

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Saved to a New Life
Ephesians 2:1-16

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

You may want to use readers to conclude the worship time. The material is prepared for use and is available at the end of the Worship Time materials.

Music Sources:

Grace Alone, *The Worship Hymnal* #112; CCLI # 2335524

Amazing Grace, *The Worship Hymnal* #104; CCLI # 22025 Public Domain

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Saved to a New Life

Focal Text:

Ephesians 2:1-16

Background Text:

Ephesians 2:1-22

Main Idea:

God's salvation gives spiritually dead people a new life.

Question to Explore:

What does God's salvation do for us?

Teaching Aim:

The hearer will receive God's gift of salvation through a personal act of faith.

Those who are saved will seek to live lives of obedience to God.

The hearer will grow in their appreciation for the grace of God offered in our salvation.

Gathering together:

Sing **Grace Alone**, The Worship Hymnal #112; CCLI # 2335524

First thoughts:

Today's study and worship will focus on a familiar and much loved passage ***For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast*** Ephesians 2: 8-9. Believers never tire of hearing this truth and unbelievers may hear it and know that the gift of God is for them.

We often do boast – if not verbally – then internally. We are given to thinking that our Christian life depends on us – what we do, what we believe, what group we are a part of.

May we remember today that we are saved through faith and that faith itself is a gift of God. Grace alone.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Saved to a New Life

Focal Text:

Ephesians 2:1-16

Background Text:

Ephesians 2:1-22

Main Idea:

God’s salvation gives spiritually dead people a new life.

Question to Explore:

What does God’s salvation do for us?

Teaching Aim:

The hearer will receive God’s gift of salvation through a personal act of faith.

Those who are saved will seek to live lives of obedience to God.

The hearer will grow in their appreciation for the grace of God offered in our salvation.

Introduction to your personal study:

Elaine was one of the music teachers in the local high school that began attending our Young Adults Bible Study. She was raised in church, and her father was one of her church’s elders. She was the church organist, playing every hymn and hearing every sermon the pastor preached. Elaine was bold to proclaim that she was “a Christian,” but when I asked about her personal testimony with Jesus she didn’t have one. When I asked when she personally received God’s gift of grace through faith she didn’t know what I was talking about. Over the process of months in our Bible study she began to see that her “faith” was something her parents had given her. She was a “good person,” but that wasn’t good enough. She attended church every week, but that wasn’t good enough. She even played the church organ, but that wasn’t good enough. She did not know Jesus personally!

One Tuesday evening that she showed up to our Bible study a different person. All of these realizations had brought her to a point of crisis in her life, and she was going to have to do something about it. On her own at home, she knelt and personally confessed the truths she had learned from God's word. She was a sinner who was "separate from Christ." Even though she attended church she was "not a part of God's people" because she did not know Him personally. She had "no hope" and was "without God in this world." She personally accepted God's gift of grace of salvation and immediately received the gift of His Holy Spirit. She was transformed in a moment as God gave her a new life. Her parents couldn't believe the change. Her very face shone with a joy and radiance, and she couldn't stop smiling. She gave me a big hug and said, "I never knew. I never knew it could be this way."

A verse came to my mind from the book of Isaiah, "Having eyes, they do not see. Having ears, they do not hear. Having hearts, they do not understand" (Isaiah 6:10). Not until you experience salvation personally, not until God opens your eyes, unstops your ears, and enlightens your mind, will you ever know. Being a "Christian" is something you have to experience for yourself.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the "**Introduction**" article found at the beginning of this series of Bible Study and Worship sessions (Bible Teaching #.....). The person who downloaded this session should have that material for you, as well.

In chapter 1 Paul launched into an extended praise to God for his eternal purpose of salvation (1:3-14) as well as a prayer for the saints that God would grant them spiritual wisdom and understanding (1:15-23). In chapter 2, Paul reminded the saints of their own personal salvation experience. God's salvation gives spiritually dead people a new life. So, how does that work? What does God's salvation do for us?

