

Ephesians 2:1-2 Commentary

PREVIOUS

EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH
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NEXT

Ephesians 2:1 And you [were dead](#) in your [trespasses](#) and [sins](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [Kai humas ontas \(PAPMPA\) nekrous tois paraptomasin kai tais hamartiais humon.](#)

BGT Καὶ μὲν ὑμεῖς νεκροὶ τῶν παραπτωμάτων καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν,

Amplified: AND YOU [He made alive - not in Greek], when you were dead (slain) by [your] trespasses and sins ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Hoehner - And you being dead in your transgressions and sins

NLT: Once you were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

NLT (revised) Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins.

Phillips: To you, who were spiritually dead all the time ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: And you being dead with reference to your trespasses and sins, He made alive ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: Also you -- being dead in the trespasses and the sins,

KJV *And you hath he quickened,* (NOT IN ORIGINAL GREEK) who were dead in trespasses and sins;

NKJ *And you He made alive* (NOT IN ORIGINAL GREEK) , who were dead in trespasses and sins,

ESV And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

NET And although you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

NIV As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

CSB And you were dead in your trespasses and sins

NRS You were dead through the trespasses and sins

NAB You were dead in your transgressions and sins

NJB And you were dead, through the crimes and the sins

GWN You were once dead because of your failures and sins.

BBE And to you did he give life, when you were dead through your wrongdoing and sins,

AND YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRESPASSES AND SINS: [Kai humas ontas \(PAPMPA\) nekrous tois paraptomasin kai tais hamartiais humon:](#)

- **And you** (these references are based on the KJV but as noted "hath he quickened" is not in the Greek text) Eph 2:5,6; 1:19,20; John 5:25; 10:10; 11:25,26; 14:6; Ro 8:2; 1 Cor 15:45; Col 2:13; 3:1, 2, 3, 4
- **were dead in your trespasses and sins** Eph 2:5; 4:18; 5:14; Mt 8:22; Lk 15:24,32; Jn 5:21; 2 Cor 5:14; 1 Ti 5:6; 1 Jn 3:14; Rev 3:1
- [Ephesians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 2:1-3 The Deadly Power of Sin](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ - Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10 Exchanging Living Death for Dying Life](#) - John MacArthur

THE SYMMETRICAL STRUCTURE
OF EPHESIANS

EPHESIANS 1-3	EPHESIANS 4-6
Spiritual Wealth	Spiritual Walk
The Position of the Believer	The Practice of the Believer
God Sees Us in Christ	The World Should See Christ in Us
Privilege	Practice
Doctrine	Duty
Doctrinal	Practical
Revelation	Responsibility
Christian Blessings	Christian Behavior
Belief	Behavior
Privileges of the Believer	Responsibilities of the Believer
Our Heritage In Christ	Our Life In Christ
Know your Resources (Riches) in Christ	Live by faith in the light of your Resources (Riches) in Christ
Work of Christ	Walk of the Christian
Work of Christ In Us	Work of Christ Through Us
We in Christ	Christ in Us
Word of God	Walk of the Christian
Heavenly Standing	Earthly Walk
Who You Are In Christ	Whose You Are In Christ
Identity	Responsibility
Theology	Ethics

Ephesians 2 Is Amazing!	
Ephesians 2:1-3	Amazing Depths
Ephesians 2:4-7	Amazing Heights
Ephesians 2:8-9	Amazing Grace
Ephesians 2:10	Amazing Work
Adapted from Kent Hughes: Preaching the Word: Ephesians	

Related Passages:

Isaiah 59:2 But **your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God**, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Titus 3:3+ For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

YOUR PAST LIFE: D.O.A!

D.O.A. means dead on arrival. In other words the moment of our conception marked the moment we "D.O.A." because we were all infected with the sin virus from our forefather Adam (Ro 5:12+). Ponder that thought - every soul not in Christ is one of the "Walking Dead." That was the name of a popular fictional television series, but the Bible is not fiction and it says we are all born dead in sin!

Bryan Williams has entitled Ephesians 2:1-10 + "From Wrath to Riches!" An apt title indeed! (from [Christ the Head: Bible Studies in Ephesians](#))

Moule entitles this section "Regeneration of the Ephesians, an instance of gratuitous salvation." ([Ephesians Commentary 2](#))

Lehman Strauss introduces Eph 2:1–10 - The Christian's Past Position in the World- The theme of Ephesians is Christ and His Church. In chapter one, the Church is likened to a body of which Christ is the **Head**. The **Head** is in heaven, and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world, the **Body**, which is Christ's purchased possession, is being formed. The **Head** without the Body is incomplete. When the **Body** is complete, the **Head** will come to unite the **Body** to Himself, never to be separated. The symbolism is beautiful. In chapter two, the Church is likened to a **building**. Paul speaks of its foundation as being "**the apostles and prophets**," its chief Corner-Stone is "**Jesus Christ Himself**," and believers fitly framed together form "**a holy temple in the Lord...for an habitation of God through the Spirit**" (Eph 2:19-22+). Such is the creation and design of the Church. Ephesians is the thrilling story of how God creates anew the man that He created originally in His own image and likeness, but who, through disobedience, fell from his lofty position. The plan involved a **perfect Head for the Body and a perfect Head-Stone for the Building**. So in the fullness of time God sent His Son in a human body, and through His virgin birth, virtuous life, vicarious death, victorious resurrection, and visible return, He is restoring to the Father His fallen creature. In our present chapter Paul shows the need for being made a new creation by reviewing the believer's past history before he became saved. He shows the unregenerated man to be **separated** from God both by **death** and **distance**. It is a portrait of what every unsaved man is, and what every saved person was before trusting in Christ. **Separated by Death** - These verses are marked by a series of triplets. The three's of the Bible make for interesting and instructive teaching. Bible triads represent strength and completeness. The Scripture says that "a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Eccl. 4:12). The verses before us contain a triad of evil and a triad of good: (a) the three ravaging forces are the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph 2:1–3); (b) the three redeeming facts are mercy, love, and grace (Eph 2:4–6); and (c) the three resulting features are that the saints are **made alive together** with Christ, **raised up together** with Christ, and **made to sit together in heavenly places** in Christ. ([Ephesians 1-3 Commentary](#))

1. Spiritual death—the separation of the spirit from God (Ephesians 2:1; 4:18; 1 John 5:12)
2. Physical death—the separation of the soul, or life, from the body (1 Corinthians 15:21–22; Hebrews 9:27)
3. Eternal death—the eternal separation of the soul from the presence of God (Revelation 20:14, 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:9)

And (kai) would seem to link the following statement to the previous verses, although some commentaries do not see it this way. He had just described resurrection power (Eph 1:19-20+) and in this next section he will show how it was also able to raise the walking dead (Eph 2:6+), so that they might be supernaturally enabled to walk in **newness of life** (Ro 6:4). Now that's power! So before describing our revivification and resurrection, he describes our former state of spiritual death. Note again that Paul writes one long continuous sentence from Ephesians 2:1-7. I wonder what kind of grade he received in grammar classes?

You were dead (nekros) in your trespasses (paraptoma) and sins - **Were** is in the present tense indicating we were continually dead. **Dead** was used literally to refer to a *corpse*. Paul is saying in effect "You were corpses!" You had no life! Although Paul, a Jew, says "**you**" referring to his Gentile audience who are now saints, the fact is that the **you** in this verse is really "ALL," for Paul explains "just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to **ALL** men, because **ALL** sinned (THE FACT THAT THEY COMMITTED SIN PROVES THEY INHERITED THE "VIRUS" OF SIN FROM ADAM'S BLOODLINE!)." (Ro 5:12+). **Were dead** is past tense so Paul is acknowledging they are now "alive," both dead and alive being used figuratively to refer to their spiritual status. When Adam sinned, his spirit died and since we were all in Adam by birth, our spirit was born dead. When we were born again in Christ, our spirit was regenerated in Him. So his readers were **dead** spiritually, but now as they read his letter, they are alive spiritually (in fact, they could not even understand what he was writing if they were not spiritually alive because natural men cannot grasp spiritual truth - 1Cor 2:14+). So they were dead and death brings about separation, in this

context separation from God. Paul reiterates this same idea later when he says they (Gentiles) were all once **separate from Christ** (Eph 2:12+). Note that the verb **were** (eimi) is in the **present tense** indicating (spiritual) death was their (our) continual state (literally "being dead"). Unregenerate men, still in Adam (Ro 5:12+, 1Cor 15:22+), are like the popular television show **"Walking Dead!"** Without Christ we were all in a sense **"[spiritual zombies](#)!"**

You cannot live a life for God until you receive life from God.

