



Our Past is Over!

Our Past is Over is a reprint of the July 1996 Artios Letter. I trust you enjoy it as much as I did writing it and now, republishing it. Jerry

God wants us to know who and what we were before we were delivered. Ephesians 2 helps us unlock the mystery of the past so that we can move into the future. I would like to share Ephesians 2:1-10 so that you may easily realize who and what you were to the end that you may become who you should be.

(Eph 2:1-10) And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:

{2} Wherein in time past ye



walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

{3} Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. {4} But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, {5} Even when

we were dead in sins, hath

quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) {6} And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: {7} That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. {8} For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast. {10} For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Let's take it one verse at a time:

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(Eph 2:1) And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:

“Quickened” means “made alive.” It is an old English word referring to how the spirit of life quickens a person. Without this spirit of life, the person is spiritually dead. The spirit of life that God gives those who are now part of His family is the spirit of eternal life. This means that it is an eternal spirit. In fact, that is the difference between the soul life that you are *born with*, and the spirit of life that you are *born again* with. The first is temporal and the second is eternal. ***God made us alive from a most desperate state: death.***

We were dead in trespasses and sins. The greatness of what we received when we were born again lies in our ability to be a

part of God’s family. God made us righteous, and it is by that righteousness that we can stand before God forever, without any sense of shortcomings.

(Eph 2:2) Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

We are still looking at what we used to be. Before we joined God’s family, we walked in the world. This is different than walking in the world now. ***When we were not part of God’s family, we did not have a connection with God.*** That is because we did not have His spirit within us. Without this connection, we lived by a different set of rules, rules gendered by the prince of this world. That prince is also

called by many different names, some of which are Satan and the Devil. Satan rules over the world as we know it today. Because we did not know God’s Word, we did not know how God wanted us to live. We did not understand the lifestyle that He would have had us live. In fact, if we do not know His Word today, we still will not know His Will for us. ***To know God, we have to know His Word.*** Until that time, we will walk according to the course of this world.

Just knowing His Word does not signify change. One must practice God’s Word in his or her lifestyle. There has to be a connection between knowledge and practice. This is what it is talking about when it says “walked.” We must practice the Word in our walks. Satan will always try to work in people, and you are no exception. He would love to stop God’s family from becoming the family

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that it is supposed to be. We must always be aware of this and guard against it. The greatest protection we can put on is God's Word in our minds. Those who are not born again, and those who do not put God's Word into their minds and walk that Word can be used by the adversary. *Satan is always looking for a few good men.* Let's not be numbered among those ranks.

(Eph 2:3) Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Obtaining more information about our past, verse three tells us about our manner of life [conversation]. We are told that our manner of life was driven by the lusts of our flesh. "Lusts" means "over desires." An *over desire* could be in any area,

including sewing. Please don't think that it is solely limited to passionate events. This is what so many people think. It certainly can center around things that are sensually appealing though. The lust of the eyes is an interesting situation. For something to be introduced into the mind, the image must be presented into the mind. That is what the five senses are responsible for. Once it reaches the mind, it can really develop. Whatever it is that you over desire, learn to control those desires so that you can walk according to God's Word.

By nature, we fell into this way of life. Our nature was worldly before we joined God's family. Once we joined God's family, we had the ability to take on a new lifestyle. This is what allows us to become who we would like to be now. Until we joined God's family, we were naturally a part of something that was not good.

All people are born into this state, and all people need to be freed from this state. This is what Jesus Christ came to accomplish. *By Jesus Christ's accomplishments, we are free from the grasp of Satan.* To make this a reality, we must practice God's Word *after* learning it.

(Eph 2:4) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

Have you ever felt that no one could relate to your duress in this life? I am sure that all of us have at one time or another. The truth of the matter is that God can relate and He did relate. This is what mercy is all about. God knew what the situation was, and He had the plan to fix our lousy situation. Mercy means "withholding of merited judgement." Even though we were born into such a messy state of affairs, we have a way out. That

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way out was provided by God's mercy. God is rich in mercy, and also has a great love with which He loves us.

(Eph 2:5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

To add to the excitement of what God did for us, verse five brings us our most depressive past and tells us how all of that was taken care of. Remember that we saw the word 'quickened' in verse one? Well, it is here again, only with more explanation. Our being made alive spiritually is with Christ. That's right! Jesus Christ paid the price for our salvation, and what we have, we have with Christ. This is a real family affair. In verse four, we saw that God's rich mercy was a main instigator for our freedom, but grace also played a big part. We were saved by grace. Grace means

"undeserved favor." This means that you received something when you did not deserve it. Another way to look at "grace" is you are God's favorite now. *We were saved from the world's grasp, quite literally, Satan's grasp, by the grace or favor of God.*

(Eph 2:6) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Now is when it gets really exciting. We have been looking at who and what we were before we were born again. Finally, we can see the reality of what God did for us after we were born again. God raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies. Could it get any better than this? Notice that we were all raised up at the same time. This could only have happened because of the

accomplishments of Jesus Christ. When Jesus was raised, we were raised. It happened that quickly and in that exact fashion. In fact, when we were raised and seated in the heavenlies, we stayed there. What this means is that the work was done and awaiting those who wanted to receive it to believe. Jesus Christ accomplished all that we would ever need. All we have to do is believe. *Once we believe, all that we will ever be is "IN CHRIST!"* That means that our salvation is not of ourselves, it is from something greater than ourselves. That is the only way that it could have happened.

