



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians

Chapter 2

Bishop Youssef



Introduction

- In Chapter 1, St. Paul explained the blessings that we received being in God's family (the Church)
- In Chapter 2, he explains the transition into God's family:
From Death to Life (2:1-10)
From Strangers to Citizens (2:11-22)
- Also in this chapter St. Paul explains the spiritual structure of the church.



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- Our condition outside of Christ (1-3)
- Dead in trespasses and sins (1)
- Walking according to the course of the world and the devil (2)
- Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind, by nature the children of wrath (3)



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23)
- Course of this world: This is a reference to the universe under the control of Satan and his forces
- The ruler of this world is Satan (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11)
- The power of the air refers to the realm of demonic spirits



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- They have no more place in heaven, having fallen when they rebelled, along with Satan, against Almighty God
- As disembodied spirits, they have no place on earth, unless they can find a body to inhabit
- Spirit speaks of the state of mind that originates with Satan and is characteristic of those who are disobedient to the will of God



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- The unbeliever does what he wants to do, as dictated by the desires of the mind and flesh, apart from divine guidance
- The believer "walk worthy of the calling" with which he is called according to God's will (Eph 5:1)
- The sin nature is inherited from Adam



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- God made us alive together with Christ (4-5)
By virtue of His mercy and great love
Even when dead in trespasses
By His grace we have been saved



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- God's love depends on His character, not on ours. He is an initiator of love, not a responder
- God's love is:
 - Unconditional
 - Limitless
 - Sacrificial
- No life away from Christ



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- God raised us with Christ (6-7)
- Made to sit with Him in heavenly places
- That in ages to come, God might show the exceeding riches of His grace
- These verses speak of the reality of our union with Christ



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- God's fairness and grace are demonstrated not only to us but also to Satan and his "principalities and powers."
- We obtained all these gifts only through the Lord Jesus Christ
- Saved by grace through faith (8-9)



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- Not of ourselves, it is the gift of God
- Not of works, lest any man should boast
- We are not saved by works but we will not be saved without them
- Human good promotes boasting and pride
- Grace promotes humility, growth, and divine good



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- Human works, that are according to the desires of mind and flesh, whether good or bad, are dead to God because they come from the Sin Nature. (Isaiah 64:6)
- We are thus God's workmanship (10)
- Created in Christ Jesus, in Baptism, for good works according to His will



From Death to Life (2:1-10)

- Created to walk in good works which God prepared beforehand, not according to our will
- The believer walks:
 - By faith, not by sight (2 Cor 5:7)
 - By the Spirit not fulfilling the desire of the flesh (Gal 5:16-18)
 - In the truth (3 John 3, 4)

From Strangers to Citizens (2:11-22)



- The gentiles' condition "without" Christ (11-12)
 - Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel (Ceremonial Barrier)
 - Strangers from the covenants of promise (Legal Barrier)
 - Having no hope and without God in the world (Moral Barrier)

From Strangers to Citizens (2:11-22)



- The circumcision of the flesh vs. circumcision of the heart
- It is a misery to have no god (atheism) or to believe in false gods (pantheism)
- The hopelessness and despair that unbelievers feel, when they think of the afterlife or the future, can be crushing

From Strangers to Citizens (2:11-22)



- The gentiles' condition "through" Christ (13-18)
- Made near by the blood of Christ (ransom) (13)
 - Can now be "one body" with the Jews, because:
 - By breaking down the wall of division (outer court) between them (14) (the legal barrier)
 - The Lord abolished in His flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances (15) (the ceremonial barrier)

From Strangers to Citizens (2:11-22)



- The Lord now reconciles them both to God (veil) in one body (the Church) through the cross (16) (the moral barrier)
- The Lord preached peace to those afar off and those near (17)
- Can now have access by one Spirit (Chrismation) to the Father through Christ (the door) (18)
- Christ is our peace, in Him there should be no conflict whatsoever!

From Strangers to Citizens (2:11-22)



- It is the individual to whom God gives peace
- God has no intention to bring about happiness or peace by changing people's circumstances
- The Lord's plan is to give every believer happiness, joy, peace, all the fruit of the Spirit in the present situation
- The Peace of God does not depend on people or circumstances to maintain it

From Strangers to Citizens (2:11-22)



- The gentiles' condition "in" Christ (19-22)
 - They are now "fellow citizens with the saints" (19)
 - They are now "members of the household of God" (19)
 - They are now part of "a holy temple in the Lord, the Church" (20-22)
 - Built upon a foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ the cornerstone
 - Joined together and growing as a holy temple, a habitation of God in the Spirit

From Strangers to Citizens (2:11-22)



- The process of construction is described in Ephesians 4.
- There is no edification or growth outside the church
- The process of edification requires togetherness.
- Edification is in Him and for Him
- God's plan for you is to be His holy temple. What does this mean for you?



Conclusion

- What was our condition before Christ?
- What are the characteristics of God's love?
- What is the role of works in salvation?
- What are the spheres to the believer's walk?
- What was the condition of the gentiles without Christ?
- What is the condition of the gentiles through Christ?
- What is the condition of the gentiles now in Christ?