

Ephesians 13-11-03b

We pick up our study in Ephesians chapter 2, verse 1 says, and you were dead in trespasses and sins, you who were dead. As I said, you could construe this perhaps as a paraphrastic, but since I'm not going to construe it that way, it saves me having to describe what the paraphrastic would mean. This is a present participle, being dead, you being dead.

But this is a participle used in the concessive sense. And all you have to know about concessive is that you translate it although. When it's a concessive participle, the translation is although.

And that's a much better way to introduce this next thought that comes up in chapter 2, verse 1, although there shouldn't be a chapter break here. God has exerted this incredible, enormous, unbelievable, unimaginable power in raising Jesus Christ from the dead and seating Him at His right hand, where? Not just at His right hand, up in glory, surrounded by the flaming angels protecting His holiness. Specifically in verse 21, Jesus has been seated far above principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the age to come.

Right now, these words are significant in verse 19, and I didn't make much of them when we first went through this. But let me just quickly give you a couple of these words. The exceeding greatness of His power when He worked it in Christ, raising Him from the dead, seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, verse 20, far above, verse 21.

This is up above. This is huper hyper and, way up above, all rule. The word rule is arche, archeis.

This is singular. It's all kinds of rule. It's not rulers, plural.

It's all rulership, so to speak. Arche and authority. This is exousia, E-X-O-U-S-I-A.

Arche, of course, A-R-C-H-E. Arche is rule. Exousia is authority and power.

They say principality, power, and might in your New King James, but this principality is rulership, or rule. Exousia is authority, which they translate here, power. But remember, as many as received Him, to them gave He authority, power, to become the sons of God.

This is exousia, and then when it says might, this is dynamite. This is dunamis, dunameos here. And this is active power, power that is exerted and moves dirt, chips rock, makes things happen.

Active power. And dominion. Well, dominion has been so taken over by science fiction that you hardly know what to think of it anymore.

This is kurios kurios. You know what a kurios is, right? Kurios is Lord. Whenever you see Lord teach us to pray, the disciples calling Jesus, or the one who owns and instructs servants, the Lord of the house, the Lord of that servant will come on that day when He's not expected and will

recompense.

Curios is Lord. So curio tetos is lordship. This is the master of people, the one who sets policy, implements procedures, oversees and evaluates and judges those who are working for Him or under Him.

This is Lord in the personal sense. My Lord and my God. This is personal authority.

This is authority recognized by people. Curio tetos. So those are the things that Jesus Christ has been raised far above.

Why is that important? Well, especially when you come down here to chapter two, you who were dead, you and with the concessive participle here, we say, although you were in a state of death, being the present participle, it's awkward if we render it literally in English. Although you being dead. In trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, talked about this word walk during our scripture reading.

Walk here is peripateo. Peripateo. And that's how you operate.

Your lifestyle. You move around in life. Then it says, you walked according to.

And that's a great translation because the preposition here is kata. And we saw that up above. Remember in verse 19, the greatness of His power toward us who believe according to the working of His mighty power, according to the standard of, at the same level of, the magnitude of it is the same as when He raised Christ from the dead.

Well, now we've got another according to. There's the working of God's power, raising Christ from the dead, and the greatness of His power toward us is the same kata. It's like an equal sign.

It meets the same standard. Kata literally can be translated according to the standard of. So in verse 19, Paul says, I pray that you'll come to know the exceeding greatness of His power toward us, which is according to the standard of the power that He exercised when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in His right hand in the heavens.

I want you to know how great that power is. It is kata. It is according to.

It is the same in you as it was in Christ. This is just mind-blowing. You and me sitting here, standing here, operating in this life.

God is manifesting His power, is capable of manifesting His power toward us to the same extent, according to the standard of the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now he's amplifying that idea here in what we call chapter two, which is really just a continuation of his thought. It's the most unfortunate chapter break, I think, in the whole Bible.

