

Ephesians- Lesson Six

Westminster Shorter Catechism Q 10. How did God create man?

A. God created man, male and female, in His own image and in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, to rule over the other creatures.

Summary of Chapter One: Following the great benediction of praise to God for the blessings that have come to believers in Christ, Paul is led to a great prayer for the believers in Ephesus. It is a prayer for their ongoing spiritual growth. Praise for who God is leads to prayers for God's specific work.

Ephesians 2:1–3 (ESV)

And you- Transition to personal emphasis following 1:23 and the broad focus of whole universe.

were dead- Nekros. The universal condition of all people that is described in the following phrases. It is the battle of sin, flesh and the devil. Man is totally unable to do what is needed.

in the trespasses (sins of turning away) and sins (and sins of missing the mark). Root of the problem is in relation to God for sin is defined by God- His laws and nature.

The World, the Flesh, and the Devil

The World: in which you once walked- Literally walking around. Deadness is way of life and shows powerlessness of people to change. The term walked/walking is used to mark the six closing sections of the second half of Ephesians (this is the portion of the letter that focuses on applying the doctrine of the first half). Walk in unity (4:1), walk in holiness (4:17), walk in love (5:1), etc. Man chooses the wrong path.

following the course of this world- Literally according to the age of this world. It is the timeframe into which all are born- non posse non peccare. Apart from Christ we are in this world and not able not to sin. It is a realm and kingdom we are in apart from Christ.

Galatians 1:4 (ESV) who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

The Devil: following the prince of the power of the air- There is a ruler of the realm of death.

1 John 5:19 (ESV) We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- Work is energy/power.

The Flesh: among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh- The condition of death is universal.

carrying out the desires of the body and the mind- Our sin is rooted in the flesh, body and mind. It permeates all of our existence. Like spiritual blessings, spiritual death is not limited to certain areas.

and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind- Children shows the wrath of God is on all. The same thing is shown in the word nature. This is the greatest consequence of sin.

Psalm 51:5 (ESV) Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Ephesians 2:4–7 (ESV)

But God- Two of the best words in the Bible! This is God's response to man's need.

being rich in mercy- The character of God that underlies His response of salvation.

because of the great love with which he loved us- The disposition of God towards His people.

even when we were dead in our trespasses- Our condition did not determine God's response of mercy. This repeats the nature of man's condition from earlier verses.

The Great "withs": Alive with Christ, Raised with Christ, Seated with Christ

made us alive together with Christ- This is a compound word (three total). Syn = with, together

Romans 6:5 (ESV) For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

by grace you have been saved- The work to redeem us totally of God's free grace,

and raised us up with him- One compound word is used here, too. We are raised to heaven because we are in Christ (11 times that phrase was mentioned in chapter 1). We are in the place where He is.

Ephesians 1:20 (ESV) that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,

and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus- The seating of Jesus completes His glorification by the Father and confirms His authority over every power. Jesus was raised from the grave, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father (session). He rules and reigns now.

Ephesians 1:21–22 (ESV) far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,

Believers share in Jesus' mission of building His church. We also have in Christ the security of knowing they are part of the greatest power and authority in the universe, even though we still live in this present evil age.

Matthew 16:19 (ESV) I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Already and Not Yet principle. We already enjoy the blessings of these truths but not the fullness of them.

so that in the coming ages he might show- Ages is plural. It is not simply a single future period but a continuation of times from the present until the completion of all things in heaven. There is more to come.

the immeasurable riches of his grace- The riches of God's grace are likewise not for a future age but present now, though they too will be more evident through the ages.

in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus- Everything comes to us in and through Jesus.