

BEFORE AND AFTER

Eph.2
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Often times various diet plans are advertised and zealously promoted on the basis of “before and after” by the use of pictures depicting the finished “product” of the plan showing the “before” and the “after.”
2. The “before and after” in the spiritual life of the Ephesians as discussed in Eph.2 suggests this topic to me and serves as the basis for the study, Eph.2:1-22. (Suggested by Vv.11-13. Thus our theme for our study is “Before And After” as it applies in several areas of study.
3. Therefore we introduce our study with:

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE BEFORE AND AFTER STATE AND/OR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE EPHESIANS.

1. Before their conversion to Christ:
 - a. They were dead in trespasses and sins, Eph.2:1b,5a.
 - b. They walked (lived) according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience, 2:2; Cf Jno.12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2Cor.4:4; Eph.6:12.
 - c. They had their conversation in the lust of the flesh, or conducted themselves in the lusts of their flesh, 2:3a.
 - d. They were by nature, or by habitual practice, the children of wrath, 2:3b.
 - e. They were Gentiles in the flesh, or heath in a physical sense, called the uncircumcision by those who call themselves the circumcision in the flesh made by hands, 2:11.
 - f. At that time, they were without Christ, 2:12a.
 - g. They were aliens from or to the commonwealth of Israel, 2:12b. Cf. Rom.2:14.
 - h. They were strangers from the covenants of promise, 2:12c.
 - i. In their alienated, sinful condition, they had no hope, and were without God in the world,2:12d.
 - j. They were “far off,” 2:13b.

- k. They were “strangers and foreigners,” 2:19a.
- 2. After their conversion to Jesus Christ:
 - a. They had been “quickenened” or made alive spiritually, 2:1a.
 - b. God had quickened them together with Christ, saved by grace, 2:5b.
 - c. They had been raised up to sit in the heavenly realm in Christ, 2:6.
 - d. They had been saved by grace through faith, a salvation that was not of themselves (not of their own meritorious works, or boastful works), but the gift of God, 2:8,9.
 - e. They are not God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, 2:10.
 - f. They are now in Christ Jesus and made nigh by the blood of Christ, 2:13.
 - g. They are now one in Christ with those from whom they were formerly separated by the law as a middle wall of partition which has now been abolished, 2:11-15.
 - h. Now both Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to God in one body by the cross of Christ, 2:16-22.
 - i. Now they are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly realm in Christ, 1:3.
 - j. Now they have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God’s grace, 1:7.
 - k. See Ac.19:5,6 for the record of their conversion. Cf. Eph.5:25-27.

B. BEFORE AND AFTER THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

- 1. Before the cross, or the death of Christ on the cross.
 - a. The law of Moses was in effect.
 - (1) This law was the law of God given by Moses but given only to the Jewish nation (the Gentiles were never under it or bound by it, Rom.2:14), Eph.2:11-12.
 - (2) This was the covenant God made at Horeb with the Israelites when he had delivered them from Egyptian bondage, Deut.5:1-3.
 - (3) It was the covenant made at Horeb with them and them alone; it was not a law bound on anyone before that time, not even on the Jewish fathers before them.
 - (4) This was the law that included the 10 Commandments, which included the Sabbath law, Exo.20; Deut.5.

