

The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON XX : GOD MAKES ALIVE / RAISES UP DEAD SINNERS BY GRACE (2:4-10)

God Makes Alive / Raises Up Dead Sinners by Grace (2:1-10)

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 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: 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. 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. (KJV)

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 sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 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. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 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. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (NIV)

Also you — being dead in the trespasses and the sins, in which once ye did walk according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all did walk once in the desires of our flesh, doing the wishes of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath — as also the others, and God, being rich in kindness, because of His great love with which He loved us, even being dead in the trespasses, did make us to live together with the Christ, (by grace ye are having been saved,) and did raise [us] up together, and did seat [us] together in the heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus, that He might show, in the ages that are coming, the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus, for by grace ye are having been saved, through faith, and this not of you — of God the gift, not of works, that no one may boast; for of Him we are workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God did before prepare, that in them we may walk. (Young’s Literal Translation)

Form and Structure

Paul begins a new sentence (vv 1-7) but is broken, the subject and verb is not given until vv 4,5 where the sentence begins again

¹ And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

having mentioned sin, Paul digresses into the depravity of man before continuing his original thought

² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

he now continues his original intent by repeating how he began

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

⁶ and raised us up together,

and made us sit together in the 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 in Christ Jesus.

Paul now begins the second sentence (vv 8-10) providing a summary of the nature of the salvation achieved by God

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:1-10 NKJV)

HOW DOES THIS PERICOPE RELATE TO THE PREVIOUS PERICOPE? — Since Paul begins his comments but then immediately departs into a parenthetical side-issue, we can see the flow of Paul’s thinking better if we remove the parenthesis. Here is 1:15 - 2:10 without Paul’s parenthesis:

Paul gives thanks for the readers

¹⁵ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you,

intercessory prayer-report

making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; *that you may know*

what is the hope of His calling,

what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ and *what* is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe,

confessional material in praise of God’s power in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, leading into the next section

according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ

when He *raised Him from the dead*

and *seated Him at His right hand* in the heavenly places,

²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

²² And He *put all things under His feet,*

and *gave Him to be head over all things to the [congregation],*

²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all...

the application of the power that worked in Christ in relation to believers

⁴ God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses,

made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

⁶ and *raised us up together,*

and *made us sit together* in the 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 in Christ Jesus. (Eph 1:15-23, 2:4-7 NKJV)

OUR ‘RAISED WITH HIM’ IS NOT THE EXACT PARALLEL WITH CHRIST’S RESURRECTION — “The actual phrase ‘in the heavenly realms,’ is employed in both contexts and the compound verbs ‘raised with’ and ‘seated with’ in 2:6 deliberately recall the simple forms ‘raised’ and ‘seated’ in 1:20. Yet the parallel is by no means exact. *The death from which Christ was raised was according to 1:20 a physical death, while that form which believers have been raised is the death of an existence characterized by their sinful action.* One reason for the anacoluthon of vv 1-3 may well be that before he completes his comparison, [Paul] wishes to clarify in what sense he speaks of his readers as dead. At the same time, this elaboration of their past condition functions as a backdrop setting in sharper relief the salvation God has now provided for them.” [Lincoln, 85f, Greek replaced by English]

v. 4 — COMPLETING THE THOUGHT BEGAN IN VERSE ONE — but God being rich in mercy, – ὁ δὲ θεὸς πλούσιος ὢν ἐν ἐλέει, [ho de theos plousios ōn en eleei.] “But” introduces God’s actions towards sinners in contrast to their plight in vv. 1-3. The contrast is actually with v. 1 because vv. 2,3 are only relative sentences further describing what was stated in v. 1. “Finally, after the digression which describes the sinners’ plight, God is introduced as the grammatical subject and the subject of the gracious act of redemption.” [Hoehner, 325] “*Here [Paul] begins to return to the thought begun in v 1 but interrupted by his expansion on what it means to be dead through trespasses and sins in vv 2, 3. He has seen clearly the hopeless condition of humanity in sin and painted it in dark colors. Yet the explanation for the overall mood of the first part of the letter being one of praise and thanksgiving to God rather than despair is summed up by the eloquent little phrase at the start of v 4, ‘but God...’.*” [Lincoln, 99f]