--Anonymous

Strauss elaborates on their being spiritually dead in trespasses and sins first explaining that **"The clearer the picture of our destitute condition before we were saved, the greater is our appreciation of what God has undertaken to do for us.** The natural man is dead, a state into which he has come through trespasses and sins. "Man is separated from God because the life-cord has been severed." God had warned Adam: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Ge 2:17+). Our first parents ignored the warning, and "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Ro 5:12+). Sin and death came through Adam. In Adam's sin **all** sinned; therefore in Adam's sin **all** die. Because of the solidarity of the human race, no man has escaped sin. Therefore, death is universal. Never in Scripture does death mean annihilation (**[Is annihilationism biblical?](#)**). H. S. Miller defines death as the separation of a person from the purpose or use for which he was intended (**ED: THIS IS ACTUALLY THE ESSENCE OF THE MEANING OF THE VERB [apollumi](#) - see word study**). There are three kinds of death: **(1) physical**, the separation of the soul, or life, from the body (1Co. 15:21-22+; Heb. 9:27+); **(2) spiritual**, the separation of the spirit from God (Eph 2:1; Eph 4:18+; 1Jn 5:12+); and **(3) eternal**, the everlasting banishment from the Presence of God (1Cor. 6:9, 10+; 2Th 1:9+ = "eternal destruction", **ED:** cf eternal punishment). In Ephesians Paul speaks of spiritual death. The unsaved man may be physically and mentally alive to all of the pleasures of this world but dead spiritually (1Ti 5:6). **How foolish for someone who is spiritually dead to try to live the Christian life! It cannot be done.** Suppose a person allows himself every indulgence and says to himself: "Ah, this is the life." Then he comes to church occasionally to imitate the Christian life. Such effort is futile. **You see, we are all born as dead men, and we live as dead men until we are made partakers of the life of God.** Someone has said: "You cannot live a life for God until you receive life from God." In physical death, the function of the body ceases; in spiritual death, there is no function of man's spirit toward God (1Cor 2:14+). As far as the relation of the nations of the earth toward God is concerned, we live in a world of dead men. There is a state of intense physical activity, but until a man passes from death unto life (John 5:24), he remains alienated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18+). (**[Ephesians 1-3 Commentary](#)**)

Alan Carr on the significance of **dead** - They were "spiritually dead". It speaks to the fact that lost sinners are absolutely unable to initiate any movement toward God. It reminds us that they are unwilling and incapable of coming to God by their own initiative....We have all experienced the death of a loved one. When they die, they no longer know us, nor do they respond to our presence. They are like Lazarus. He was dead and buried in his tomb. Outside that tomb his sisters and their friends were weeping and mourning his death. Even Jesus came and spoke to the mourners outside the tomb of Lazarus. Lazarus was unaware of any of those events. Why? He was dead!...What is death? Death is the opposite of life. In John 17:3, Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." In other words, those who know the Lord are alive, while those who do not know Jesus Christ are dead. John repeats this truth in 1 John 5:12, where he says, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Paul says the lost are "dead". What is true of a dead body is also true of those who are dead in sin. The lost are alive to this world. They live in it, move in it, love in it, laugh in it, and seek pleasure in it; but they are dead even while they live. They are not dead to the world, but they are dead to God. They cannot see Him, feel Him, know Him, sense Him or get to Him on their own. They are devoid of all spiritual life. Not everyone believes this about the lost sinner. Many people believe that the lost have the ability approach God when they want to, and on their own terms. Most folk have the idea that the lost are capable of making a decision for the Lord. The facts are quite different. If sinners are truly "dead", then they are unable to come to God, and God must make the first move in salvation. This dovetails precisely with what Jesus said in John 6:44; 65. You see, the lost are not merely sick and in need of healing; they are lost and in need of a resurrection. They need to be "quickened" so they can come to Jesus Christ and be saved. And that, my friends, is entirely the work of God!

Wood adds that "The death Paul describes is a death of "the most vital part of man's personality - the spirit - is dead to the most important factor in life - God." (**[The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#)**, 1st edition, page 33)

Spurgeon exhorts us "Look back to what you used to be, to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged."

THOUGHT - When we truly grasp the immensity of the gift of life made possible by God's grace, we are (should be) overwhelmed with a heart of thanksgiving for bestowing on us so great a salvation (Heb 2:3+) How often do we (I) ponder where I was before Christ (not morbid introspective, simply focusing on my spiritually dead condition) that it might fill my heart with gratitude to God? Stop and thank Him this very moment! Amen!

Wiersbe introduces chapter 2 writing "Having described our spiritual possessions in Christ, Paul turns to a complementary truth: our spiritual position in Christ. First he explains what God has done for all sinners in general; then he explains what God did for the Gentiles in particular." (See **[Ephesians Through Revelation](#)**)

Harold Hoehner - In Eph 2:1–10 Paul discussed how sinners who deserve nothing but God's wrath can become trophies of His grace. .([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

Hoehner points out that "The apostle chooses not to explain the grace of God until he makes inescapably clear the desperate need of human beings.....This concept of spiritual death would be familiar to the readers of this letter for the same language was used in Greek philosophy. It can especially be seen in Stoic writings, in Hellenistic Judaism, where Philo speaks of the estrangement of the wicked from God as true death in contrast to physical death, and also in rabbinic literature.....As those who are physically dead cannot communicate with the living, so also those who are spiritually dead cannot communicate with the eternal living God and thus are separated from God. They are lost and need to be found. They are dead and need to be made alive. (See [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

In Ephesians 2:1, the **KJV** adds the words "**hath he quickened**" and the NKJV "**He made alive**". These words are not in the original Greek but are implied from the context. Paul ended Chapter 1 (Eph 1:23-note) by considering that the ultimate example of God's power was the resurrection of Jesus; now Paul considers what the implications of Jesus' resurrection are for us.

THOUGHT - Let us never forget where we have come from and where we are headed - dead in trespasses and sins and on our way to glory (cp 2Th 1:10+). We were not merely sick or injured, but were completely, spiritually dead. Death always brings separation. Thus every person ever born has been born into a state of separation from their Creator, the only true and Living God.

Spurgeon - Look back to what you used to be, to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged: "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." ([Exposition](#))

Gaebelein speaks of cards signed during an evangelistic campaign, which read "From now on I promise to lead a better religious and Christian life." To these promises **Gaebelein** replied that in light of the truth in Ephesians 2:1 "How is it possible for a person to live a better life, when that person has no life at all"? As an aside, it is notable that such promises are not without Biblical precedent. Read several other times where people made promises they could not keep - Ro 7:14-25 Ex 24:3, 7, Ex 19:8 Josh 24:21,22,24.

Dead in - "In" is locative of sphere, which indicates the sphere or realm, in which we lived before we were born **in** (the sphere of) **Christ** (see in Christ and in Christ Jesus and in Christ). We were not dead because we had committed sin but because we were in the sphere of sin. That's why we committed sin. We were born with the penchant as it were to commit sins. As a fish lives in an aquarium, we were born in the "aquarium" of sin. **What does this mean?** To reiterate we sin because we are sinners. Stealing does not make us a thief. We steal because we are by nature (from Adam) thieves! **Does that hurt your pride?**

TECHNICAL NOTE - [Some disagree](#) with the idea that this functions like "locative of sphere" because the Greek does not have the preposition "in" (en). Hoehner (who favors locative of sphere) goes on to say "The datives could indicate cause ("because of your transgressions and sins") or be instrumental ("by your transgressions and sins") or preferably indicate sphere ("in your transgressions and sins"). The parallel passage of Col 2:13, "dead **in** transgressions and the uncircumcision of the flesh," would seem to rule out the causal and instrumental sense in that they were not dead *because of or by* their uncircumcision of the flesh. Barth prefers to leave it vague so that it would denote "the cause, the instrument, the manifestation, the realm, and the consequence of death." **Sphere** leaves it vague enough to capture these various ideas. Alford's illustration of "sick in a fever" shows the cause and condition. Sin is the cause of the spiritual death of people and they remain in that dead condition until God acts." (See [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

While unbelievers are dead in sin (or because of) sin, believers are dead to sin. **Spencer** says "The Bible clearly teaches that the believer is also dead to sin. God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Romans 6:2) This is fact! The Child of God is dead to sin. Does that mean that the believer does not sin? Absolutely not! Being dead to sin does not mean that he is totally unable to sin. The fact is the believer in Christ often chooses to sin. To be dead to sin does not mean that a believer is totally unable to sin, it means that Christ has separated him from the slavery of sin and set him apart for a specific purpose." ([Expository Pulpit Series](#))

When God looks down from heaven, in a sense, the whole world looks like a cemetery to Him. All God sees are spiritually dead people. Above every corpse (both those "walking" as well as those "lying" in the grave) is a three-word epitaph "DEAD IN SIN." The world without Christ always makes me think of the 1968 horror spoof "[Night of the Living Dead](#)"! And so Paul begins with the most important point which is man's desperate need for divine grace and mercy. Dead men can't do much (ANYTHING!) in their own strength to create new life in their spirits! If you miss this point, you may miss eternity with God!

ILLUSTRATION - Someone said to a person dying; "Well, you are in the land of the living yet." "No," said he, "I am in the land of the dying yet, but I am going to the land of the living; they live there and never die." This is the land of sin and death and tears, but up

yonder they never die. It is perpetual life; it is unceasing joy. (**D L Moody** in his great little book **Heaven**)

Dead ([3498](#)) ([nekros](#) from which we get English "necropsy") denotes the body derived of life, and refers literally to the physical condition of being deceased. As used here in Ephesians, figuratively "dead" refers to the spiritual condition of those who are unable to attain to the life of faith in and of themselves. Lost men are spiritually, eternally dead, not merely weakened, incapacitated, disabled, or sick. Spiritual death is the state of separation from God and His life. Death itself is a separation, whether physical, the separation of the person from his body, or spiritual, the separation of the person from God. Two other marks of a dead person are corruption and impotence, both relevant to the spiritual condition of unregenerate men and women.