You being dead, although you were being dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked

according to, not the mighty power of God raising Christ from the dead. It's a negative power. You walked according to, equal to, it says the course of this world.

This is the ion. We use that as eon in English. We say, well, you know, eons ago there was a, you know, it was a different age.

But here it doesn't so much mean age in a chronological sense, as age in a philosophical sense. We talk about, well, it's new age thinking. It doesn't mean we've had a new dispensation, or a new chronological event take place where, you know, another asteroid has struck the Yucatan Peninsula, and now we're in a different world.

New age, you know, the thinking of the age, he's a man of his time, he's a man of his age. This is the way ion is used. So what's it saying here? What's it saying? You, although being dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the standard of, the philosophy, the thinking, the age, of this world.

You thought like everybody else. You figured, get ahead, look out for number one, got to make your own way. I've got to gratify my own desires.

That's what happiness is, is self-gratification. You thought just like everybody else in the world. And this is the world outside Judaism.

No thought of the Abrahamic Covenant, no thought of God in His heaven, no thought of a coming Messiah, no thought of righteousness and judgment. This is the pagan world. This is the world of, well, let me find a mystical way to get ahead.

If I sacrifice to this God, I'll get better crops. If I go and make friends with certain people, that friendship will get me ahead. It's a philosophy.

It's a way of operating. And he says, you were dead in trespasses and sins according to the standard of the world and its thinking. Now, this is an awful thing for us who are now believers in Jesus Christ, who have been saved by grace, who have been given all of these things that were detailed in chapter one, all of the so that's, all of the in Christ things, the destiny, the inheritance, the future, the hope, all of these wonderful things, access to God's power to ignore and completely forget all of those things and go back to the ion of this world.

Do we ever spend days where we live exactly like this? We say, wow, you know, it's all in how I write my resume, whether or not I get a job. If I could just write my resume the right way, that'll impress them and I'll get a job. It's the power of the resume.

I'm going to read books. I'm going to get a seminar. I'm going to use other examples and read articles about, this is the way to write.

Lie, lie like a rug. Say whatever you have to say. If you ever saw a thing, you have two years

experience in it.

If you ever sat in a doctor's office, you have two years of experience in a doctor's office. You just lie. The paper represents you and you've got to fluff it up.

Don't just say you were in a place when they accomplished a thing. Maybe you were sorting mail and making coffee when they did a \$2 million sale. You were an integral part of it and helped to bring it about.

Whatever the resume says, this is the way of the world. I will say it and it will be so. Hope and change.

I will say hope and change. There will be hope and change. Speak it into existence.

It's the power of positive thinking. It's the reality. What is reality anyway? Reality is what I say reality is.

That's the ion of the world. Do we get sucked into this? Of course we do. We're immersed.

We're enmeshed. We are entangled in this world and it is only the power of God that can cut those cords and those vines and those tendrils of worldly thinking and enable us to live with integrity and to be holy and to measure ourselves by a standard that partakes of the eternal, not the temporal. The standard of this world is, well, hey, it worked.

I got the job, didn't I? The most amazing thing, there's a hugely prominent church here in Dallas. And some years ago, this has been a few decades back, they had a minister that came there and was very prominent on the platform, on TV, introducing things, making things happen. And he was Dr. So-and-so and was a shaker and mover in this church.

One day, something came up that didn't quite fit and somebody did a little research and started making a few phone calls. This guy with his spacious, plush office at the church, making a salary, one of the salaried ministers of the church, practically the assistant pastor, functionally was the assistant pastor. Somebody raised a question and it led to somebody just tugging on one little thread, you know, and the thing started to unravel.

The degrees the guy had on his wall were fake. Didn't have a doctorate. Had never attended the seminary from which he had supposedly earned a doctorate.

And was fake from beginning to end. Had put all this stuff on his resume. Got hired on the strength of it.

Had been functioning there for some years all on the basis of a lie. It's the ion of the world. But believe me, when you raise yourself up on a cushion of hot air, when it finally gets punctured, the fall of it is very great.

