

## THE CHRISTIAN'S RELIGIOUS HISTORY

**Ephesians 2:1-7**

**(Not entirely original with me)**

**Introduction:** Sometimes Christians need to be reminded of their past and how they came to be what they are today. Everybody has gotten out an old picture album and looked through it, remembering this picture and that one and thinking how "they" have changed through the years. Those old picture albums brought back a lot of memories of one's past life. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he mentions some things which is our text (2:1-7) that perhaps we need to take another look at as if it were a photo album of our past. Paul's passage is really an overview of the Christian's religious history, what he/she was like before becoming a Christian, how he/she became a Christian and how things have changed since becoming a Christian. We need to be reminded every once in a while of our past.

### **I. EVERY CHRISTIAN WAS ONCE (IN GOD'S SIGHT) DEAD BECAUSE OF SIN**

1. When a person is insensible, numb, unaffected, unaware of something, then he/she in Biblical language can be said to be "dead."
  - Christians were once "dead" to religious, divine things, thoughts or eternity.
  - Christians were alive to worldly, rational, intellectual things but dead to spiritual things.
  - There was a time when Christians could not hear God's voice in any form or manner.
  - Christians were also spiritually blind, seeing no glory in God, nothing in Jesus Christ, nothing wrong with sin, nothing of a "plan of salvation."
  - There was no feeling of guilt or of the evilness of sin or the hardness of one's heart, nothing of the goodness of God or of the love of Jesus Christ.
  - There would have been little difference if the Christian had been buried in a grave somewhere.
2. Christians were dead to God, but very alive to their fellow human beings.
  - Christians once lived their lives according to Satan's will as he stirred appetites, passions, desires wants and whatever it took to cause them to pursue self-gratification.
  - As the world lived, so once did the Christian, ignoring God, intent on fulfilling the desires of one's flesh and mind.
  - While the Christian was living like the rest of the world, God was watching and listening for that Christian to speak to Him, but not a word for there was no sense of guilt.
3. God's justice cried out for that sinning person to be punished, to be "cut down."
  - Instead, God's mercy caused that sinner to be spared, even though that sinner (now a Christian) gave no thought to justice, mercy but kept on pursuing the things of the world.
  - A frowning, angry God was looking down with His curse resting on the sinning person while the world kept drawing that person deeper and deeper into sin.
    - Hell was opening wide for death to hurl that sinner into the flames below.
4. Christians, these things were once your character, way of life and situation and is that today of countless people whom you were once like.

## II. GOD'S MERCY ACTED AND HE HAS SPARED THE CHRISTIAN

1. When the Christian was once dead in sin, God made the Christian alive.
  - God began to make known His eternal love.
  - God dealt with the once dead Christian as a thinking, rational person.
  - God sent someone with His Word to that once dead Christian and spoke to that heart.
  - That once dead Christian's attention was caught, aroused, his/her conscience awakened and thoughts that he/she never had before began to flood his/her mind.
  - God's Word, the Scriptures were read, as well as Christian publications.
  - Attendance was started at worship services where the word of God was preached.
  - Truths began to take form in the mind and recognition of his/her true condition in God's eyes began to take form.
  - Guilt began to become a burden along with deep anxiety and caused many nights of restlessness.
  - The feeling of the need of a Savior began to grow and grow and that if anybody could save you] it had to be God for there was nothing anybody else could do.
  - So, upon finally believing in God's Son, Jesus Christ as best as he/she knew how, in that instant God breathed life into that once dead life and that believing person became a living soul.
  - A new life meant a new world, one never before known of, one never even imagined could exist.
  - Eyes of understanding were opened, ears were opened and could hear God's voice, the heart of stone was changed and now feelings were different.
  - A hunger and thirst after righteousness and things of God flooded over that person's being.
  - Christian, do not these things bring back memories?
2. God raised the Christian from death and now the Christian has a place in Heaven with the Lord.
  - The disobedient spirit has been removed and replaced by the Holy Spirit.
  - God pardoned all sins, removed guilt, added the Christian to His family and to His Church, given him/her a new name, a heavenly inheritance, and sealed the Christian with the Holy Spirit.
  - God has a place prepared and awaiting for the Christian upon his/her death of this human life where the Christian will reign with the Lord Jesus forever and ever.
3. Christian, what caused God to raise you from the dead and give you all these wonderful things was/is His own self-moved goodness.
  - Nothing but God's grace saves.
  - Nothing but God's self-moving goodness and love prompted Him to bestow His grace on those who believe in His Son.
  - Christian, you were dead in your sins and you could not do anything about it and you didn't even know you were dead nor did you have a desire to change anything UNTIL God began to work with you.
  - Christian, you deserved nothing but the wrath of God forever but God's grace, His unmerited favor stepped into your life and His love led Him to grant you grace.
  - How could God love anybody who was so sinful, wicked and dead as you and the rest of mankind?
    - God loved you for His Son's sake. *"...All that the Father giveth me, says he, shall come to me; and this is the will of my Father, that of all that He has given me I should lose none..."*
  - Christian, you were once a part of those who knew nothing of God's love and grace, but God has loved you with an everlasting love and has drawn you to Himself.

## CONCLUSION:

1. Christians, God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...
2. Christians, God has done all this for us. He has loved us with an everlasting love. He has made us alive when we were dead in sin and has raised us up together and caused us to sit together in heavenly places the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Christians, God has done all this out of grace, mercy and with nothing on our part. Shouldn't we love Him, praise Him, and live for Him only?
4. Christians, what amount of money would cause you to go back into the world of lost-ness, sinfulness, separation from God's love and grace?
  - What would tempt you to return to being dead in trespasses and sin, under the power of Satan and the world again?
  - For what would you sell the gifts which God has given you?
5. Christian, remember what you once were before God found you and saved you. Give thanks to God for His grace and mercy.
6. If you are not a Christian, then you have heard the condition described in which you presently are in.
  - Will you not turn to the God who loves you and can bring you into a new world where you will share in all that you have heard that the Christian has now and will have?