Nekros in Ephesians - Eph. 1:20; Eph. 2:1; Eph. 2:5; Eph. 5:14;

Spiritual death is probably the most difficult truth in all of Scripture for human beings to believe (or accept) The unsaved think we as believers have lost our mind talking about the "walking dead"! They don't accept the divine judgment that because of sin every person born is separated from God. They refuse to believe that dead mankind is unable to know God personally and can't do anything about the condition. Worst of all, they are dead and don't know it! To be dead is a hopeless condition and later in this chapter Paul specifically says the Gentiles were those "having no hope."

Moule adds that Paul uses the analogy of physical death which is something everyone is painfully aware they must one experience (unless they are living in "the Rapture generation"). He writes that this analogy on the whole consists in this that...

(1) It is a state in which a living principle, necessary for organization, growth and energy, in reference to God and holiness, is entirely lacking; (2) it is a state which has no innate tendency to develop such a principle of life. The principle must come to it altogether *ab extra*. -- The latest researches into nature confirm the conviction that *dead matter* has absolutely no inner tendency to generate life, which must come into it *ab extra* if it is to live." ([Ephesians Commentary 2](#))

In Genesis 2 before Eve had been created, God warned Adam...

but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17)

In Genesis 3 the serpent of old, Satan, the liar and deceiver countered Eve's arguments...

And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! (Genesis 3:4)

Paul sums these events up writing...

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (Ro 5:12-note)

Comment: We are all born as sons of Adam and thus born in sin and in guilt and condemnation... all because of Adam's sin). (See also related topic [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#).)

The uselessness of the dead is the subject of Solomon's proverb who writes that

whoever is joined with all the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a **dead** lion (Ecclesiastes 9:4)

Jesus referred to all of us in our spiritually "embalmed" condition when He prophesied...

"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the **dead** shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. (John 5:25)

Maybe you heard about the little boy who walked out of the church sanctuary one Sunday. Out in the lobby was an engraved plaque listing all the members of the church who were **dead** as a result of their military service. The little boy asked his father, "Dad, what's that?" His dad replied, "That's for the members who died in the Service." To which the little boy asked, "Which service did they die in, Dad? The morning or the evening service?"

Most of our politicians, business leaders, educators, journalists, and work associates are dead. With a few rare exceptions, this world is being run by people who are spiritually dead and in desperate need of new life. **ILLUSTRATION** - **S Lewis Johnson** tells the following story from a Scottish expositor who wrote "that there was a graveyard in Ayrshire, one of the counties of Scotland, where once a stranger was buried. It greatly distressed the people of that particular parish, so much so that they put a notice up on the outside of the graveyard to this effect, this is what it read: **"This graveyard is reserved exclusively for the dead who are living in this parish."** Now, that is what we have in this parish of the whole wide world. We have dead people. They're alive, just like Adam was alive, physically, after he had sinned, but nevertheless, he was spiritually dead. We are living in the parish, but we are

dead, as we are born into this human race. ([Ephesians 2:1-10 His Power and Our Salvation](#))

What are some of the implications of these truths? Trespasses and sins lead to guilt, which places all men in need of forgiveness. They ultimately lead to eternal death, which is only reversed by a new life in Christ.

The fact that all men apart from God are sinful does not mean that every person is equally corrupt and wicked. In other words, not all men are as evil as they could be, but regardless, all fail to measure up to God's perfect standard.

On the other hand Sin has infected every part of our being—our mind, our emotions, our will, our intellect, our moral reasoning, our decision making, our words and our deeds. No part of our life is exempt from the debilitating effects of sin. As someone has said, "If sin were blue, we'd be blue all over." Part would be dark blue, part would be sky blue, part would be light blue, but every part would be blue in one shade or another.

The **KJV Bible Commentary** - This truth is denied in these days. Men speak of "the better self" and "the good spark." Man needs a new heart, not just a new start; a new life, not just turning over a new leaf; a resurrection, not just reformation. Signing a pledge card will not suffice. No one can live a life for God until he first receives life from God. ([Dobson, E G, Charles Feinberg, E Hindson, Woodrow Kroll, H L. Wilmington: KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson](#))

Spiritual death defines all of mankind's condition. Furthermore, as explained in chapters like Romans 6, all unbelievers are in a state of bondage or enslavement to the power of sin. Jesus declared...

"Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who **commits** (present tense) sin **is** (present tense) the slave of sin." (John 8:34)

We commit sins because we are born sinners in Adam. We are all born with the "sin virus!"

From a human standpoint, it appears that people might be able to do good, but God through His prophet Isaiah explains that

"all our righteous deeds are like a filthy (Hebrew = menstruation a picture of ceremonial uncleanness and undesirable filth) garment" (Isa 64:6)

Paul affirms this truth writing that...

ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." (see **note** Romans 3:12)

In another passage Paul explains that unbelievers are not even able to understand the things of God, for

a natural (unsaved, still "in Adam", not "in Christ") man does not accept (dechomai = deliberately and readily, receive kindly, they do not "put out a welcome mat"! = present tense) the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness (moria = that which is considered intellectually weak, irrational) to him, and he cannot (dunamai = present tense = have intrinsic power - natural men lack the inner, inherent ability and resources on their own to) **understand** (verb ginosko = know by experience) them, because they are spiritually appraised (anakrino = sift up and down and so to scrutinize, to examine accurately and carefully with exact research like in legal processes)." (1Cor 2:14+)

Nor can we come to God in our own power, for Jesus says,

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44).

And so from a theological standpoint, the truth that all men are born spiritually dead touches on one of the most controversial areas in theology. How can a "dead" man hear so as to be saved? This is a topic we won't delve into except to say that the exact nature of what happens when a spiritually dead person is regenerated or born from above is mysterious. Mortal man does not understand how God gives spiritual life to the spiritually dead, except through what He has revealed to us in Scripture. Jesus alluded to the mysterious, invisible nature of regeneration when He explained to Nicodemus that...

"The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)

And so just as one cannot see the wind at work but can see its results, so it is with the new birth. It may come about slowly or suddenly, from one direction or another. One cannot detail the mechanics of the regeneration process. Just as one does not remember his physical birth, he may be unable to pinpoint his spiritual birth. As the proof of the one is the reality of his physical life, so the proof of the other is the reality of his spiritual life. And it is this glorious truth that Paul is preparing to unveil in the subsequent passages. But first, he continues to explain more of the "bad news".

Trespases (3900) (**paraptoma** from **parapipto** = fall aside from **para** = aside + **pipto** = fall) means a deviation from living according to what has been revealed as the right way to live, stepping out of line of true conduct, a deviation from truth and uprightness. It refers to a willful transgression of a known rule of life. The plural of both **trespases** and **sins** further emphasizes the natural tendency of humans to continue in sin.

The basic idea of **paraptoma** is conveyed is that of stumbling or falling so as to lose one's footing. **Paraptoma** conveys the idea of a false step and so often is translated a **transgression**. The idea behind **transgressions** (*transgress* in English means to to go beyond or overstep a limit or boundary and is from Latin *trans-* across + *gradi* = to step) is that we have crossed a line, challenging God's boundaries. Similarly, the word derived via the Old French from a word meaning "to pass over" or "to go across" to commit an offense against a person or a set of rules.

ISBE says that **trespass** means "To pass over, to go beyond one's right in place or act; to injure another; to do that which annoys or inconveniences another; any violation of law, civil or moral; it may relate to a person, a community, or the state, or to offenses against God. The Hebrew 'asham ("sin"), is used very frequently in the Old Testament when the trespass is a violation of law of which God is the author. ([ISBE Article](#))

Sins (266) (**hamartia**) originally had the idea of missing mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow. Later it came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. The word hamartia is plural, which means it's not referring to one simple result. Everything in his life shows that he is completely missing the mark. It is an outward manifestation of the inward nature of a person without spiritual life. **Hamartia** in the Bible means to miss God's mark as an archer misses the "bull's eye" and ultimately to miss the true purpose and end of our lives which is God Himself. The Hebrew word for "sin" (**chata** 02398) conveys a similar picture in a literal OT use "Out of all these people 700 choice men were left-handed; each one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss (**chata**) (Jdg 20:16+) Sin is any violation of God's righteous character. It is anything we say or do or think or imagine or plan that does not meet God's standard of perfection.

