTh p287)

We are saved by faith, and this grace comes from God.

Whereas later (after Luther) the Churches thought that faith was a priority even before baptism. But perhaps belief would be a better word for this, as it is difficult to see how St. Paul's meaning of faith could be received by a non-baptized person.

Belief, which includes understanding intellectually, comes before grace and so cannot be the instigator of God's work. Only the grace of faith impels man to do the good works that God has prepared for him.

So, belief in the scriptures and relevant creeds before baptism are followed later by the grace of faith from God.

The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.

Introduction to Dogmatic Theology on the basis of

Litton, E.A.

Classical Anglican

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