THE GOD WROTH WITH SIN IS A GOD OF GRACE — “[T]he other side of our case is now to be set forth – the Divine grace which meets the sinful, condemned condition, and which stands over the dark background of our death by sin and our subjection by nature to the Divine wrath. God who is wroth with sin, is a God of grace. His disposition towards those who are dead by trespasses and sins is one of mercy, and this no stinted mercy, but a mercy that is rich, exhaustless.... If mercy is God’s attitude to sinful men, love is His motive in all that He does with them; and as the mercy is ‘rich’ so the love is ‘great.’ With

this great love God loved us when He chose us, and it is on account of that love that He acts with us as He does.” [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 287] *“If unbelievers were once dead in sin, under the power of evil supernatural beings, controlled by their own wicked desires and subject to God’s wrath, they could expect no mercy from God, yet surprisingly, that is not so for God is rich in mercy.... The new position of believers is a result only of the nature and activity of God.”* [Best, 213]

rich — πλούσιος [plousios] *wealthy, abounding in material resources, abounding, abundantly supplied. God is not miserly in his mercy but rich. God is frequently characterized in this way: he ‘abounds in mercy’ (Exod 34:6; Ps 103:8; Jonah 4:2) and ‘delights in mercy’ (Mic 7:18).* “That is, exceedingly bountiful and liberal in the exercise of mercy. And in this metaphorical sense, the words ‘rich’ and ‘riches’ are used by the best writers. Lucian speaks of ... ‘the riches of philosophy.’ The Roman orator frequently speaks of the ‘riches of the mind,’ by which he means those excellencies of understanding and virtue which are the peculiar ornaments and riches of it. So the apostle means here the infinite benignity of the Divine Nature, and his unchangeable disposition to be merciful.” [Chandler, quoted in Calvin, Ephesians]

“... The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth” (Exod 34:6 NKJV)

“The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.” (Ps 103:8 NKJV)

“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.” (Ps 145:8 NKJV)

“... for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.” (Jonah 4:2 NKJV)

“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.” (Micah 7:18 NKJV)

Samuel Davies and John Newton writes about this mercy using Micah 7:18 as their basis in their song ‘Great God of Wonders.’ The words were written by Samuel Davies (1723-1761), an evangelist, Presbyterian minister and also the fourth President of Princeton University. John Newton of ‘Amazing Grace’ fame wrote the music. What wonderful words:

Great God of wonders! All Thy ways
Are matchless, Godlike and divine;
But the fair glories of Thy grace
More Godlike and unrivaled shine,
More Godlike and unrivaled shine.

(chorus): Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?
Or who has grace so rich and free?

Crimes of such horror to forgive,
Such guilty, daring worms to spare;
This is Thy grand prerogative,
And none shall in the honor share,
And none shall in the honor share
(chorus)

Angels and men, resign your claim
To pity, mercy, love and grace:
These glories crown Jehovah’s Name
With an incomparable glaze
With an incomparable glaze.
(chorus)

In wonder lost, with trembling joy,
We take the pardon of our God:
Pardon for crimes of deepest dye,
A pardon bought with Jesus’ blood,
A pardon bought with Jesus’ blood.
(chorus)

O may this strange, this matchless grace,
This Godlike miracle of love,
Fill the whole earth with grateful praise,
And all th’angelic choirs above,
And all th’angelic choirs above.
(chorus)

mercy — ἐλεει [eleei] The word is used in the NT 27x. *The best known illustration of this word is the mercy shown by the Good Samaritan's action* (Luke 10:37). Hoehner quotes Aristotle as saying mercy is “an emotional concern for those who undeservedly suffered some calamity. Those who have suffered or think they might suffer the same disaster are most likely to feel the pity or mercy.” Hoehner then continues by contrasting Aristotle's view with the scriptural view of mercy: “*In the present context it is God's compassion or pity on the sinners who are suffering the calamity of sin. In this instance, the calamity of sin is not something undeserved, yet God extends his mercy toward sinners because he loves them and knows that they are helplessly entrapped in their own snare. They have nothing to commend them to God.*” [Hoehner, 326f]

Aristotle

the God of Scripture

mercy is “an emotional concern for those who undeservedly suffered some calamity.”

God extends his mercy toward sinners because he loves them and knows that they are helplessly entrapped in their own snare. They have nothing to commend them to God.