Related Resources:

- [Sin - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Unpardonable Sin Sin \(2\) Sin](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Sin](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Sin](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopaedia [Sin](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Sin](#)

Dead (3498) (**nekros**) **Friberg** - dead; (1) of persons; (a) literally; (i) of human beings and animals no longer physically alive dead, lifeless, deceased (Acts 28.6; Jas 2.26a); (ii) substantively on. dead person (Lk 7.15) the dead, dead people (Mk 12.26); (b) figuratively; (i) of persons unable to respond to God because of moral badness or spiritual alienation dead, powerless (Eph 2.1, 5); (ii) of persons regarded as dead because of separation dead (Lk 15.24, 32); (iii) of persons no longer under the control of something dead to (Ro 6.11); (2) of things; literally lifeless (e.g. idols); figuratively, of what is of no benefit morally or spiritually utterly useless, completely ineffective (Heb 6.1; Jas 2.26b) (**BORROW** [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

Nekros - corpse (1), dead (122), dead man (3), dead men (1), dead men's (1) Matt. 8:22; Matt. 10:8; Matt. 11:5; Matt. 14:2; Matt. 17:9; Matt. 22:31; Matt. 22:32; Matt. 23:27; Matt. 27:64; Matt. 28:4; Matt. 28:7; Mk. 6:14; Mk. 9:9; Mk. 9:10; Mk. 9:26; Mk. 12:25; Mk. 12:26; Mk. 12:27; Lk. 7:15; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 9:7; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 15:24; Lk. 15:32; Lk. 16:30; Lk. 16:31; Lk. 20:35; Lk. 20:37; Lk. 20:38; Lk. 24:5; Lk. 24:46; Jn. 2:22; Jn. 5:21; Jn. 5:25; Jn. 12:1; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:17; Jn. 20:9; Jn. 21:14; Acts 3:15; Acts 4:2; Acts 4:10; Acts 5:10; Acts 10:41; Acts 10:42; Acts 13:30; Acts 13:34; Acts 17:3; Acts 17:31; Acts 17:32; Acts 20:9; Acts 23:6; Acts 24:21; Acts 26:8; Acts 26:23; Acts 28:6; Rom. 1:4; Rom. 4:17; Rom. 4:24; Rom. 6:4; Rom. 6:9; Rom. 6:11; Rom. 6:13; Rom. 7:4; Rom. 7:8; Rom. 8:10; Rom. 8:11; Rom. 10:7; Rom. 10:9; Rom. 11:15; Rom. 14:9; 1 Co. 15:12; 1 Co. 15:13; 1 Co. 15:15; 1 Co. 15:16; 1 Co. 15:20; 1 Co. 15:21; 1 Co. 15:29; 1 Co. 15:32; 1 Co. 15:35; 1 Co. 15:42; 1 Co. 15:52; 2 Co. 1:9; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20; Eph. 2:1; Eph. 2:5; Eph. 5:14; Phil. 3:11; Col. 1:18; Col. 2:12; Col. 2:13; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:8; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 6:1; Heb. 6:2; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 9:17; Heb. 11:19; Heb. 11:35; Heb. 13:20; Jas. 2:17; Jas. 2:26; 1 Pet. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:21; 1 Pet. 4:5; 1 Pet. 4:6; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 1:17; Rev. 1:18; Rev. 2:8; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 11:18; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 16:3; Rev. 20:5; Rev. 20:12; Rev. 20:13

Ray Pritchard sums up the consequences of sin writing that because of sin we are...

Lost—To be lost means to be in a position of great personal danger because you cannot find your way to safety. The unsaved are "lost" in precisely that sense. They are far from God and do not know where or how to find him.

Separated from God—Sin has created a great chasm between God and us. We were made to know God but our sin keeps us from him. We feel it and we know it is true. There is a cloud between us, a mountain of sin rising up, and a deep chasm beneath us. This is why we are restless. Nothing on earth can satisfy our hunger for God. This is why we are seeking and searching and trying and striving.

Blind—Sin destroys our ability to see things clearly. We live in the darkness of sin and not even the tiniest ray of light breaks through to us.

Dead—A dead person has eyes but cannot see, ears but cannot hear, lips but cannot speak, feet but cannot move. The spiritually dead have within them no ability to respond to God. Unless someone raises them to life, they can never know the God who made them.

Enslaved—Because of sin we are slaves to our own lusts. Even our heart has been corrupted. Jeremiah 17:9 reminds us that the heart is deceitful and wicked so that we cannot trust our own instincts. Left to ourselves, we repeatedly choose to do wrong. Try as we might we cannot change ourselves. In the words of the cartoon character Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us." We are enslaved and we cannot set ourselves free! God says, "Thou shalt not" but we say "I shall" and then we hate ourselves afterwards. Why? We are enslaved to sin. Sin masters us, rules us, dominates us. We are a people of high ideals and weak wills, of big dreams and small deeds, high hopes and low living.

Helpless—This is the logical end of it all. A person who is lost, separated, blind, dead, and enslaved is truly helpless. He is trapped with no hope within himself. Any help must come from somewhere else. ([The Truth about You](#))

Today in the Word- Dead Men Can't Hear - In an article in Fortune magazine, David Whitford wrote of the shocking discovery prior to his father's death that his dad had amassed a six-figure debt on high-interest credit cards. There had been clues that his father was having financial problems, but when Whitford had tried to talk about it his father immediately changed the subject. "At one point," Whitford writes, "he put his hands over his ears and made a humming noise." Yet two days after his father's death, Whitford found these words scrawled on his father's desk: "Help me. I'm drowning." Whitford's story illustrates a tragic reality. There is little we can do for those who refuse our help.

Illustration of Sin - An open-air preacher was telling the old, old story, when a thoughtless youth rapped out, "You tell us about the burden of sin. I feel none." Then he flippantly added, "How much does sin weigh? Eighty pounds? Ten pounds?" The preacher answered, "Tell me, if I put a 400 pound weight on the chest of a dead man, would he feel it?" "No, because he is dead," answered the youth. The preacher responded, "And the man who feels no load of sin is dead spiritually." The lad's remarks only proved what he was. The Scriptures call it "Dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Do you feel the burden of your sins? If you do not, you may well feel alarmed. You are dead spiritually.—Baptist Herald

Today in the Word - Staring at A Dead Man: Author Mark Twain received so many photos from men claiming to look like him that he composed this form letter to send out: 'My dear Sir, I thank you very much for your letter and your photograph. In my opinion you are more like me than any other of my numerous doubles. I may even say that you resemble me more closely than I do myself. In fact, I intend to use your photograph to shave by.' Twain's humorous letter helps to illustrate a serious spiritual truth. When we hold the Bible up to our lives, the picture it gives us of ourselves is more accurate than what we see in the mirror, because the Bible shows us our hearts.

Alan Carr - Some years ago a movie entitled "The Sixth Sense" was released. In that film, a little boy appears to be suffering from some sort of mental disorder. It turns out that his problems result from the fact that he sees ghosts. The problem with the ghosts this little boy sees is that the ghosts do not know they are ghosts. They do not know they are dead. Among the dead people the little boy encounters is a child psychologist who attempts to help the little boy with his problems. The psychologist also does not realize that he dead. The climactic moment of the film comes when the boy looks at the psychologist and says, "I see dead people!"

Movies and books that follow that theme are on the increase. There is a morbid fascination with death, dying, and the dead. This is especially true in the realm of zombie literature. Zombies are dead people who have somehow returned to life. These zombies have an insatiable desire for human flesh. There has been a dramatic increase in books and films related to ghosts and zombies. Our world is fascinated by the dead.

Just for the record, I do not believe in either ghosts or zombies. The Bible is crystal clear on this matter. When you die, you go either to Heaven or Hell. You do not come back to either haunt or eat the living. Thank God!

Our Daily Bread - "Life Giving Words" ...

In Luke 7 we read the dramatic story of what happened when Jesus encountered a large funeral procession. A widow was on her way to the cemetery to bury her only son. With a heart full of compassion, Jesus spoke to the woman, touched the coffin, and with a command brought her son back to life.

What happened to that young man is an illustration of what happens to a person who is converted to Christ. Until you and I come in contact with the Savior, we are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1) and on our way to the cemetery of what the Bible calls the second death (Rev. 20:6). We will be eternally separated from God's love unless we are spiritually reborn.

But when Jesus speaks to the needy sinner through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, and the person puts his faith in Jesus, instantly he receives new life. Peace, joy, and blessing will follow.

Friend, have you heard the life-giving words of Jesus? He alone can take away the deadness of your soul and give you a thrilling awakening that brings forgiveness and joy right now, and the prospect of heaven forever.

If Jesus has rescued you from eternal death, ask Him to use you to tell others of the One who gives new life.-- Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Once far from God and dead in sin,
No light my heart could see,
But in God's Word the light I found --
Now Christ liveth in me.-- Whittle

When you trust God's Son, darkness gives way to the light.

Our Daily Bread - "New Life" ...

For a long time the old church sat empty and abandoned in a Detroit neighborhood. The decaying building blended naturally into the whole area. Storefronts were boarded up. An old school building was padlocked. Party stores flourished, but little else. Grim, unswept, forgotten—that's how it all looked.

Then one night things changed. The old church sparkled with light. Parked cars lined the streets. The sound of music filled the air. What had been dead and abandoned had come to life.

I've seen people like that. For years they were dark and empty like that old church. There was little inside except anger, selfishness, and pride. Then one day all was changed. Suddenly the darkness was gone. It was as if someone had turned on the lights.

And that Someone is God. He forgives those who come to Him through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. He specializes in giving new life to those who seem to be beyond hope—those who are dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1).

If all this sounds unfamiliar, it may be because we've lost sight of the transforming power of Jesus Christ. Let's remember what He has done for us, and what He can do for others. —MRDII ([Ibid](#))

Christ takes each sin, each pain, each loss,
And by the power of His cross
Transforms our brokenness and shame
So we may glorify His name. —D. De Haan

Salvation produces a change within that breaks the chains of sin.