And the devastating catastrophic effect, how can you ever be trusted with anything for anything? You know, you have this castle built on air and when it falls, great is the fall of it. And the guy was not even alive a few years after this. So, the ion of this world is what is in view here.

You, although being dead in trespasses and sins according to the ion of this world walking around. Couldn't help it. You're doing the worst that any pagans could ever do.

Notice, according to the ion of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. And it looks like in this English translation that the prince of the power of the air is the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience. That's not what it says.

You think, I don't really care. Yes, you do. Pay attention and I'll show you why we care.

Why do we care about this? By the way, the net Bible is one of the few translations that gets this right in my opinion. The net Bible translation of this passage is, and although you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you formerly lived according to this world's present path. They're using path to translate ion.

According to the ruler of the kingdom of the air. Now, according to the ruler. The ruler is the Archonta.

Remember up above? I told you that there's Arche up there. Far above in verse 21, all principalities, that your word principalities, that's Arche. Jesus has been raised above Arche.

You being dead formerly walked according to the Arche in this world. The Arche of the exousia. He is the ruler of, remember the second word I gave you up there in verse 21, far above all rule, principality and authority exousia.

Well, now we've got the Arche of the exousia down here in verse 2. Christ has been raised above that you formerly walked entangled and dominated and overpowered by the Arche of the exousia of the air. That's the air down here. Where did Jesus ascend? Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing north? It's not like the chariot of Elijah that was like a hovercraft, lifted up in the whirlwind and went away, but not up.

The Lord Jesus Christ went up above and beyond both literally and spiritually everything in this world including the air. This is the Arche of the exousia of the air. Now, I am tempted to apply this to our electronic age, your Wi-Fi, your television, your radio.

How is the spirit of the sons of disobedience spread, manifest and exerted in this age? It's all electronics. It all passes through the air. It's your satellites.

It's your technology. We're getting away from copper more and more and it all comes through the air. In actuality.

What's that? Oh, was that an amen? Yeah. So, He is the Arche of the exousia of the aios. It's air.

In another sense, it is hot air. This is the verbiage, the speaking, the endless defenses and arguments and justifications and it's all in the reason and the rationale of it and people talk their way into this and defend and support themselves in the air. It's all a bunch of talk.

It's invisible, but it's supposedly substantial. But He, this is the ruler. This is singular here again, but before it was feminine.

Back up in verse 21 when it says Christ was raised up above the Arche, this was the feminine singular and feminine suggests conceptual things. When they wanted to talk about abstractions and concepts, it would be a feminine noun in many cases. This is not a hard and fast rule, but it's suggested.

You put it in the feminine and it's kind of like talking about a ship. Well, she sails on the next high tide and when you want to personify and conceptualize everything about a ship or even a nation, they used to put it in the feminine gender because it sort of elevated it and contrary to the whole boo on patriarchal society, when people wanted to elevate something into a higher realm, they would put it in the feminine. And this goes back hundreds of years and that's why you call ships and nations she.

She's a worthy ship. Or when America was moving westward, she cut her ties with Europe and so on. That's what's happening here.

Arche in verse 21 is feminine because this is all rule. This is rule as a concept. Any kind of rule you want to talk about, Christ is above it.

Here now in verse 2, Arche is masculine because this is talking about a ruler. One specific ruler. This is a reference to Satan.

This is a reference to the devil. It's him. He is the ruler.

Masculine of two different things. He is the ruler of the authority of the air. This probably in its first and best sense is talking about the fallen spiritual influences.

These are the demons and their influence which literally comes across through the air now. It's never been more resonant than in media today. But you lived according to the ion, the philosophy of the world, this world, according to the ruler.

Where does this philosophy come from? It comes from the ruler of the authority of the air. And he is the ruler of the spirit. The one now operating in the sons of disobedience.

The ruler rules two things. He rules the authority of the air. And by the way, that authority is feminine here because it's a block, it's a group.

And he is ruler of the spirit that now operates. And this is Energeo. This is another present active participle.