“This initiative is launched because God is a God not only of righteous wrath (v 3) but also of mercy.... **God's mercy is his overflowing active compassion and is freely exercised, excluding all ideas of merit on the part of its object.** It is noticeable that the notion of God's mercy is a prominent present element in several examples of the contrast between the pre-Christian past and the Christian present (cf. Rom 11:30-32; 1 Tim 1:13; Titus 3:3-5; 1 Pet 2:10). It plays an important part in the apostle Paul's thinking about God's relationship to humanity in Rom 9-11 in particular (cf. 9:15, 16, 18, 23; 11:30, 31, 32).” [Lincoln, 100]

because of his great love — διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ [dia tēn pollēn agapēn autou] This clause states *the cause for this demonstration of mercy; i.e., the love of God.* Most of the commentators I have read consider this phrase to have the sense of ‘because of, on account of,’ thus ‘*in order to satisfy His great love.*’ “Διὰ [dia] is not to be rendered *through*, but *on account of.* *It was to satisfy his love, that he raised us from the death of sin.*” [Hodge, Ephesians] *Mercy may feel misery but love compelled God to act; “God who has abundant mercy, on account of His love”*

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:6-8)

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:39)

‘Love’ here is God's love, agapē love, self-sacrificing love, the love of Calvary (John 3:16). “*This love of God is so great that it defies all definition. We can speak of it as his intense concern for, deep personal interest in, warm attachment to, and spontaneous tenderness toward his chosen ones, but all this is but to stammer. Those, and those only, who experience it are the ones who know what it is, though even they can never fully comprehend it (3:19). They know, however, that it is unique, spontaneous, strong, sovereign, everlasting, and infinite (Isa. 55:6,7; 62:10-12; 63:9; Jer. 31:3, 31-34; Hos. 11:8; Mic. 7:18-20; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8, 16, 19). It is ‘the love that has been shed abroad in our hearts’ (Rom 5:5), ‘his own love toward us’ (Rom 5:8), the love from which no one and nothing ‘will be able to separate us’ (Rom 8:39).*” [Hendriksen, 117] “As Paul has stressed the riches of God's mercy, so he now asserts the greatness of his love. God's love for his people in Christ is a particular thrust of Romans (cf. 5:5, 8; 8:39). And as in Romans 5:8, so here God's love is focused on the love of Christ, which led to his giving himself up as a sacrifice on behalf of his people.” [O'Brien, 166] “God's mercy and love caused him to act on behalf of men and women and to do what was necessary for them, even when they were in such a condition (cf. the similar thought in Rom 5:8, where God is said to show his love for us in Christ's death ‘while we were yet sinners’).” [Lincoln, 101]

with which he loved us — ἣν ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς [hēn ēgapēsēn hēmas] According to Hoehner this is a “constative aorist” which views the entire action without reference to its beginning, its progress or its end.

Constative aorist — This is the official description for an aorist that describes an action in its entirety. It is the most foundational meaning of the aorist tense. For example, John 2:20 – ‘This temple **was built** in forty-six years.’ The verb takes a 46-year process and wraps it up in a single package. The emphasis is on the fact that it happened, not on how long it took. (<http://ezraproject.com/id34.html>)

v. 5 — AN EMPHATIC CONTRAST — even when we were dead in transgressions — καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν [kai ontas hēmas nekrous tois paraptōmasin] This is basically a restatement of v. 1 with the only differences being a change from “you” (v. 1) to “we” (v. 5) and the dropping of “and sin” which was most likely just being used synonymously for transgressions. Salmond comments on Paul's use of ‘and’ in the beginning of this verse: it is not used merely to connect together two statements; nor is it a repetition of the ‘and’ of the first verse; nor does it have the sense of ‘also, also us’; but is used as translated, ‘even.’ *This plus the location of ‘dead’ is strongly emphatic: “The condition of death in which we are by nature is now re-affirmed, and in a still more emphatic way than in ver. 1.... [the use of words and their position in the sentence] heightens the sense of the greatness of the Divine power – as a power operating on us when we were yet held fast in the state of inexorable death.”* [Salmond, Expositor's GK Testament, 287] *We were not just helpless, hopeless, without strength to come to God but we were satisfied in our sins. We did not want His intervention in our lives! We were in the grasp of sin and loving it! There was nothing to force God to reach out to us but God freely chose to have mercy on us to satisfy His great love.*

‘MADE ALIVE TOGETHER WITH’

Having introduced the subject (God), Paul describes what God does by using three main compound verbs, all of which are extremely rare. We will consider these words all together due to their similarity.

