

## **THE IDENTITY OF THE OVERCOMING CHURCH: JEWS AND GENTILES ALIVE IN CHRIST**

Houses of Light Church • Pastor Netz, Sharon Wilberger • December 1, 2024

### I. SUMMARY

- A. In Ephesians 1 we saw that at the root of all the blessings Paul expresses is God's good purpose (vv. 5, 9, and 11). That is why He chose us to be holy (v. 4); He predestined us to be His children (vv. 5 and 11) and He redeemed us by purchasing the forgiveness of our sins (v. 7). Then, when we believed, He sealed us with His Holy Spirit (v. 13); and He gave us an inheritance (vv. 11 and 14). All of this is for the praise of His glory (vv. 6, 12, and 14) and is carried out according to the riches of His grace in Christ (vv. 6-7).
- B. Then in verses 1:15-23 Paul prays for us to understand all of this and not just a superficial knowledge but the knowledge that we obtain through the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that enlightens our hearts to consider these truths as something precious, valuable and desirable.
- C. His prayer includes that we know the hope of the calling, the inheritance that we are and have in Christ and the divine power that was needed for us to convert from death to life and it is the same power that acted in Christ to raise Him from the dead (vv. 19-20). This power not only converted us to Christ but placed us to share the reign with Him.
- D. When all history is completed and the redeemed are placed with Christ on the throne, we will share His reign even to judge together with Him (Eph. 2:6). God will receive the glory and we will be full of praise to Him, which means that we will be happy forever and He will be glorified for all eternity.

### II. THE GRACE OF GOD SAVES US JEWS AND GENTILES

*“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.” Ephesians 2:1-3*

- A. In chapter one Paul spoke to us of all that we are now in Christ, but now in this chapter he describes the condition in which we Gentile Christians were before we were converted, and then in v. 3 he also includes the Jews in similar conditions. We were all dead in our trespasses and sins, according to the spirit that works in the world leading to disobedience (2:1 and 3).
- B. The spiritual DNA of all, both Jews and Gentiles, was disobedience, that is why we were under the wrath of God.  
*'But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ' Ephesians 2:4-5*
- C. We did not deserve it, but the Father raised us up and seated us with Christ. And the ultimate goal of all this new life in Christ is:  
*'in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ' Ephesians 2:7*
- D. The Holy Spirit, through what Paul writes, is helping us to see that our salvation, both in its eternal preparation and in its application for our time, is intended to display the majesty of God's sovereign grace and to silence all human boasting. None of this salvation is the result of our good works; rather, our good works are those He prepared in advance (Eph. 2:10).

### III. JEWS AND GENTILES UNITED UNDER THE WRATH BUT ALSO UNDER THE CROSS

*'Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and*

*foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross... He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ' Ephesians 2:11-18*

- A. Paul makes three statements about the kind of condition between Jews and Gentiles before God: • 1) We are united in the same sins (2:1 and 3) • 2) In the spiritual death that we have (2:1); and • 3) We are by nature disobedient, deserving of God's wrath (2:2 and 3).
- B. Paul describes that the Jews were close, they were the people of the promise, they had God's attention and the Gentiles were very far from the covenant, deprived of the promises and separated from God but now the gospel has expanded the limits of the covenant reaching the nations through a single mediator who is Christ and a single shed blood. (v. 1:7). It is not that the Jews have one way of being saved and the Gentiles another.
- C. Here is a beautiful truth when it comes to relationships between different races or ethnicities in the church. We will never see a person of our own race or another race who was not in this same condition. If we can apply this to our relationships with one another, we really do have the most important thing in common and can be one in Christ.

#### IV. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SPIRITUALLY DEAD?

- A. It is important to understand the terrible spiritual death that both Jews and Gentiles were in and from which we needed to be saved. Maybe some of us thought that our problem was drugs, or alcohol, or perversion or whatever, but that was not our main problem. All of us, even the most decent and clean, were dead in our crimes and sins. Many people do not know what they were saved from or what their salvation cost; they have never been taught.
- B. According to Scripture this was our condition before God:
  - 1. We have all sinned and are deprived of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).
  - 2. There is no human being who does not sin (1 Kings 8:46).
  - 3. No one can claim innocence (Ps. 143:2).
  - 4. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).
- C. We were not dead physically or emotionally; we were actually very busy in our sins, going along with the flow of this world, conforming to the influence of the prince of the power of the air, with our mind and body involved in all of this. We are called by nature "children of disobedience" (v. 2c) and "children of wrath" (v. 3c). That is, it is a nature that deserves the wrath of God because we were living in crimes and sins, breaking His laws and dishonoring Him.
- D. Before Christ we were in darkness, we were blind to spiritual things. This blindness prevented us from seeing the light of the gospel of Christ who is the image of God.

*'The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ' 2 Corinthians 4:4*
- E. Unbelievers do not know the glory or the beauty or the value of Christ due to the hardness of their hearts and there is the root of the problem, that is why disobedience comes and therefore the wrath of God, that is being dead in sins and crimes, it is being like a hard rock.

*'They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ' Ephesians 4:18*
- F. Hardness produces ignorance that leads to blindness that prevents us from seeing the glory of God in Christ. Spiritual death is an inability to see anything beautiful or glorious in God that leads us to submit to Him.

*'The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. '1 Corinthians 2:14*

- G. That is why Jesus said that if we are not born again we cannot see the kingdom of God or enter it.

*'Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. " John 3:3*

- H. There is a difference between the one who is born again and the one who is not born again.

*'And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 'Romans 5:5-8*

- I. This is the promise of the New Covenant to pass from death to life and be saved and that is within our reach if we repent and believe in the gospel.

*'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ' Ezekiel 36:26*

## **V. REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. What do Jews and Gentiles have in common?
2. Why can we identify and unite with other races?
3. What does it mean to be spiritually dead and what is God's solution for us?

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Don't forget we have our Young Adult Set (Y.A.S.) every Wednesday at 8:00 pm here in the prayer room.
2. This Thursday, December 5th at 7:00 p.m. is ministry night! The whole family is invited to meet the Lord.
3. Wanna join our volunteer teams? We are now receiving new people in the ushers, security, parking, and kids ministry teams! Talk to one of our team members to sign up.