

Ephesians 2:1-12

### **Why We Need A Savior**

Last week I read from Luke that an angel appeared to Mary and told her she would bear a Son “**and of his kingdom there will be no end.**” (Luke 1:33<sub>ESV</sub>) Now the angel appears to Joseph and says of Mary, “**She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.**” (Matthew 1:21) We are speaking in these Advent sermons that the time for salvation is now. For each generation since Christ was resurrected and returned to heaven the time for salvation is now. There are three reasons mentioned in Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 to 3. Reading beginning in verse 1, “**And you were dead in the trespasses and sins<sup>2</sup> 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 —<sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**”

**According to Ephesians 2:1 we need a Savior because we are dead in sin.**

**According to verse 2 we need a Savior because we are captive to an alien power.**

**According to verse 3 we need a Savior because we are children of wrath.** This has been true since the fall of mankind. The time for salvation has always been now and will remain now until Christ’s return. I want to stress these 3 things are not what you will find out about yourself from any of the news agencies: CNN, Fox, NBC, etc. Nor will you find these out on the Internet or TV. They simply are not on the radar of the American culture or the world’s for that matter. Unfortunately, many churches do not consider these 3 truths as foundational. As scripture says,

“So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.” (Romans 11:5)

Only the remnant church believes: Without Jesus as one’s Savior all people -

- are dead in sin and capable of anything that is spiritually good.
- have been captured and blinded by an evil, supernatural person named Satan who is the prince of this world until Christ’s return.
- are under the wrath of God and sentenced to eternal torment in hell.

The reasons the world does not even see the possibility of these truths is because they are unappealing to human nature and our society is humanistic, and because these truths must be learned from God not man. However, all mankind should know without a doubt that God exists. Scripture teaches, “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. **So they are without excuse.**” (Romans 1:19-20) Salvation is given to one by God through Christ – one cannot earn it or buy it.

One of the great men of faith that I greatly admire is Charles Spurgeon. I want to read a portion of a sermon he gave on December 14, 1856, 161 years ago this month. Spurgeon says what I wanted to say, he says it so well, I thought I would let him speak to us this morning. What he says is based on Hebrews 11:6, “without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

Reading from Spurgeon’s message, quote, “I may know a thing, and yet not believe it. Therefore assent must go with faith: that is to say, what we know we must also agree with, as being most certainly the will of God. **Now, with faith, it is necessary that I should not only read the Scriptures and understand them, but that I should receive them in my soul as being the very truth of the living God,** and should devoutly, with my whole heart, receive the whole of Scripture as being

inspired of the most High, and the whole of the doctrine which he requires me to believe for my salvation. You are not allowed to divide the Scriptures, and to believe what you please; you are not allowed to believe the Scriptures with a half-heartedness, for if you do this wilfully, you have not the faith which looks alone to Christ. True faith gives its full assent to the Scriptures; it takes a page and says, 'No matter what is in the page, I believe it;' it turns over the next chapter and says, 'Here are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable do ignore, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their destruction; but hard though it be, I believe it.' It sees the Trinity; it cannot understand the Trinity in Unity, but it believes it. It sees an atoning sacrifice; there is something difficult in the thought, but it believes it; and whatever it be which it sees in revelation, it devoutly puts its lips to the book, and says, 'I love it all; I give my full, free and hearty assent to every word of it, whether it be the threatening or the promise, the proverb, the precept, or the blessing. I believe that since it is all the word of God it is all most assuredly true.' ”

I appreciate Joyce sharing this with me this week and providing an answer to what I was seeking to share. Spurgeon speaks of a complete surrender to the Word of God. Do you see the difference of half-hearted belief that leads to a horrible end and the true belief that leads to salvation? Does this help you see the difference between the remnant churches holding fast to God's Word and those broad churches that use the Bible as they see fit and change the precepts of God?

Hebrews 4:2 addresses this, saying, **“For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.”** (Hebrews 4:2 NIV84)

God gives faith and without it the value of the Bible is limited because God is limited. The world has created many religions, but only God creates a relationship with him through Christ. Let me read a statement and philosophy and you determine if you

see truth in it of most of the developed first world countries including America. It was written over 150 years ago.