(v. 5) made us alive together — συνεζωποποίησεν [sunezōpoiēsen] is not used in classical literature or the LXX but only in Eph 2:5 and Col 2:13. The word is created from two words, “with” + “to make alive, to impart life.” The root word is much more common, being used in classical literature to refer to the birth of animals or the growth of plants. It is used 11x in the NT. Except for an illustration of the seed dying and coming to life (1 Cor 15:36), it is always used in the NT of one of the Trinity who has the ability to make alive. **“Dead people cannot bring themselves back to life and so the first step here, and the following two, come from God. We can arrange neither to be born nor to be reborn.”** [Best, 215] **“As the death from which the Christian is delivered includes condemnation (judicial death), pollution, and misery; so the life which he receives comprehends forgiveness (justification), regeneration, and blessedness. Thus in 2 Cor. 2, 12, 13, the apostle says, ‘And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.’”** [Hodge, Ephesians] “This phrase ‘making alive together with Christ’ has reference to spiritual life and not the physical resurrection of the believer. Christ died physically, we were dead spiritually. Christ was raised physically (1:20), we were raised together with Christ spiritually. We were dead spiritually and now he made us alive spiritually.... Ephesians states that we were dead in our trespasses but were made alive with Christ to the newness of life. However, **our identification with Christ does not end in the newness of life but continues until the time that we are resurrected with him** (1 Thess 4:14, 17; Phil 1:23; cf. 2 Cor 5:8). In John 5:21-24 Jesus asserts that as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he wills; whoever believes in the Son has eternal life presently and will not come into judgment but is passed from death to life. This new life occurred at the time of our conversion for in the immediate context there is mention that salvation is by grace and the means is by faith and not works (vv. 5b, 8-9).” [Hoehner, 330f]

‘RAISED UP TOGETHER WITH’

(v. 6) and raised us up with him — καὶ συνήγειρεν [kai sunēgiren] The word is created from two words, “with” + “to raise up.” This word is used 2x in the LXX where it refers to someone assisting another to raise something heavy (Ex 23:5) and of Sheol arousing the spirits of the dead (Isa 14:9). It is only used here and Col 2:12; 3:1 where it speaks of being raised with Christ:

‘buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.’ (Col 2:12 NKJV) Note this verse also has a similar word, συνταφέντες [suntaphentes] meaning ‘to bury together with’.

‘If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.’ (Col 3:1 NKJV)

While our physical resurrection is yet future, this speaks of our past (spiritual) resurrection in conjunction with Christ’s physical resurrection. **“This new resurrected life demands new values. It is summed up well in Col 3:1-2 which says, ‘If therefore you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God; set your mind on things above, not on things on earth.’”** [Hoehner, 334]

‘SEATED TOGETHER WITH’

(v. 6) and seated us with him — καὶ συνεκάθισεν [kai sunekathisen] The word is created from two words, “with” + “to sit.” This word is used 4x in the LXX and twice in the NT. Besides here, it is used in Luke 22:55 where it speaks of those who sat down together in the high priest’s courtyard after Christ was arrested: *‘Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.’* (Luke 22:55 NKJV) In the present context, not only has God made us alive with Christ and raised us up together with Christ but believers are also seated together with Christ. **“‘Seated us, or ‘enthroned us’ – Made us sharers with Him in dignity and dominion, so that even now, and in foretaste of our future exaltation, our life and thought are raised to the heavenlies where He reigns.”** [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 288]

ALTHOUGH BELIEVERS ARE SEATED WITH CHRIST, HIS POSITION IS STILL UNIQUE — “[In Col 3:1] the believer is exhorted to seek ‘the things above,’ because Christ is above and the believer’s life is hidden with Christ in God. In Col 3:1 the realm above is closely related to the sphere of resurrection existence, for those whose whole concern is to be the things above, where Christ is, are those who already share his resurrection life. Since resurrection life is heavenly life, by being united with Christ in his resurrection believers participate in the life of the realm above, and the imperatives in [Col] 3:1, 2 can be seen to be based on indicatives. [Paul] has grasped this thought clearly and here spells out its significance boldly. If believers have been given a share in Christ’s resurrection life, they can also be said to share in the triumph of its heavenly aspect. Again the desire to complete the parallel with [Eph] 1:20 dictates the formulation, ‘and seated us with Christ in the heavenly realms,’ and the Colossians background opens the way for the thought behind it. **It should be observed that along with the parallel between believers and Christ there remains a distinction. The phrase ‘at his right hand,’ in 1:20 is reserved for Christ and not repeated in the case of believers in 2:6. Although believers share in Christ’s exaltation, his position in the heavenly realm and his relationship to God are unique.**” [Lincoln, 106f] Others make the same observation: “Believers are distinguished from Christ in that they are not said to sit at God’s right hand.” [Best, 219] **“But ... Paul pauses here and does not add [‘at His right hand’] which is said of Christ in i. 20.”** [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 288]