Ephesians 2:2 in [which](#) you [formerly walked according](#) to the [course](#) of [this world](#), [according](#) to the [prince](#) of the [power](#) of the [air](#), of the [spirit](#) that is [now working](#) in the [sons](#) of [disobedience](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [en ais pote periepatesate \(2PAAI\) kata ton aiona tou kosmou toutou, kata ton archonta tes exousias tou aeros, tou pneumatou tou nun energountos \(PAPNSG\) en tois huois tes apeitheias:](#)

BGT ν α ς ποτε περιεπατσατε κατ τ ν α να το κ σμου του, κατ τ ν ρχοντα τ ς ξουσας το ρος, το πνε ματος το ν ν νεργο ντος ν το ς υ ο ς τ ς πειθε ας·

Amplified: In which at one time you walked [habitually]. You were following the course and fashion of this world [were under the sway of the tendency of this present age], following the prince of the power of the air. [You were obedient to and under the control of] the [demon] spirit that still constantly works in the sons of disobedience [the careless, the rebellious, and the unbelieving, who go against the purposes of God]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

NLT (revised) You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil-- the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.

Phillips: that you drifted along on the stream of this world's ideas of living, and obeyed its unseen ruler (who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God), to you Christ has given life!

REV - in which you once walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient

Young's Literal: 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

KJV 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:

ESV in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience--

NET in which you formerly lived according to this world's present path, according to the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience,

NIV 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.

CSB in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens, the spirit now working in the disobedient.

NKJ 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,

NRS in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.

NAB in which you once lived following the age of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the disobedient.

NJB which used to make up your way of life when you were living by the principles of this world, obeying the ruler who dominates the air, the spirit who is at work in those who rebel.

GWN You followed the ways of this present world and its spiritual ruler. This ruler continues to work in people who refuse to obey God.

BBE In which you were living in the past, after the ways of this present world, doing the pleasure of the lord of the power of the air, the spirit who is now working in those who go against the purpose of God;

IN WHICH YOU FORMERLY WALKED ACCORDING TO THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD: en ais pote periepatesate (2PAAI) kata ton aiona tou kosmou toutou:

- **In which you formerly** - Ep 2:3; 4:22; Job 31:7; Acts 19:35; 1Co 6:11; Col 1:21; 3:7; 1Pe 4:3; 1John 5:19
- **Walked according to the course of this world** - Ps 17:14; Jer 23:10; Lk 16:8; Jn 7:7; 8:23; 15:19; Ro 12:2; 1Co 5:10; Gal

1:4; 2Ti 4:10; Jas 1:7; 4:4; 1Jn 2:15, 16, 17; 5:4

- [Ephesians 2:1-3 The Deadly Power of Sin](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ - Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10 Exchanging Living Death for Dying Life](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Colossians 1:21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,

1 Peter 4:3 For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

Jeremiah 7:23-26 "But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.' 24 **"Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.** 25 "Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them. 26 Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers.

Philippians 3:16-19 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. 17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. 18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

A WALK OF DEATH IN THIS GODLESS KOSMOS

After stating their spiritually dead condition, he then proceeds to describe the three influences that control all dead men - the godless world system, the anti-God devil and the anti-God energy of the fallen flesh, the same terrible trio described by John in 1Jn 2:15-17+.

in which you formerly (pote) walked (peripateo) according to the course (aion) of this world (kosmos) - **In which** (in **trespasses and sins**) marks the sphere or "environment" in which the unsaved Ephesian Gentiles formerly conducted their life. In other words, "In" is the "locative of sphere" meaning that the unregenerate order their behavior and lives within the sphere of **trespasses and sins**. (Contrast a worthy walk - Eph 4:1+) **Walked (peripateo)** is a figurative description of their habitual godless way of life, their immersion is a sin-dominated lifestyle. Life is a walk, an active process that moves along step by step. When you followed the ways of this world – the pressures of society & culture led them away from God.

The time phrase **formerly** is important to note because while believers obviously still sin they do not habitually walk in sin. As Paul says "a new creature; the old things (LIKE HABITUAL SIN) passed away; behold, new things (PURSUIT OF HOLINESS, ALBEIT NOT PERFECTLY) have come." (2Co 5:17+). John makes that patently clear writing "No one who is born of God **practices** (present tense - habitually, as their lifestyle) sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot (present tense - habitually) sin, because he is born of God." (1Jn 3:9+) As [Steven Cole](#) says "If you profess to be born again but continue to live in sin, you need to examine whether you are truly born of God. Walking in sin characterizes the person who is spiritually dead." (cf 2Co 13:5+)

Kenneth Wuest explains it this way - All their thoughts, words, and deeds are ensphered by sin. Not one of their acts ever gets outside this circle of sin. That is what is meant by total depravity. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

Formerly (4218) (pote) is a generalization concerning time and means at some time or other, of the past once, formerly. In Eph 2:2,3, 11, 13 (a key word in Ephesians 2) describes at one time in the past, and in reality describing their daily life. This is a reminder to the Ephesians "holy ones" of their former "unholy" state! Before their new birth, they walked in a wrong path of conduct conforming to the world's low standard of morality, doing what came naturally. Their day to day life was determined by the spirit and practice of the age in its unregenerate, evil, anti-god state.

Gilbrant - Classical Greek - Pote is an indefinite, temporal particle that appears frequently in classical literature describing some unknown point of time in the past or future. More generally it means "at some time or other, at any time, ever." When the word is used with negatives, pote often means "never." In questions

expressing surprise, tis pote is translated "who on earth . . . ?" or "whoever in the world (would do such a thing)?" (Liddell-Scott).

New Testament Usage - In the New Testament pote appears on over 32 occasions and is variously translated in the Authorized Version: "in time(s) past" (8 times; e.g., Gal 1:13); "sometime(s)" (6 times; e.g., Ephesians 2:13); "at any time" (4 times; e.g., Hebrews 1:5); "once" (2 times; e.g., Romans 7:9); and various other translations, such as "when, aforesaid, at length, any time, ever yet, in the old time, never (with negative)." ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

Friberg - Pote - an enclitic indefinite adverb of time at some time or other; (1) of past time once, formerly (Gal 1:13); (2) of future time when (once) (Lk 22:32); (3) of present time - now at last (Phil 4:10); (4) after a negative ever, at any time (1Th 2:5); (5) in rhetorical questions expecting a negative answer ever (Heb 1:5) ([Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

Zodhiates - Pote (I) At some time, one time or another, once, used both of time past and future. Of the past it means once, formerly (John 9:13, "one who was blind at one time" [a.t.]; Rom. 7:9, "at one time without law" [a.t.]; see 11:30; Gal. 1:13, 23; Eph. 2:2, 3, 11, 13; 5:8; Phil. 4:10, "that now at the last," meaning now at length; Col. 1:21, "you who were at one time" [a.t.]; 3:7; Titus 3:3; Phile. 1:11; 1 Pet. 2:10; 3:5, 20; 2 Pet. 1:21). Of the fut., meaning once, one day, at last (Luke 22:32; Rom. 1:10).

(II) At any time, ever (Eph. 5:29; 1 Thess. 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:10). Used intens. in an interrogation equivalent to the Eng. ever or now, expressing surprise (1 Cor. 9:7; Heb. 1:5, 13). Used indirectly (Gal. 2:6).

Deriv.: dépote <G1221>, whatever; mépote <G3379>, lest ever; pópote <G4455>, by no means, not ever at any time.

Syn.: próteron <G4386>, formerly, before; pálai <G3819>, long ago, of old. ([The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

Pote - 30x in 28v - any time(1), ever(4), former(1), former times(1), formerly(8), last(2), never*(2), once(8), when(1), when once(1). Lk. 14:29; Lk. 22:32; Jn. 9:13; Ro 1:10; Ro 7:9; Rom. 11:30; 1 Co. 9:7; Gal. 1:13; Gal. 1:23; Eph. 2:2; Eph. 2:3; Eph. 2:11; Eph. 2:13; Eph. 5:8; Eph. 5:29; Phil. 4:10; Col. 1:21; Col. 3:7; 1 Thess. 2:5; Tit. 3:3; Phlm. 1:11; Heb. 1:5; Heb. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 1:10; 2 Pet. 1:21

Paul brings up the past again later as a means of motivating their present and future conduct writing that...

that, **in reference to your former manner of life**, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Eph 4:22+)

In a similar manner, Paul reminded the saints at Colossae of the incredible change that God's Spirit had wrought in them...

And although **you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind**, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach (Col 1:21, 22-notes)

Writing to the Church at Corinth Paul reminded them of their former manner of life to emphasize the greatness of their salvation...

Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you** (this is who we all once were); but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. (1Cor 6:9, 10, 11+)

Walked (4043) (**peripateo** from **peri** = about, around + **pateo** = walk, tread) means literally to walk about here and there or to tread all around. **Peripateo** then came to mean, to make one's way, to make progress, to make due use of one's opportunities and finally (as used by Paul in Ephesians), to live, to regulate one's life, to conduct one's self. Most of the NT uses refer to an "ethical walk," to the daily conduct of one's life or how one orders their behavior or passes their life (see [multiple articles on "walk"](#)).