You were being dead in transgressions and sin. And the spirit now energizing in the sons of disobedience. So the philosophy and the motivation and encouragement, the energy that motivates them.

Why is it that there's so much opposition to Christianity? They're not opposed to a lot of other religions the way they are to Christianity. Nobody stands up against Islam the way they stand up against Christianity. Nobody says, how dare you put that Islamic symbol on top of your building.

But there's more and more animosity toward having a cross or having a Ten Commandments or having a nativity scene or anything else that speaks of Christianity. Movies now routinely will reference getting into the lotus position and meditating with Eastern Buddhist, Hindu motifs. But you don't see the cross and you don't see anything speaking of Christianity anymore because it's on the outs.

What is the motivation for this? What is the active force that so embitters people toward Christianity? Well, God the Holy Spirit is convicting of sin, righteousness and judgment. And these fallen spirits, these spirits of the air under the rule of Satan are actively opposing. There is a conflict and it is active.

And it's only peripherally involving other religions. It is directly attacking Christ and His representatives on earth, Christians. It's active.

Expect it. We shouldn't be surprised that Christianity is the object of hostility in a way no other religion is, even when other religions are extremely violent. Nobody comes out and says, what's the matter with this religion? They say, well, you know, the extremists.

It's not the religion, it's the extremists. Do they ever give that kind of concession to Christianity? Well, it's not Christianity, it's just the extremists. No, no, no, it's Christianity's fault that anybody who has any association with Christianity has done something bad.

It's the entire religion's fault. But they're very careful to distinguish Islamic and other extremists. Well, the religion is fine.

Nothing wrong with the religion, it's the religion of peace. It's just these flaky fringe. You don't see that same argument made.

Because there's an active conflict, and Paul talks about it here. There is a ruler, he is the ruler of the authority of the air, and he is the ruler of, this is a two-object construction, ruler of the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. When you get entangled in a conversation with atheists or those hostile to Christianity, they are working for somebody.

This is not just them at their own behest. They have a ruler, and as much as they protest about, well, who should pay any attention to the authority of Scripture, who should pay any attention to the authority of anything they think of as being Christian, they themselves are under the authority of this ruler. They are working for the ruler of the spirit that works, is working now in the sons of disobedience.

Now look at verse 3, Now why does he switch from you to we? He's been talking about these people out there in the slings and arrows of the godless pagan Gentile world, and he says, And the order of words is not quite right here in the English. In Greek, it says, Who's we all? There's y'all, and there's we all. Y'all are Gentiles.

We all are sons of Israel. And we all, we all, all of Israel behaved. Behaved is real interesting.

He doesn't use peripateo here. We all lived. He uses anastrepho.

Now anastrepho is a real close Greek analogy to our word return. Ana means again or re, and strepho means turn. Ana, re, strepho, turn, re, turn.

And it's often translated that way. But here, it doesn't make any sense. We also returned in the desires of the flesh.

But what it suggests is this is behavior to which you return. In other words, it is your pattern. A pattern is something that repeats, right? And anastrepho, when it is translated behave or conduct, conduct yourself, it means this is typical.

This is a type. This is a pattern to which you return on a regular basis. And you're circular in it.

It can be a good kind of pattern or a bad kind of pattern. It can be godly conduct or it can be evil conduct. But that's why anastrepho really emphasizes the idea that we keep coming back to this.

We keep doing it. Something we keep on doing. We return to it over and over.

We also anastrophed then, in whom also we all behaved then or once. Here, it's not according to the law of the world. It's not the philosophy of the world.

It's not according to the spirit that operates in the sons of disobedience. That isn't what animated us. That isn't what the standard according to which we functioned.

We behaved. We conducted ourselves. We kept returning to conduct in the desires of the flesh.

We were in the grip of our lusts, epithumia. Epithumia tes sarikos. And what is the desire of the flesh? Well, what's the difference in this and what he's just been describing? What he's been describing is external, isn't it? You've got spirits in the air.

