

## Focus on Ephesians 2:1–10

### WHAT is important to know? — From “Exegetical Perspective,” John M. Vonder Bruegge

The key lies in the author’s deliberate evocation of the experiences of Christ (1:20–21) in the experiences of the believer (2:5–7). They were dead in sin, but they have been “made alive together” (v. 5; cf. Col. 2:13) with Christ. Whereas God “raised” (*egeiras*) Christ from the dead and “seated” (*kathisas*) him “in the heavenly places” (1:20), the one who has been saved by grace is “raised with him” (*synēgeiren*) and “seated with him” (*synekathisen*) “in the heavenly places in Christ” (2:6). Just as Christ’s exaltation was for both “this age” and “the age to come” (1:21), so also God will reveal his grace and kindness in “the ages to come” (2:7).

### WHERE is God in these words? — From “Theological Perspective,” Ian S. Markham

God gets all the credit. We did not deserve the love while we lived life wallowing in our self-preoccupation, being manipulated by the forces around us (v. 5). God provides the agent of our transformation. We are not responsible for the dramatic miracle made possible by Christ’s resurrection (v. 6). Nor can we take any credit for the role we will play as witnesses to the kindness shown to us in the ages to come. We are recipients of a remarkable gift from God—the gift of absolutely everything. The goal is a transformed life (one created for “good works,” v. 10), which God has created in Christ Jesus. We are playing a privileged role in God’s plan (v. 10).

### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives? — From “Pastoral Perspective,”

Adam E. Eckhart

A redemptive ethic encourages faithful people to share their stories of how powers influence them. Verse 3 shifts from second person “you” language to first person plural “we” to admit that “all of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh.” This admission enables Gentile and Jewish Christians to share their common submission to powers and therefore to unite them in Christ’s redemptive work. As part of our Lenten confessional discipline, our liturgy can encourage people to name aloud or silently specific powers that haunt us or loved ones, inviting us to witness to internal and social struggles that have distorted God’s creation.

### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do? — From “Homiletical Perspective,”

Jeff Paschal

“Passions of our flesh” [2:3] refers not just to what we do as individuals, but to what we do corporately. It can apply to our complicity in poverty, war, unfair conditions for the poor, and in political choices that make life easier for us but bring hurt to the weak and persons on the margins of society. Instead, we are to live out who we truly are, “alive with Christ,” following his example of love and placing our ultimate trust in God through Christ.