Peripateo on Ephesians - Eph. 2:2; Eph. 2:10; Eph. 4:1; Eph. 4:17; Eph. 5:2; Eph. 5:8; Eph. 5:15

Walked is in the **aorist tense**, which Wuest explains as "constative, a construction which looks at a thing or an action as a complete unit, looks at it in a panoramic view. The whole life of the unsaved person is nothing but sin." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

In a good sense, Luke describes Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, as being

"righteous in the sight of God, **walking** (peripateo) blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord" (Lk 1:6+).

In contrast, Paul refers in this verse to the lifestyle of unbelievers and later in this same letter counseled the Ephesian believers to

"**walk** no longer just as the Gentiles (in context a description of all the unsaved) also **walk**, in the futility of their mind" (Eph 4:17+).

John declares that,

"if we **walk** (peripateo) in the light as [God] Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1Jn 1:7+)

In Colossians 3 uses **peripateo** in a similar context to his use in Ephesians 2:2, describing how the Colossians saints walked before Christ transformed their heart and mind...

"In (the sphere of immorality, etc, all things that on account of the wrath of God will come = Col 3:5+, Col 3:6+) you also once **walked** (peripateo), when you were living in them." (Col 3:7+)

In other words before the Ephesian saints were saved, they ordered their behavior and regulated their lives within the sphere of **trespasses and sins**. Not a ray of light from God, nothing of God's righteousness or goodness, and not a single good thing in the sight of God penetrated that circle (sphere) of "**conduct**". All their previous thoughts, words, and deeds were *ensphered* so to speak in an **atmosphere** of sin. Not one of their acts ever got outside the circle of sin -- their previous manner of walking is a description of what is often termed **total depravity**.

According to (2596) (kata) is a preposition which is used in the NT in a variety of ways, but in this verse **kata** means "down" which speaks of domination and control. Paul's point is that unregenerate men in the act of ordering their behavior in the sphere of trespasses and sins are dominated or controlled by the "course of this world". They are continually in the state of being "under" the dominion or power of the world system and the evil prince, Satan.

Course (165) (aion) is not an easy word to define but in general **aion** usually refers to some aspect of **time** past, present or future. As used in this verse, **aion** conveys a figurative meaning referring primarily to the ethical/moral system of the world. In other words in this use **aion** refers to the system of practices and standards associated with secular society (that is, without reference to any demands or requirements of God). Note that **aion** is also sometimes translated "world" with somewhat of a similar meaning to the following word "**kosmos**". For example Paul exhorts believers to stop being

"conformed to this **world (aion)**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Ro 12:2+)

This present evil world system is continually seeking to squeeze men into its mold of godlessness. The unsaved either consciously or unconsciously are controlled by the values and attitudes of this world system and behave accordingly.

Hoehner explains that before Christ became their life, they went "along with what is fashionable and acceptable and are not out of step with the rest of the world, hence, they embrace temporal values. They are concerned only with activities and values of the present age and are not concerned with God and eternal values or with the judgment to come." (See [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#))

Rev Bible - When a person walks in accord with the *aiōn* of this *kosmos*, he walks in a way that conforms to the world in its present fallen and corrupt state. The Greek word *aiōn* gets translated "age," most of the time, but it is important that we think of "age" the same way the Greeks did. Generally, when we think of "age," we mean a period of time. Although the word did refer to a period of time, it referred to the thinking and attitudes that existed in that age.....Just as the owners of a Mexican or Chinese restaurant work hard to create an "atmosphere" that represents their home country, the Adversary works hard to make sure that this world has an "ungodly atmosphere," and that "atmosphere" is the *aiōn* of this world (*kosmos*). The unsaved and the ignorant Christians do not even notice that the "atmosphere" of this world is ungodly, and they follow the culture without thinking much about it."

Trench adds that **aion** can be defined as "All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale,—all this is included in the **aion**, which is, as Bengel has expressed it, '*the subtle informing spirit of the kosmos, or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God*' " ([Synonyms of the New Testament](#))

Wuest commenting on **aion** adds that "The Germans have a word for it, **zeitgeist**, "the spirit of the age." "World" is in the head, his demons are his emissaries, and all the unsaved **kosmos**, which here refers to the system of evil of which Satan are his slaves,

together with the purposes, pursuits, pleasures, and places where God is not wanted. To distinguish the words, one could say that **kosmos** gives the over-all picture of mankind alienated from God during all history, and *aion* represents any distinct age or period of human history as marked out from another by particular characteristics. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

World (2889) (**kosmos**) basically means something well arranged or orderly (English word = "cosmetics"!). *Kosmos* is used 186 times in the Greek New Testament, and virtually every instance has an evil connotation. **Kosmos** does not represent the physical creation in this verse but refers to the world in a moral or ethical sense, specifically the world's values and ways of doing things. The idea is captured by the phrase we often hear -- "the spirit of this age". It is the "order" of this evil world system, which is ruled by Satan and his minions (1Jn 5:19, Jn 12:31) which is alienated and hostile toward God and God's people. In this use **kosmos** represents the self-centered, godless value system and mores of fallen mankind. The goal of this present *kosmos* is self-glory, self-fulfillment, self-indulgence, self-satisfaction, and every other form of self-serving. This world-system is imposing and powerful with armies and fleets and is often outwardly religious, scientific, cultured, and elegant; but, deep beneath seethes with national and commercial rivalries and ambitions. **Kosmos** is the present world, the present order of things, as opposed to the kingdom of Christ; and hence, always is associated with the ideas of transience, worthlessness, and evil both physical and moral and is the seat of aberrant cares, wicked temptations and irregular desires. The **world**, this present evil age alienated from the life of God, was the environment they formerly moved about freely, feeling perfectly at home in and conducting themselves in complete harmony with.

Kosmos in Ephesians - Eph. 1:4; Eph. 2:2; Eph. 2:12

John gives a strong warning regarding the fallen **world**....

Do not love ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the **world** (*kosmos*) nor the things in the **world** (*kosmos*). If anyone loves the **world** (*kosmos*), the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the **world** (*kosmos*), the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The **world** (*kosmos*) is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does (present tense) the will of God lives forever. (1Jn 2:15-17+)

Steven Cole remarks that "Those outside of Christ live for this present evil world, because it is all they have. They may believe in heaven, but not enough to live in light of it. They may believe in hell, but they figure that only the worst of the worst will go there. But their focus is on how to get ahead in this world. They have no thought of laying up treasures in heaven nor of seeking first God's kingdom."

ACCORDING TO THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR: kata ton archonta tes exousias tou aeris:

- **According to the prince** - Eph 6:12; John 8:44; 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9; 13:8,14; 20:2) (Job 1:7,16,19; Revelation 16:17
- [Ephesians 2:1-3 The Deadly Power of Sin](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ - Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10 Exchanging Living Death for Dying Life](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

Ephesians 6:12+ For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the **powers** (*exousia*) , against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 1:20-21+ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 **far above all rule and authority** (*exousia*) and **power and dominion**, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

COMMENT - Note that Jesus Christ the Creator is far over the created Satan and his **authority** (*exousia*).

Acts 26:18+ (GOSPEL) to open their eyes so that they may turn **from darkness** to light and from the **dominion** (*exousia*) of **Satan** to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Colossians 1:13+ For He rescued us from the **domain** (*exousia*) of **darkness**, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

THE ENEMY WITHOUT

According to the prince (archon) of the power (exousia) of the air (aer) - According to sets the stage, for this phrase is the preposition **kata** the root meaning of which is “down,” which suggests domination of the unsaved by Satan, the chief ruler of the demons, the one in control of this evil, godless world system. Those **dead in their trespasses and sins** are “down” and dominated by the evil prince, Satan who has been delegated ability and authority to act. And so during the **present evil age** (Gal 1:4+) he and his demonic hordes dominate, pressure, and control every person who is unsaved. The **air (aer)** refers to the lower part of the atmosphere and in classical Greek was used to refer to the dwelling place of evil spirits. The designation as **prince of the power of the air** shows that the spiritual powers are both invisible and powerful, a fact we need to remember when we encounter spiritual warfare! We must therefore put on the full armor of God in order to fight an invisible enemy (Eph 6:12-18+)

Spurgeon says it this way - He makes them to be his forge. There he blows his coals, there he fabricates his instruments. Do you not hear the noise of the infernal bellows when “**the children of disobedience:**” swear, and use unclean language? Ah, such were some of us; but we are cleansed! The evil spirit has been driven out, and he no more works in us.

Steven Cole - “Sophisticated” modern man scoffs at the notion that such unseen spiritual powers exist. Yet everyone accepts the existence of unseen radio waves, microwaves, and X-rays that travel through the air. We cannot see them, but we can see their effects. It is the same with demonic power. We cannot usually see demons, but we can see the results of their evil power. Paul is not saying that all unbelievers are demon-possessed. But he is saying that Satan and his evil forces actively work in this world through unbelievers. In most cases they are oblivious to it. They go about their lives without much thought about it, except perhaps at Halloween. But worldly people are actually in Satan’s domain of darkness (Col. 1:13). By living independently of God, with no fear of God in their hearts, they are inadvertently furthering Satan’s evil plans to usurp God’s sovereignty.

