

Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Ephesians 2:1–10 (NKJV) Part 1

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“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 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, 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. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

All human beings are born with a sinful and fallen nature. We are born *“dead [spiritually] in trespasses and in sins.”* (vs. 1) The sinful nature and the associated spiritual death we suffer have been passed down to us through Adam.

When God created Adam, He made him without sin. Sin came into the world as the result of disobedience. Through the Law of Federal Headship sin was “passed down” through Adam to all men, by divine mandate, *“...and thus death spread to all men...”* (Romans 5:12) Paul taught that, *“...death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam...”* Romans 5:14 (NKJV) Therefore, we see that all men are declared sinners, and are subject to death, by divine mandate through this Law.

Some will argue that we may be born with a sinful nature but that we are not sinners until we act upon that nature and make the choice to sin. However, this is not what the Bible teaches. We do sin because we are born sinners, and because we have a natural propensity for sin; but through the Law of Federal Headship, we are equated with the sinful history of man and therefore held in contempt for the sins of our forefathers. Therefore, whether we like it or not, we are declared sinners through the Law of Federal Headship by the sovereign declaration of God.

When Paul wrote, *“...just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned,”* (Romans 5:12 NKJV) he used the past tense of the word for sin. Thus Paul communicated that the action occurred in the past.

The Greek word Paul used for sin is “harmatano.” It is in the “aorist tense” and the “indicative mood.” This means that Paul summarized the action as having occurred in the past. He did not say, “all sin” in this passage. He said, *“all sinned.”* Therefore we see that Paul taught that God held the descendents of Adam in contempt for the sin committed *in* Adam. Paul also communicated this fact to the Corinthians when he said, *“...in Adam all die...”* (1 Corinthians 15:22 NKJV)

Therefore, when Paul tells the Ephesians that believers are *“...made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,”* (vs. 1) there is no inconsistency in the expression or meaning. We were dead, and God, by His grace, has given the believer life from the death we suffered.

Secondly, we should note that sin is not exclusive to the Law of Federal Headship. Paul makes clear that all men and women personally sin and are prone to sinfulness through the Law of Natural Headship – that is, because we are born through natural means and have inherited the fallen nature

of our earthly fathers. We are declared sinners by the Law of Federal Headship but are likewise each guilty of personal sin and are therefore conclusively, justly, and personally in need of a Savior. Paul told the Romans that, *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* Romans 3:23 (NKJV) The word “fall” is in the “present tense” and suggests that we are all “falling” short, personally and presently.

The good news is that inasmuch *“as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”* 1 Corinthians 15:22 (NKJV) Therefore, the Law of Federal Headship carries a positive effect for those who have trusted Christ for salvation. Believers become the sons and daughters of God. Therefore, through spiritual re-birth (being born again) we have *“passed from death unto life,”* (1 John 3:14 NKJV) and have been accounted as righteous through the perfect life of Jesus.

It is for this reason that Jesus was born of a virgin – and not of a natural father. If Jesus had been born of man, not by virgin birth through the supernatural impregnation of Mary by the Holy Spirit, He would have been born with a sinful nature and therefore would have been a sinner Himself (through the Laws of Federal and Natural Headship.) If Jesus were born of a natural father, He would have been incapable of dying for the sins of the world, and would have died only for His own sin. However, Jesus was not born of man; He was born without sin, never personally sinned, and was without a sinful or fallen nature. He was not born under the rule of Federal Headship! *“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him...”* Hebrews 7:25a (NKJV)

Therefore, when Paul tells the Ephesians, and all of us that, *“...you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,”* Ephesians 2:1a (NKJV) we rejoice. We were dead, separated from God, and without hope in this world. *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”* Ephesians 2:4-5 (NKJV) This He did according to the good pleasure of His will. (See Ephesians 1) *“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”* Ephesians 2:1a (NKJV) *“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”* Colossians 2:13 (NKJV)

End Note: The Law of Federal Headship also includes the fact that man is head of his household, as father is head of his family, and is the one who represents his family and descendants before God and man. (See Ephesians 5:22-6:4)

Read: Romans 5:6-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-28

Questions

True or False: All human beings are born with a sinful and fallen nature.

True or False: The sinful nature and the associated spiritual death we suffer have been passed down to us through Adam.

True or False: When God created Adam, He made him without sin.

True or False: Sin came into the world as the result of disobedience.

True or False: All men and women are declared sinners, and are subject to death, by divine mandate through the Law of Federal Headship.

True or False: Whether we like it or not, we are declared sinners through the Law of Federal Headship by the sovereign declaration of God.

True or False: The Law of Federal Headship is unfair.

True or False: We may be born with a sinful nature, but we are not sinners until we act upon that nature and make the choice to sin.

True or False: All men and women personally sin, are guilty of sin, and therefore need a Savior.

True or False: As a believer I used to sin – but not anymore.

True or False: The word “fall” in Romans 3:23 is the “present tense” and suggests that we are all “falling” short, personally and presently.

True or False: The Law of Federal Headship carries a positive effect for those who have trusted Christ for salvation because believers are made the sons and daughters of God. Therefore, through spiritual re-birth (being born again) we pass from death unto life, and are accounted as righteous through the perfect life of Jesus.

True or False: If Jesus were born of a natural father, He would have been incapable of dying for the sins of the world, and would have died only for His own sin.

True or False: Jesus could have been born like any other man – the virgin birth is not that important.

True or False: Jesus never personally sinned and was without a sinful and fallen nature.

True or False: We do not deserve the life God has given us in Christ!

True or False: Man is head of his household, as a father is head of his family, and is the one who represents his family and descendants before God and man.