(Eph 2:7) That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Now you have to ask yourselves why God did all of these great

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things for us. After reading the entire verse, we notice that all that was ever done was through Christ Jesus. Once again, what we have and who we are is of something greater than ourselves. Our salvation is simply not of ourselves. That should take a lot of pressure off. All of the works that you could imagine and perform will accomplish nothing from God's perspective. They may make you feel good, but they do nothing spiritually! We must believe the truth set forth in Ephesians. All that was done was through Christ!

All that was done for us was done for a purpose. In this verse, we see the phrase: "that in the ages to come." This means that there is more to life than what we see, hear, taste, touch and smell today. That's right. *We have something coming that will take all of the pain and pressures of*

today away. God plans to show the exceeding riches of his grace in His kindness toward us. That sounds very exciting to me. How about you? It should get your blood pumping a little bit, just knowing some of what is in store for us down the road. I get a real kick out of knowing that God has such kindness toward us. *So many people want us to believe that God is cruel and that God is a killer.* I must tell you that those people have been misled. God is so loving and kind that there is nothing that compares. He is the best, and we must learn to see Him as He is, not as others portray Him.

(Eph 2:8) For by grace
are ye saved through faith;
and that not of yourselves:
it is the gift of God:

I have been saying it over and over again, but one more time

will not hurt any of us. We have been saved by grace through faith. "Faith" means "the right way of believing." We are responsible to learn God's Word and believe it. His Word is what we are to believe for the right way of believing. One man's interpretation of God's Word is not necessarily the right way of believing; God's Word is the right way of believing. God can work in you to understand what His Word is saying. Also, not everyone teaching the Word of God is completely wrong. Many people hash God's Word to pieces, but many do not. Only when you have studied the Word and put some of it together can you start to understand when someone is right or wrong.

There are simple truths that help us along the way. These truths are taught in Biblical classes around the world. But, we are saved by grace through the right way of believing God's Word, and that not

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of yourselves, it is the gift of God. This means that our salvation is of God and not of ourselves. Quite literally, salvation is a gift from God. If it is a gift, then it is a gift.

When God says that it is a gift, you or I can't change that and say that it is not a gift and add stipulations to receiving that gift.

If it is a gift, then there are no strings attached. If there are no strings attached, then the gift is truly free. It was not free to God for it cost Him everything He had in His Son Jesus Christ. But it is free to us.

(Eph 2:9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Let's just drive the point home even further. ***There are no works that you could do today, tomorrow, or when you finally get your act together that***

could ever bring you salvation. You are made whole, which is what salvation means. This happens when you believe the right way, through Jesus Christ. If you could receive salvation any other way, then you would have the right to boast, especially if you were required to do some form of work to receive that salvation. You cannot do any work to receive salvation. The gift of salvation is free when we believe.

Some have said that this act of confessing the Saviour from sin is a work. It is not a work, it is an act. It is literally the act of confessing that you believe in the work that Jesus Christ accomplished. If saying one simple phrase is your idea of work, it would be easy to claim that receiving salvation is a work. Receiving salvation is not a work. It is an act that you are expected to perform in order to receive the benefits of the work

that Jesus Christ did! Do you know how to become born again? I would like to show you. Look at Romans 10: 9 and 10:

(Rom 10:9-10) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

There are only two things necessary to do in order to become born again. One requires confessing Jesus as Lord and the other requires believing from the heart that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. There is no way to get works out of that. The works were already done by the time you came along. I am not saying that this does not require some sort

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of action for it does. You must accomplish the act in order to receive the results, but you do not have to do any work to receive the results. The results are handed to you on a golden platter. If we think that this is work, then you have a distorted idea of what work really encompasses. Jesus Christ worked. He gave his life for us. He completed the Law, the Old Testament rules, to the letter. He did not err once. That is work! Our act of acceptance is understanding what he did and doing the two items listed in Romans 10: 9 and 10. ***I would say that there is a whole lot of difference between what Jesus Christ accomplished and what we have to do in order to receive the benefits of his accomplishments.***

(Eph 2:10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ

Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

The final result of all of this work on God's part ends up in us being His masterpiece. That means that we are one great work of God's art. What is even more wonderful about this is that we, as works of art, are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. All that we are is in Christ Jesus. There is nothing that we have spiritually that is of ourselves. Anything otherwise would not be spiritual. Interesting to note is that we were created spiritually unto good works. Now, if you are one of these guys that really gets into works for salvation, stop doing the works for salvation and start doing them for AFTER salvation. That is what we are to be doing!

Why are we to be doing good works after salvation? Because God "before ordained that we

should walk in them." That about sums it up. God, before the world began, ordained that we should live our lives a certain way. ***He wants our lives to be full of good works.*** There are bad works, but He does not want us to do those. He wants us to apply His Word in all areas of our lives and follow the right way of believing. That really isn't too hard. In fact, it is easy. We are masterpieces all because of what Jesus Christ accomplished, and we should be walking a "good works" lifestyle because that's what God wants us to do.

We were born into this world completely dead in trespasses and sins. That was a lousy state of affairs at best. We walked after the manner of this world, of which Satan ruled. Then the grace and mercy of God made salvation available. Once we believed the right way, we were saved. This great salvation, a gift from God,

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was completely free to us. It was not completely free to God, for it cost Him everything. When we accept what He did for us, and what we can do with it now, our lives can and will change for God wants us to become who we really are, complete Christian men and women, filled with the greatness of His spiritual gift. *Now, we are His masterpieces, created in Christ Jesus!*

God bless you abundantly in Christ!

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