Strauss - It has been pointed out already that a personal devil is the god of this age. The saints who have been born again were born into God’s kingdom (John 3:3+), having been rescued from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of God’s Son (Col. 1:13+). The unsaved man is still in Satan’s kingdom and therefore is Satan’s slave. Satan separates men from God by blinding their minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (2Cor. 4:4+). Of course their blindness is self-chosen. They refused to believe. By rejecting their Deliverer, they fell into the clutches of Satan. The great spiritual struggle in the world is the control of the soul of man—the God of light and life versus the god of darkness and death. If you are a rebel against God, then you are ruled by Satan, and he will continue his evil work in you to keep you separated from God. **I shrink from the horror of my past, but I praise God for His remarkable delivering power.**([Ephesians 1-3 Commentary](#))

S Lewis Johnson has an interesting perspective of what it means to walk according to the prince of the power of the air writing that “the things that dominate Satan are the things that dominate us. A characteristic of Satanic activity is opposition to the word of God. We often blame Satan for things that are really, simply, the lusts of the flesh. I don’t deny that Satan may use the lusts of the flesh. But really Satan is more interested in the counterfeit of the truth. And so he’s not so interested in the fleshly lust types of things as he is in infecting the mind with false doctrine. Satanic things are the things that primarily have to do with the denial of the truth of God, the counterfeit of the truth of God. ([Ephesians 2:1-10 His Power and Our Salvation](#))

Piper on prince of the power of the air- The influence of the power spoken of in verse 2 is so pervasive, that it can be called the power of the air. Man has to have air to live. The power of the air is therefore a power that can get at man everywhere. The whole inhabited world is the domain and the subject of this power. ([Sermon](#))

Paul is saying that everyone born is born enslaved to sin and Satan. Believers once were the **‘prince’s’** possession, but were set free by the gospel of grace and are now his opponents. And so Paul exhorts the Gentile believers to...

Put on (aorist imperative = Command to do this now! Don’t delay!) the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (see **notes** Ephesians 6:11; Ephesians 6:12)

S Lewis Johnson has a humorous story relating to the **‘prince of the power of the air’** “Many years ago, there was a very modern, liberal preacher by the name of S. Parks Cathman. He was a person who was known far and wide, very much like Harry Emerson Fosdick. He had a radio broadcast, very well-known man, very influential man. He was introducing a man over the radio one day, and an evangelical heard him. He introduced this man as being a mighty Christian minister, and he built him up by talking about his education and his background and his accomplishments, and then in one final rhetorical flourish he said, “And now we present to you **the prince of the power of the air**” He didn’t realize, of course, that he was introducing him in a term that is used in Scripture as a term for Satan. Fortunately, an evangelical heard it and that’s story has been told by evangelicals around the country for about 50 years now. ([Ephesians 2:1-10 His Power and Our Salvation](#))

Prince (758) (**archon** from **archo** = to rule) refers to the first in rank or power. It is the first in an order of persons or things and thus conveys the idea of ruler, chief or prince. In the present context **archon** refers to Satan as the first one in power and authority in this kingdom. He is the chief fallen angel who rules over a vast multitude of other fallen angels who oppose God and His people. (See brief related discussion on Satan) (See also related word study on **diabolos**)

John writes...

We know (**eido**) that we are of God, and the whole (complete in extent) world (**kosmos**) lies in [the power] of the evil one (**poneros**). (1Jn 5:19+)

Comment - "The power" is implied and is added by most translations. Note the separation into conflicting forces - of God versus of the evil one. Believers cannot be friends with the fallen wall (James 4:4+). We must live in it and work in it, but we cannot be friends!

Similarly on the night in which he was betrayed **Jesus** addressed the Jewish chief priests and officers...

While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours. (Lk 22:53+, cf Lk 22:47, 48+)

Comment: In this verse "the power of darkness" is not a reference to the darkness of the night in which Jesus was arrested, by to Satan and the dark powers he ruled over, the power (devil) that entered Judas Iscariot just before he left the upper room for the last time (Jn 13:2, 30)!

In other allusions to Satan as **ruler** of the **world** Jesus declared...

Now judgment is upon this world; now the **ruler** (archon) of this **world** (kosmos) shall be cast out. (John 12:31)

Comment: This verse at first glance seems somewhat confusing for Jesus says **now** which might suggest Satan no longer holds power which we know is not true from other passages. The **"now"** refers to the assurance of ultimate victory over Satan that was to be won by Christ on the Cross - Col 2:14, 15+.

"I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. (John 14:30)

Comment: Jesus is saying here that Satan possesses nothing in the Person of Christ and has no power over Him whatsoever which of course is another evidence of Christ's sinlessness.

(the Holy Spirit) when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment... concerning judgment, because the **ruler** (archon) of this **world** (kosmos) has been judged. (John 16:11)

Comment: Jesus was referring to His judgment of Satan that was effected by His death on the cross (cf John 12:31). Satan is the **prince** of this **world**, but he is a defeated prince! Satan has already been judged and the verdict announced. All that must take place is the executing of the sentence, and that will occur when Jesus returns.

Paul referred to Satan when he explained to the church at Corinth that...

the **god of this world** (aion = better translated **"age"** - Satan rules for a short time in this present **evilage** but in the **age** to come, the **Millennium**, Jesus will be the King of kings) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2Cor 4:4+) .

Comment: The **"god of this world"** is not saying Satan is god in the sense of God, but that he is a false god who wields enormous influence for evil in this present world. He controls the ideologies, opinions, hopes, aims, goals, and viewpoints current in the world -- cf. 2Cor. 10:3, 4, 5 (notes;). Satan is behind the world's systems of philosophy, psychology, education, sociology, ethics, and economics, but one of his greatest spheres of influence is in the realm of false religion. He is called a **god** in the sense that his deluded followers serve him as if he were one. Satan is the original model for all the false gods in all the false religions he has spawned. As a corollary, believers should pray that the Spirit would take the gospel and "open [unbeliever's] eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God" Acts 26:18.

All unbelievers, all who are still in Adam, are under the dominion of and are ruled by their "father, the Devil" (see John 8:44) the chief ruler of all the evil spirits, whose realm is the atmosphere surrounding planet earth (see **"air"** below) All of us before Christ were

willingly obedient to the god of this age, Satan. During the present age Satan and his demon hosts dominate, pressure, and control every person who is unsaved.

Power (1949) (**exousia**) means "the right and the might". It describes the authority a person has delegated to him from someone else. The person delegating authority is in a sense "out of himself" and acting in the person to whom he has delegated the authority. **Exousia** conveys the idea of "delegated authority" with the authority and the right to exercise that authority. "Authority or right is the dominant meaning in the New Testament." (Vincent) **Exousía** means the power to do something and was a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right. We see this sense emphasized in the temptation of Jesus when Satan "led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this **domain** (exousia) and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish." (Lk 4:5-6+)

Exousia in Ephesians - Eph. 1:21; Eph. 2:2; Eph. 3:10; Eph. 6:12

Vine explains that **exousía** evolved "from the meaning of "leave or permission" or "liberty of doing as one pleases" and passed to that of "the ability or strength with which one is endued," then to that of the "power of authority," the right to exercise power or "the power of rule or government," the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others." ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Air (109) (**aer**) refers to the atmosphere immediately above the earth's surface or the celestial air surrounding the earth. The kingdom of Satan is in this lower atmosphere where we humans live, in order that this sinister creation who is filled with a bitter hatred of God and mankind, might with his hordes of evil demons, prey upon humanity. Satan is the leader of the demons of the lower atmosphere. All unsaved men and women order their behavior according to Satan's dictates and those of his demons! (They would of course deny this is true but they are lost and deceived!)

Keeping in mind that the **air** or the lower atmosphere is the main location of Satan's rule, it is notable that this is also the location where the final bowl of God's wrath is poured out in the 7th bowl judgment! (read Revelation 16:17+) In addition, one day soon, the Lord Jesus Christ will return and penetrate the **air** and deliver His body, the church, from this present evil age (cf rapture 1Th 4:13ff - see [harpazo](#)).

Paul used the term "third heaven" in 2 Cor 12:2+ which refers to the abode of God. The "first heaven" is the atmosphere (referred to as "air" in Eph 2:2), and the second heaven is outer space. (See note on the Third Heaven)

Wuest has a note on "**air**" adding that "The Greeks had two words which meant "air," **aer** and **aither**. **Aer** was used to designate the lower air, the thick air or haze that surrounds the earth. **Aither** was the name given the pure, upper air as opposed to the thick lower air. The pure upper air started at the mountain tops for the Greeks of the ancient world, since they had no way of exploring the regions above these. The word **aer** referring to the lower atmosphere, namely, that below the mountain tops, is used in the NT. **Aither** is not used, although it must have been in common use in the first century ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used by permission)

REV Bible - "of the air." The "air" can be literal, because the Devil controls and to some extent lives in the air. However, the "air" can legitimately refer to the "atmosphere" of evil that exists in the world, which is part of the understanding of *aiōn*. This may be an excellent example of the Figure of Speech, amphibologia, double meaning. Both meanings are true, and can be textually supported by the vocabulary.