**“Man makes religion, religion does not make man.** Religion is, indeed, the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man ... But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man – state, society. This state and this society produce religion ... Religion is the general theory of this world ... its logic in popular form ... its enthusiasm, its moral sanction ... and its universal basis of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence since the human essence has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion.

Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. ***It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness.***” (Karl Marx 1844) I do agree with a small part of Karl Marx’s statement, **“Man makes religion, religion does not make man.”** The world is full of religions that take people’s focus off of the one true God. The world is full of religions based on works. Believing in Christ, as one’s Savior is not a religion but life of faith, a life lived in relationship with the living God. As Paul wrote in verses 8 and 9, **“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”** (Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV) As Spurgeon clarified, **“Now, with faith, it is necessary that I should not only read the Scriptures and understand them, but that I should receive them in my soul as being the very truth of the living God.”**

The world is made up of mostly unbelieving people and therefore the world will go to extreme measures to avoid God. As Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians,

chapter 2, “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> 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 — <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

This is where we came from – from the world, sons of disobedience, children of wrath. America uses man-made religion to take people’s focus off of the truth. On-the-other-hand believing in Christ brings one into relationship with God.

Relationships always have a price. The price of a relationship with God is that one must worship him, must be obedient to him, and must serve him by serving others.

Knowing what my life was before Christ this price is something I am willing to pay. How about you? Are you willing to pay the price? The benefit of a relationship with God is experiencing His peace and joy here on earth and being with him in heaven for eternity.

The world takes the concept of it is better to give than receive and twists into a wonderful jolly Santa that on the surface says it is better to give than receive but in reality Christmas has become about receiving, not giving and receiving the material gifts that brings temporary excitement momentarily replacing the eternal joy of believing in Christ. Some say as Christians we should not celebrate Christmas because it is based on a pagan midwinter celebration. Pagans celebrate pagan beliefs, but Christians make holy this season. Was Christ born on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December? There is a 1 in 365 chance, but if the world knew the exact day of Christ’s birth they would worship the day as an idol and not Christ. The Christmas season is a time when the pagan world is more open to hearing the good news of Christ. Therefore we need to use this season for God’s glory and share the good news with those who will listen.

So, the true meaning of Christmas for Christians is that God sent his Son into the world for the purpose as the angel told Joseph, “*Mary will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*” (Luke 1:33) Fallen mankind’s natural bent is to sin. Only Christ saves one from their sins.

The reason the Son of God came to earth was “*to destroy the works of the devil.*” (1 John 3:8) For those who read and believe the Scripture it drives the devil from our thoughts and words, and from our homes and workplaces. Because all people are born as “*sons of disobedience*” and are “*by nature children of wrath*” Christ came to rescue those who believe from the wrath of God. Paul taught that as believers we “... *turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,<sup>10</sup> and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*” (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10) So Satan has worked hard to make Christmas move its focus from Christ to Santa Claus. **You see the impact of the truth of God’s incarnation is so undeniable and has so influenced the world that the prince of this world cannot confront it directly.** It is the devil that has worked hard for hundreds of years to make Christmas about Santa and materialism and fulfillment of pleasure appealing to man’s sensual fallen nature. The Christmas season has become about profit; we now have “Black Friday” the day of profit. As Christians, as the remnant church, we must work to hold fast to the true meaning of Christmas and use the true meaning to speak truth in love, grace and mercy of the gospel of Christ into people’s lives.

God has spoken. His words are preserved for us in the Bible. If you let God’s Book explain your life then you are acutely aware we are aliens and exiles in this fallen age. Living in obedience means living very differently than the world and because we remember who we were before Christ saved us, we know this is a small price to pay to live in relationship with God. I urge you, my beloved, to consider seriously today the truth of Ephesians chapter 2, verses 2 and 3 - of what

we were before Christ. We were followers of “prince of the power of the air... the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience ... and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”

These verses in Ephesians 2 tell us 3 things. First, there is a real being who rules over the world that has authority over the air. Second, this being is spirit and actively works in the hearts and lives of all those who have not a Savior. Thirdly, those without a Savior are under this spirit’s influence and they think and live in tune with the prince of this evil age as children of wrath.