You've got the power that animates them. And you've got an law in the world. And people are in

the grip of that.

They can't help themselves because they've got no recourse. You've got no alternative. If you're a godless pagan, you're out there and it's the ion of the world.

It's the spirit that works in the air and the ruler that controls them. You're just pillar to post in that environment. He says, we also were stuck, but we were controlled by something else.

It was the desires of the flesh. That's internal. It's my flesh.

It's not the air and it's not the age and it's not the world. It's my own flesh. We've met the enemy and he is us.

The epithumias te sarcos. The desires of the flesh doing the will of the flesh. The Thelema.

The Thelema is what's often translated as the will of God. Well, this is the will of the sarcos. And you have sarcos again, the will of the flesh.

We conducted ourselves in the desires of the flesh and it says, the lust of the flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. This is rationalizations. This is Deanoia and it's feminine here because it's talking about the rationalizations.

We told ourselves it was good. We told ourselves it was right. We deceived ourselves.

It was our intelligence leading us astray. Paul will contrast this in another place talking about being a fool for Christ instead of being smart and rationalizing your way into judgment. And we were children of anger.

Tecna Orgeis. We were in our nature children of wrath. We told ourselves we were children of God.

Told ourselves we were descendants of Abraham. He's talking about the Jews here. But we were actually children of wrath.

Children destined for wrath just as the others. The destination point is the same. Out in the world controlled by that.

Here we are near to God but consumed by our fleshly desires and our brain rationalizations and headed for the same wrath as the others. Two different routes to the same destination. Near and far, both missing the boat.

But God, and this is where we're going to pick up next time. What did God do for both? Those who were near and those who were far off, headed for the same wrath, the same ultimate judgment. It doesn't matter that you're near.

It's the old saying, you know, close only counts in horseshoes. Close doesn't count in the plan and purpose of God. Being near, you can come under the very same wrath, the very same condemnation as those who were far off.

But God, and that's the wonderful turning point in verse 4 where we'll look next time. So what is the conclusion we draw having looked at these things? There was a separation between the godless, pagan, Gentile world and God. Those who thought they were near because they were in Israel were equally separated because they were consumed by the lust of the flesh and their own rationalizations, equally children of wrath.

God solves that problem. And what we're going to see when He goes forward, notice in verse 6, He's going to repeat in verse 5, even when we were dead in trespasses, you who were dead in trespasses and sins, now in verse 5 He's going to say, we Jews were dead in trespasses and sins. We Israelites were dead, just as dead as you.

We just fooled ourselves into thinking we weren't. But we were in the grip of forces within ourselves. Look at verse 6, actually verse 5, made us alive together.

Verse 6, raised us up together. Made us sit together in the heavenlies. You Gentiles and we Jews.

He broke down the middle wall of partition. He's going to continue this in verse 11. You Gentiles, uncircumcised, you are without Christ and so on.

Verse 13, you who were once far off have been brought near. Verse 14, He Himself is our peace who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation. There is no difference between near and far.

Christ has abolished that and everyone can be in the heavenlies with Christ. Everyone can partake of everything we saw in chapter 1. It doesn't matter where you come from, near or far. Now, what does it mean to us? We like to make distinctions.

We like to think, well, I'm from one place and that person is from another. We like to preserve those distinctions. It's a defense mechanism.

We make ourselves feel better by saying, well, I may not be perfect, but I certainly don't do that. That's what the Jews did. Well, I may not be up there with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but I'm not one of the godless pagans who is far off, operating according to the Eros of the world and the spirit that animates all of these horrible pagans.

I'm in Israel and it rubs off. I'm in the group. When the group goes through the gate, I'll just be in the midst and kind of get carried in.

And we comfort ourselves and we fool ourselves into thinking that because we're in Christian

circles, because we have a Christian association, because we're in church, it will kind of rub off and we'll just sort of be carried in the group. And Paul says, look, Christ has made it possible for us to be delivered indeed, to be saved indeed, and being near doesn't count, being far off doesn't count. Christ has broken down those distinctions.