NOT ‘MADE ALIVE AS CHRIST WAS’ BUT ‘MADE ALIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM’ — “σύν- [sun-] compounds or expressions using the preposition σύν [sun] are frequently found in eschatological contexts referring to living with Christ at the Parousia or after death and to sharing his glory (1 Thess 4:14, 17; 5:10; Rom 6:8; 8:17; 2 Cor 4:14; Phil 1:23; Col 3:4). *A relationship with Christ is in view which affects believers’ future destinies because it involves sharing in Christ’s destiny. Yet, characteristic of Paul’s thought is that a sharing in Christ’s glory and resurrection life is conditional on a sharing in the other aspect of his destiny, his death.* ‘With Christ’ language is found in connection with two aspects of sharing that death — sharing in it as an event of the past, a death to the old order and its powers, sometimes with explicitly baptismal overtones (cf. Rom 6:4, 5, 6, 8; Gal 2:19; Col 2:12, 20; 3:1), and sharing in its aspect of present suffering (cf. Rom 8:17; Phil 3:10).” [Lincoln, 101f]

BELIEVERS HAVE ACCESS TO THE RISEN CHRIST — “[T]here is no other theological construct which could so effectively and vividly communicate to the readers their access to the authority and power of the risen Lord.” [C. E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness*, 148; q.v. O’Brien, 171]

ARE THESE DISTINCT EVENTS OR A SINGULAR EVENT? — Some (Hoehner, J. R. W. Stott) considers these as three separate events (three separate verbs) while others (Lincoln, Best, O’Brien) considers this as further describing the single main verb of “made us alive.” “[T]he two verbs of v. 6 do not follow chronologically on the being made alive of v. 5. It is better to regard all three verbs as aspects of the same act of God, made alive, raised, seated. ‘Made alive’ comes first because nothing can happen without the dead being made alive.” [Best, 217f] This appears to be an argument of semantics. Whether these events are distinct or simply describe a singular event, *the important thing to understand is that these three events occur at the same time.*

WHEN WERE BELIEVERS “MADE ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST”? — When did this happen? Ernest Best states *there is a sense in which believers came alive with Christ when Christ, as a representative or inclusive figure, was raised;* Best states the aorist “loved us” in v. 4 could refer to the Christ-event and therefore supports this view. But Best continues and concludes the better interpretation is to take this as *happening at the believer’s conversion.* [Best, 214] “The resurrection and sitting [in the heavenlies], which are here mentioned, are not yet seen by mortal eyes. Yet, as if those blessings were presently in our possession, he states that we have received them; and illustrates the change which has taken place in our condition, when we were led from Adam to Christ. It is as if we had been brought from the deepest hell to heaven itself.” [Calvin, Ephesians] As with the comments above as to these being distinct or a singular event, I believe the working of God in our salvation to be more complex than we can understand nor are we able to define in a single statement. How are we able to reduce the complexity of God into our feeble understanding? This is all clear to the Lord of course, but to us I believe there is a sense in which this occurred at the cross (as justified by Paul’s use of the aorist) but there is also another sense in which we are not partakers of these events in time until our conversion.

GOOD SUMMARY STATEMENT — *“The language of the apostle in the context will appear the less strange, if we apprehend aright the greatness of the change which believers, even in this life, experience. They are freed from the condemnation of the law, from the dominion of Satan, from the lethargy and pollution of spiritual death; they are reconciled to God, made partakers of his Spirit, as the principle of everlasting life; they are adopted into his family and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God both in this life and in that which is to come. This is a change worthy of being expressed by saying: ‘He hath quickened us, and raised us up, and made us to sit together with Christ in heavenly places.’”* [Hodge, Ephesians] *When we meditate on these comments, tears swell in our eyes in gratitude and worship for what the Lord has done for us His people!*