### **We Have An Enemy**

What does it mean to say that there is a prince of the power of the air or a ruler of the authority of the air? Air is everywhere. Air is where we live. Between heaven above and the earth beneath is the realm of air and that is the habitation of man. Sometimes we say things like, “There is excitement in the air.” What we mean is that excitement seems to be gripping everybody. Its influence is so widespread that it must simply be in the air. That is Paul’s point. The influence of the “power” spoken of in verse 2 is so pervasive that it can be called the “power of the air.” Just as the air we breathe is everywhere, so is the power of the prince of the air. The whole earth is the domain and the subject of this power.

But what is this authority or power of the air? The term refers to all those beings Paul named in Ephesians 6:12, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers (*same word as in verse 2*) over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Paul says that we wrestle with them. That is, they are not far away. They are as close as the air we breathe. Then he calls some of them “rulers.” Their sphere of activity is not just hell or heaven. It is the world, the place where all people live. When you put all these truths together, what you have

is the “prince or ruler of the air” mentioned in verse 2. In other words demonic powers rule the air - over the world of mankind.

Scripture teaches us there is a prince or ruler over all evil beings. This, no doubt, refers to Satan. He is called the “[prince of demons](#)” in Matthew 12:24. Paul identifies him as the “[god of this world](#)” in his letter to the Corinthians. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Jesus our Lord says Satan is the, “[ruler of this world and be cast out](#)” (John 12:31) The process of casting out Satan began with the crucifixion and resurrection and will finish with Christ’s return. Then four chapters later in John chapter 16, Christ explains that when he returns to the Father at that time “[the ruler of this world is judged.](#)” (John 16:11) [Satan no longer has the hold on the world that he had before the coming of Christ because Christ birthed the church. Outside of Christ’s Church the world is focused on evil.](#) Christ’s Church is the remnant church not the broad church.

Satan knows God’s will and plan will come about and his time grows short. When Christ was in the wilderness Satan made a last ditch effort saying to Christ, “[To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.](#)”<sup>7</sup> [If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.](#)” (Luke 4:6) God the Father had already limited Satan authority over the world and given ultimate authority to Christ and Christ knew this. Satan lost and he loses more and more as Christ’s coming ever grows nearer.

However, until Christ’s return the majority of the world’s people are unsaved which means the norm for this broken world is evil. During this age of evil God has allowed Satan’s evil to demonstrate to the world their desperate need for a Savior. Now what does this mean? It means that the norm of the world in which we live is evil. During the age in which we live, God permits the dominant themes of man to be under the control of Satan. Christ defeated the devil on the Cross and



began the journey where evil will grow in wicked men's hearts and the world until his return. Paul wrote in Galatians to those God has saved through Christ, <sup>3</sup> "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup> **who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age**, according to the will of our God and Father, <sup>5</sup> to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen." (Galatians 1:3-5) Because of Christ those who are saved <sup>19</sup> "We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." (1 John 5:19)

However, for those who are saved God has indwelt them with the Holy Spirit and "he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4) But we also know that the way of the cross is <sup>13</sup> "Entered by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. <sup>14</sup> For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Matthew 7:13-14) By and large the world rejects the Savior and without a Savior they are ruled by "the prince of the power of the air" and "are sons of disobedience."

### **We Must Be Saved From Wrath**

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones died in 1981 at 82 years old. He was both an author of many books that I have read and the preacher at the Westminster Chapel in London for 40 years. The year before his death he was interviewed by Christianity Today and asked, "Do you have any final words for this generation?" He answered by quoting 1 Thessalonians 1:10, Christians know it is "**Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.**" We are to live for Christ's glory and by his grace. A quote that speaks to me, also by Dr. Lloyd-Jones, brings us to a close, "It is grace in the beginning, and grace at the end. So that when you and I come to lie upon our deathbeds, the one thing that should comfort and help and strengthen us there is the thing that helped us in the beginning. Not what we have been, not what we have

done, but the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. The Christian life starts with grace, it must continue in grace, it ends with grace. Grace wondrous grace! By the grace of God I am what I am. Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

The time for a Savior is now, by his grace! Turn to Jesus and be saved. Saved from the sickness of sin, the captivity of Satan and the never-ending sentence of hell. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) To this I plea, “Come Jesus in to unbelieving hearts - Come Jesus Come!”