- b. The law of Moses stood as a middle-wall of partition “between the Jews and the Gentiles,” with the Jews and the Gentiles separated, serving God under two different systems of law, Eph.2:11-15.
 - c. Under the law of Moses, there was no absolute forgiveness of sins available to its subjects who had violated it and become sinners because “without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Heb.9:22), and the only sacrificial blood available to be offered under that law was the blood of animals, which could not take away sins in the absolute sense, Heb.10:1-4,11; 9:11-17,26.
 - d. Under the law of Moses was the knowledge of sin, but no absolute forgiveness, Rom.3:20: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is (cometh) the knowledge of sin.”
(1) Cf. Col.2:14; Ac.15:10; 13:38,39; Rom.8:1-3; 2Cor.3:6-9.
 - e. There was forgiveness in the relative sense but not in the absolute sense.
 - f. Sinners, those in violation of that law, were therefore held in bondage in their sin under the curse of the law, awaiting the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise to bless all nations, Rom.3:9-20; 7:7-11,24; Gal.3:10-12,22; Ac.15:10; Col.2:14; See Gen.12:1-3; 22:15-18; Gal.3:8-19.
2. After the cross, or the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- a. Jesus, the risen Lord and Christ, reigns at the Father’s right hand in heaven, Ac.2:22-24,32-36.
 - b. The 1st testament, which was “the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones,” has been “done away,” “blotted out” and the 2nd, the N.T., the “better covenant,” of which Jesus is the Mediator, is “established upon better promises,” is now in force, through which we have absolute forgiveness, 2Cor.3:5-11; Col. 2:14-17; Heb.8:6-13; 10:9-18; 9:15-17,26; See Jno.1:17; Heb.1:1-3.
 - c. Therefore, we have a better hope, Heb.7:17-19; that is, the hope of eternal life upon the remission of our sins in Jesus by means of the gospel of Christ, Eph.1:7; Col.1:14; Tit.12; 1Jno.2:24,25; Cf. Ac.2:36-38; Tit.2:11-13.

C. BEFORE AND AFTER BEING JOINED BY GOD IN MARRIAGE.

1. Before being joined by God in marriage.
 - a. We are free to choose either the state of celibacy or of legal and scriptural wedlock; for either state is something divinely allowed to one and all, but not commanded of any, 1Cor.7:1-9,25-28,36-38.
 - b. No one has the scriptural right to engage in unlawful, unscriptural sexual relations with impunity, Heb.13:4; 1Cor.6:9,10,18; Gal.5:19-21; Eph.5:3.

2. After being joined by God in marriage.
 - a. The bond is for life.
 - (1) Gen.2:24 (to stick, as things that are glued together; abide fast together; to adhere, as if with glue; to be glued; “leave and cleave”). Cf. Mt.19:3-6; Rom.7:1-3.
 - b. Even permanent separation is not allowed, 1Cor.7:1-5.
 - c. Divorce is not allowed except for the cause of fornication; that is, the innocent party may divorce the guilty party if the cause for the divorce is fornication on the part of the guilty party, Mt.19:9; 5:32; 1Cor.7:10-13. Cf. the language of 1Jno.2:1,2.
 - d. The attitude toward and treatment of one another in marriage is divinely regulated, Eph.5:23-32; 1Pet.3:1-7. Cf. Mal.2:14-16.

D. BEFORE AND AFTER PHYSICAL DEATH.

1. Before physical death.
 - a. There is choice because of free-moral agency and consequences, either good or bad, as result of one's choice.
 - (1) Adam and Eve had choice, Gen.2:15-17; 3:1-3.
 - (2) Can and Abel had choice, Gen.4:1-5; Heb.11:4; Rom.10:17.
 - (3) King Saul had choice, 1Sam.15.
 - (4) The Jews of Jesus' day had choice, Jno.5:39,40; 8:24.
 - (5) Judas Iscariot had choice, Ac.1:15-25.
 - (6) Those on Pentecost had choice, Ac.2:37-41.
 - (7) All of us have choice because the gospel, God's power unto salvation, is for all, Mk.16:15,16; Rom.1:16,17; Mt.11:28-30; Heb.2:9; 1Tim.2:3-6.

2. After physical death choice is no longer an option, Lk.16:29-31; 12:20,21; Jno.5:28,29; 2Cor.5:10,11; Ac.17:31; 2Th.1:6-10; 2Pet.3:9-12

III. CONCLUSION

1. Before conversion to Christ people are lost without hope. After conversion they are saved “if they continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be no moved away from the hope of the gospel,” or unless they have believed in vain, 1Cor.15:1,2; Col.1:21-23.
2. The more people turn from God, the more we witness the “before” rather than the “after”. See Rom.1:18-32. Therefore, in our present society various forms of immorality are rampant or widespread and seem to be on the increase, even among God’s own people, the church belonging to Christ.
3. Rom.6 pertains to the “before” and the “after” with emphasis on the after conversion – the absolute reformation of life after conversion and the absolute necessity of maintaining it unto the end. See Vv.1,2,11-13, 17-19,21-23.
4. Let us heed the warnings issued to the Hebrew Christians, Heb.2:1-3; 3:12-14; 4:1; 12:25.