

## **Ephesians 2:1-10 – What happens in salvation**

In this passage we are given a “before” and “after” picture. Sometimes advertisers like to show these. You can probably see them in the Daily Nation. Buy from us, they say; here is how unhappy a person is before they did, and here they are happy afterwards. In this part of Ephesians, Paul gives us a “before” and “after”. He shows us what happens in salvation and the great transformation that takes place in someone's life. Do you want to know what salvation is? Then read here!

### **1. Before: what an unsaved person is (v1-3)**

Firstly, Paul says that before conversion, we are spiritually dead (v1). We “walk” in disobedience and sin against God's law. We have no relationship with God. We are not weak, or sleepy, but dead: unable to please God or reach him. Our problem is not poverty, or education: it is that we have no spiritual life and are completely helpless. We do the will of the devil (v2), by following our own selfish desires (v3). People think they are free and in control when they sin, but if we walk in sin it shows they are spiritual slaves. We are evil by nature (v2) – the Greek Paul wrote was, “children of disobedience”. Disobedience comes to us as naturally as barking does to a dog. Because of this we are also “children of wrath” (v3) – by nature, we are hateful to God, and he is rightly angry with us. Paul says this is true of every human being who enters this life. Have you understood this? If you have, that is the first sign that God has begun to give you spiritual life.

### **2. What God does: what happens in salvation (v4-10)**

There is no hope – in ourselves. But God is rich in mercy and love (v4). There is hope in him; he does miracles. Every person who is saved is resurrected from the dead with Christ. In eternity God gave his chosen ones to Christ (as we learnt last week). Christ entered this world 2000 years ago and died and rose – and so his people rose with him. We enter the enjoyment of what happened when Christ died and rose when God visits us with spiritual life. This is called the new birth. It is a work of God, not man. He gives us a new nature so that we now love obedience and hate sin, and resist the devil. He fixes our eyes on Jesus Christ – as Paul's were! He gives us the gift of faith (v8) so that we are ready to trust completely for our salvation (not our own works). Has God done this work in you?

### **3. Why and after: what God saves people for**

Why does God save people? Out of his undeserved mercy and love (v4). It is not earned by us, but freely given as a gift; “by grace you are saved” (v5, 8). The only door to heaven is the same door used by prostitutes, thieves, murderers – you must receive salvation as a gift alongside all those people, or not at all. God's purpose is to show us even greater wonders (v7). His purpose is to do all things in Christ, that Christ may be glorified. The Biblical gospel has four great “alones”: Salvation is by grace alone, through Christ alone, received by faith alone, for the glory of God in Christ alone. If you miss any “alone”, you end up in a cult or a false religion. Is there a place for good works? Not in gaining salvation: but God saves people to do good works that he has prepared for them (v10). We do good works after becoming new people. So – have you had this great experience?