OF THE SPIRIT THAT IS NOW WORKING IN THE SONS OF DISOBEDIENCE: tou pneumatou tou nun energountos (PAPNSG) en tois huois tes apeitheias:

- **Of the spirit that is now working** - Mt 12:43-45; Luke 11:21-26; 22:2,3,31; Jn 13:2,27; Acts 5:3; 2Cor 4:4; 1Jn 3:8; 4:4
- **Sons of disobedience** - Eph 2:3; Eph 5:6; Isa 30:1; 57:4; Hosea 10:9; Mt 11:19; 13:38; Col 3:6; 1Pe 1:14; 2Pe 2:14; 1Jn 3:10
- [Ephesians 2:1-3 The Deadly Power of Sin](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10: Coming Alive in Christ - Study Guide \(see dropdown menu\)](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 2:1-10 Exchanging Living Death for Dying Life](#) - John MacArthur

Related Passages:

1 John 3:8+ **the one who practices sin is of the devil**; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

Isaiah 30:1; "Woe to the **rebellious children**," declares the LORD, "Who execute a plan, but not Mine, And

make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, In order to add sin to sin;

Colossians 3:6+ For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the **sons of disobedience**,

2 Peter 2:14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, **accursed children**;

1 John 3:10 By this the children of God and **the children of the devil** are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and **to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**.

SATAN ENERGIZES DISOBEDIENCE

of the spirit ([pneuma](#)) **that is now working** ([energeo](#)) **in the sons of disobedience** ([apeitheia](#)) - **Working** is in the present tense which pictures the continual "energetic, energizing" activity of the fallen spirits in this present evil age seeking to make what is bad even worse. Disobedience depicts a person who because of unbelief cannot be persuaded and remains obstinate and non-compliant. And since they do not respond to God, by default they are energized by the demonic spirits who oppose God. The result is not just unbelief but active rebellion, active, obstinate, hostile opposition to the will and government of God

Sons of disobedience - This is a Hebraism which serves to characterize something much as an adjective would. **NET NOTE** adds that "**Sons of disobedience** is a Semitic idiom that means "people characterized by disobedience." However, it also contains a subtle allusion to Eph 2:4-10: Some of those sons of disobedience have become sons of God."

Spirit ([4151](#)) ([pneuma](#) from **pnéo** = to breathe, to blow, referring to the movement of air) is literally breathing or breath but in this verse refers to an evil, independent non-corporeal (nonmaterial) being. In context this would refer to Satan and/or his demonic underlings. As an aside the only entity which can counter this spirit is the Holy Spirit (cf 1Jn 4:4)!

Now ([3568](#)) (**nun**) is an adverb of time and speaks of the present time, focusing on the moment. There is a day coming when Satan will be bound for 1000 years (Rev 20:2) and will no longer be actively plying his evil trade on mankind.

Working ([1754](#)) (**energeo** from **en** = in + **érgon** = work) (Click related noun [energeia](#)) means to be effective in causing something to happen. It means to bring something about through use of capability. It means to act, to be operative or to be at work.

Satan never rests as we learn in **Job**...

And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it." (Job 1:7)

And in **Peter** we read...

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert (both are aorist tense, imperative see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) Your adversary, the devil, prowls (present tense = continually) about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (See **note** 1 Peter 5:8)

Sons ([5207](#)) (**huios**) refers to male offspring. Unregenerate men and women are all descendants or offspring of disobedience.

Disobedience ([543](#)) (**apeitheia** from **a** = without + **peitho** = persuade) is a noun signifying literally one who refuses to believe or to be persuaded. It reflects an attitude of willful, perverse disbelief and is manifest as an unwillingness or refusal to comply with the demands of some authority. For example, in his "sermon" that brought about his martyrdom, Stephen called the Jews that were listening to him "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit. " (Acts 7:51+)

This phrase **sons of disobedience** is used again by Paul in this same letter in his command to ...

Let no one deceive (present imperative - with the negative ["let no one"] could mean this deception was already transpiring among the believers. Note that it is a command to continually guard against the fallen world's subtle, deceptive rationalization for justifying their flagrant rebellion against the Holy God! This world is being slowly but irrevocably being corrupted [like rust on metal on an ocean front house which is continually being bombarded with salt water breezes - beware of these corrupting "winds of doctrine" Ep 4:14+] by the lusts of deceit - see 2Pe 1:4+) you with empty words (these words may "sound" convincing at first hearing, but

they have a "hollow" ring when filtered through the "grid" of a Biblical mindset), for because of these things (Ep 5:5+) the wrath of God comes (verb actually pictures God's Holy, Awesome wrath as on its way! Woe!) upon the sons of disobedience. (Eph 5:6+)

Comment: Go back up to Ep 5:5 (+) and see what the deception entails - They were pouring out venomous statements like... "If you are saved, it doesn't make any difference how you live. Once you believe, if you sin openly and wantonly the rest of your life, you can be assured you have a 'fire insurance' policy." This is a lie from the pit of hell (figuratively and literally speaking!) and tragically is one which is infiltrating some evangelical teaching! Caveat emptor! (See Jesus' fearful, loving warning [true love warns and is not just "warm and fuzzy"] - Mt 7:21+, Mt 7:22, 23+) To be sure, **faith alone saves**, but the faith that saves is not alone! Faith not works saves, but the faith that truly saves, works. See Jas 2:14-16 +)

Ray Pritchard writes that...

the whole gospel message (can be seen) in just six words. If you know what these words are and what they mean, you will know the gospel. And you can share it with anyone you meet.

The six words come in three sets of two words each—the first from Eph 2:1, the second from Eph 2:4, and the third from Eph 2:8.

You were—Eph 2:1

But God—Eph 2:4

Through faith—Eph 2:8

The first two words describe our true condition apart from God's grace. The words "you were" describe not only what we used to be, they also describe the current condition of everyone in the world who is not saved. That condition, as we will see in a few moments, is truly hopeless.

The second two words tell us how grace works. The phrase "but God" announces the world's greatest rescue mission when the Creator took on human flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ to perform the work of salvation.

The final two words explain how we come into contact with God's grace. It is "through faith" and only through faith. It is not faith plus works or faith plus anything else. It is faith alone that brings the blessings of grace to us.

Rightly understood, the whole gospel is in those six words: **You were...But God...Through faith**. God made it simple so that anyone could understand it and so all of us could share it with someone else. ([Amazing Grace](#))

A devotional from **Our Daily Bread** entitled "Autistic Listeners"

Hear now this ... [ye] ... who have ears, and hear not: Fear ye not me? saith the Lord. Jeremiah 5:21, 22

Recently the London Times stated that there are about 4,000 autistic children in Britain. These unfortunate youngsters usually do not react to messages received and transmitted from the eyes and ears to the brain. Consequently, they live in a world where words have little or no meaning. This is a terrible physical affliction, but my mind immediately was drawn to the oft-repeated words of our Lord concerning the listeners in His day who were thus spiritually afflicted. Of them He said,

"Hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand" (Matt. 13:13).

The reason for such "autistic" listeners is clear. Unconverted men are spiritually "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ep 2:1-note). Only as the Holy Spirit enlightens them and gives them life in Christ can they "hear his voice" and follow Him.

A certain ungodly tavern keeper who was very fond of music decided to attend one of John Wesley's Methodist gatherings in order to hear the singing. He had resolved, however, not to listen to the sermon, and therefore sat with his head down and his fingers in his ears. But when God wants to speak to a soul, He can make His voice heard even if He uses means that may seem strange to us. As the man stubbornly refused to listen, a fly lit upon his nose. For a moment he moved his hand to drive it away, and in so doing, nine words of the sermon were brought to his attention:

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

From that moment the man had no rest in his soul. He came to the next meeting, listened eagerly to the

Gospel, and was saved. Have you heard the Savior's voice? "Hear, and your soul shall live!" ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I hear Thy welcome voice,
That calls me, Lord, to Thee,
For cleansing in Thy precious blood
That flowed on Calvary. — Hartsough

There is no one so deaf as the person who refuses to hear!

A devotional from **Our Daily Bread** entitled "The Peace Initiative"

It was the night before Christmas in 1870. French and German armies faced each other on the field of battle in the Franco-Prussian War. A French soldier started walking toward the German lines. His comrades watched breathlessly, expecting to hear at any instant the crack of a rifle that would end his life. As he neared the enemy lines, he stopped and began singing

"Noel, noel! Noel, noel! Born is the King of Israel!"

No shot rang out.

Slowly the Frenchman returned to his ranks. There was silence! Then from the German side came a lone soldier to the same spot and sang the German version of the same song. After each stanza both armies united in the chorus. For a few minutes Christ brought peace to that battlefield.

God is a peacemaker who always takes the first step. Jesus came as a baby, and when He grew to manhood He preached peace to a warring world. Then, in the greatest peace initiative this world has ever seen, Christ made peace between God and man by dying for our sins (Col 1:20-note).

Peacemaking efforts may be rejected, but the alternative is continued hostility. God didn't settle for that, nor should we. Let's take the first step in healing a broken relationship, even at the risk of being "shot down."-- Dennis J. De Haan ([Ibid](#))

O Prince of Peace, keep us, we pray,
From strife and enmity;
Help us to speak with loving words
That quell hostility.-- J. David Branon

What this world needs is the peace that passes all misunderstanding.