

In terms of this passage, the contrast is between what we were by nature (3) and what we are by grace (5).

- By nature, we were objects of God's wrath.
- By grace, we are saved.

For us to better appreciate 4-7, we're going to need to go back into 1-3.

^{2:1} As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² 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. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

The threefold tyranny that holds us captive

1. The ways of the world (2) – this is an external cultural tyranny
2. The influence of Satan (2) – this is a hostile supernatural tyranny
3. The wickedness of our own desire (3) – this is an internal compulsive tyranny

This threefold tyranny holds us captive in our spiritually dead state. And that, could have been that were it not for the but of (4).

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

What accounts for that change in fortunes?

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

We have done nothing to contribute to our salvation. So, what accounts for it?

- God's love:
- God's mercy:
- God's grace:

- God's kindness:

1. God made us alive with Christ

2. God raised us up with Christ

3. God seated us with Christ

Richard Coekin writes this,

'Imagine yourself as a decaying corpse (we were spiritually dead), trussed up in chains inside a coffin (we were captive to the world, the devil and the flesh), heading inexorably into the flames of the crematorium fire (objects of God's wrath)! Suddenly as your coffin is engulfed by the flames, someone leaps into the flames, smashes open the coffin, and despite the horrific burns that scar him for ever, retrieves your corpse, breathes life into your body, washes you and clothes you in his own clothes, tenderly carries you to his chauffeur driven Bentley and takes you home to his Father's presidential palace to stay in his rooms and feast at his table, enjoying the abundant hospitality of his Father for ever. This is every Christian's personal story magnified by the horrors of hell from which we've been rescued and the privileges to which we've been exalted'.

But why did God do this? The reason we're given is this

⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Conclusion

What has God done?

Why has God done it?

How has God done it?