We need to break down the distinctions in our mind, both when we look at ourselves and when we look at others. I will tell you a final little anecdote here before we close. I was in a situation once where there was a person that had come from a very extremely dark place in their past.

This person had been so confused, had such a lifestyle that they had changed their gender, had had the operation, gone through the whole thing, had known them as a man, now they're a woman. But in Christ and through the power of God, had seen the light, had gotten saved, was growing in grace and knowledge of the Savior, and fully recognized what a horrible mistake and what an awful place they had come from, how confused they had been. But you want to talk about a walk of integrity and someone who valued the grace of God, who was glad to be accepted by the people of God in a church, and had found a place of service and function where people who also appreciated God's grace chose not to look at those things which are behind, but wanted together to press forward.

And then immaturity crept in. Some people found out about the past and went ballistic and split the church, destroyed the person and their career, ran them out of the church. Why? Could not recognize the truth of this passage.

It doesn't matter if you come to Christ and come to growth and function from a very far off place. Well, you've been an awful person in the past, so you can't be with us now and function with us now. This is what the Jews were doing in Paul's day.

Well, yeah, we're all Christians, but you Gentiles, I mean, look at the kind of stuff you used to do. Look at the communities you come from. Look at the stuff you tolerate.

Look at what's still going on in your cities. We can't have you worshiping with us. Get the hints.

You're not coming to God from a near place like us. You're coming from a far place, when in fact there's just as much corruption, just as much vileness in those who consider ourselves to be near. And to denigrate and to judge and to reject someone else on such a basis is going to be dealt with at the judgment, and it is a serious offense.

Remember what Jesus said, if you do something to one of these little ones, it will be better for you. If a millstone were hung around your neck and you were cast into the sea. We want to be careful about judging others with this notion in mind.

Well, that's just from a far off place. We make these divisions. We preserve these distinctions that are done away in Christ.

We've got our hands full trying to make sure we are walking as we should, that we are overcoming the lusts of our flesh, that we are availing ourselves of all of the things God has given us in Christ that are detailed in chapter 1. We've got our hands full trying to lay hold of that for ourselves without looking over and saying, that person has messed up, that person is out of line and out of sorts, and I am going to make sure that they suffer some sort of penalty for it. Judge not lest you be judged. The measure with which you judge others is the measure with which it will be measured out to you at the judgment.

Paul is arguing here very gently and very theologically against making distinctions and making divisions. This whole statement in chapter 1, that beautiful sentence, is now being turned to talk about practicalities. We all come from a far off place and we are all brought near in Christ.

The wall of partition and separation that we think exists is abolished in Him. Focus on in Him. There is no division in Him.

There is no separation in Him. The only separation is going to be how faithful and how obedient are we. And that's a decision we make for ourselves.

So that's the direction He's moving. And that's what chapter 2 is going to bring very much into focus for us. And we have to be so careful.

It is the ion of the world to define ourselves in terms of others that I am basically better than you is a dangerous, insidious poison that breeds strife and division and will result in our judgment. Thankfully, God the Holy Spirit can minister these things to our hearts in a way that makes us healthy, that excises this kind of cancer from our soul and from our hearts and lets us focus our eyes, the eyes of our hearts, on the Lord Jesus, raised into glory, seated at the right hand of the Father, where we, being dead in trespasses and sins, are made alive together with Him. And we can sit in those same heavenly places.

What a destiny. What an opportunity for us. That's the place to focus.

That's the motivation to cultivate in the time that remains to us in this life. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the insights and the encouragements and the wisdom and revelation that You impart to us through the pages of Scripture, through the presence and power of Your Spirit.

We pray that as we think about these things, as we review them and consider them and meditate on them, that they will exert their divine power in our souls to transform our thinking, to renew us, to restore us, to energize us, to make us and remake us in Your image and according to Your likeness so that we reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus. We pray it in His name. Amen.