Focusing on the Meaning:

"Dead in Your Transgressions and Sins" (2:1-3)

Before unbelievers meet Christ they are spiritually dead people, "**dead in your transgressions and sins.**" "Death" means separation. The Bible actually speaks of three different kinds of "death." Physical death is when a person's soul is separated from their body (2 Corinthians 5:8). Spiritual death is when a person's soul is separated from God. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies (i.e. physically); and whoever lives and believes in me will never die (i.e. spiritually)" (John 11:25-26). When a spiritually dead person dies physically they experience "eternal death" or the "second death" (Revelation 21:8). People who are alive physically but who do not know Jesus personally are walking (spiritually) dead people, separated from God because of their personal sins. They follow "**the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air**" (v. 2), enslaved to the devil and to their own sin. As such, they deserve to experience God's

“**wrath**” (v. 3). They do not need counselling, a handout, or a self-help course on how to live. Dead people cannot help themselves. Their only hope is resurrection.

“**Alive with Christ**” (2:4-7)

But God has “**great love for us**” and he is “**rich in mercy**” (v. 4), so he entered into our hopeless existence, raised spiritually dead people, and “**made us alive with Christ**” (v. 5). This is totally undeserved love, amazing grace, on his part. And only by this “**grace you have been saved**” (v. 5). God “**raised us up**” and “**seated us with him in the heavenly realms**” (v. 6), giving us a new life and a new spiritual power to function. “The heavenly realms” is Paul’s way of describing the spiritual location where believers live in this age – the place where believers are already raised into fellowship with Christ, but where we also experience spiritual warfare (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). In other words, the physical world is not the only reality we experience, for we also exist on a higher plane.

We enjoy many “blessings” here as we wait for our final salvation when we will experience no more spiritual conflicts. We no longer live simply on the physical plane but also in the spiritual. Paul used these terms in the past tense, describing an action already completed for these Ephesian Christians. They do not have to wait until they die for this to happen. The moment someone responds to God’s grace in faith they receive a new life and a new power.

“**By Grace, Through Faith**” (2:8-10)

Only by God’s “**grace you have been saved,**” but every person must receive God’s grace personally “**through faith**” (v. 8). More than simply believing with one’s mind, faith is grasping him out of desperation. Faith is a determined choice of the will, a deliberate decision to give Jesus control of one’s life from now on. Faith trusts Jesus with a desperation that knows that salvation is possible by no other way. It is clinging for one’s very life and receiving his gracious gift as a dying (or dead) person with no other hope. Earlier in Ephesians Paul described how this act of receiving salvation takes place. First, “you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation,” then you believed, and God marked you with the seal of his Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13). In the ancient world a seal was a mark of ownership. Thus Paul meant that by believing in Jesus a person changes masters, or become “God’s possession” (1:14).

By no means is this act of believing or “faith” considered some kind of work we have done. Salvation is “**not from yourselves, it is the gift of God**” to be received, it is “**not by works, so that no one can boast**” that in any way we are able to save ourselves (2:9). After being saved, then may people simply live however they want to live, and God expects nothing out of their conduct? Absolutely not! In saving us God has remade us, “**for we are God’s workmanship,**” masterpieces of his saving power. We were “**created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do**” (2:10). Salvation is all of God’s grace. We live lives of

obedience to his will out of our gratitude for what he has done for us. True saving faith will demonstrate itself in obedient living (1 John 2:3-6).

“Formerly but now....” (2:11-16)

Paul wanted these Gentile Christians to remember their former life before God saved them. They were **“uncircumcised,”** demonstrating that they were not of the covenant people of God (v. 11). They were **“separate from Christ,”** without a relationship with God. They were **“excluded from citizenship in Israel,”** out of fellowship with God’s covenant people. They were **“foreigners to the covenants of promise,”** that is outside of God’s means of salvation. As such, they were totally **“without hope and without God in the world,”** a totally hopeless existence (v. 12). But God changed everything with his tremendous **“But now”** (v. 13). Now everything is different. **“In Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ”** (v. 13). God made his salvation possible “in Christ Jesus” and “through the blood of Christ.”

Christ has taken away the distinction between Jew and Gentile and **“has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility”** separating the two (v. 14). Paul referred to a barrier in the temple in Jerusalem that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Israelites. Signs were posted in Latin and Greek warning Gentiles not to enter any further under penalty of death. In fact, Paul himself was arrested in Jerusalem and charged with bringing an Ephesian named Trophimus into the restricted area (Acts 21:28-29). To Paul, this barrier in the temple was a striking example of how the Jewish law separated people. But God’s **“purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two”** (v. 15), so that no one would claim any longer “I am a Jew” or “I am a Gentile,” but instead claim a new title, “I am a Christian”. God has created a bond deeper than any ethnic or cultural distinction, because he has made them into **“one body,”** bringing reconciliation among them **“through the cross”** (v. 16).

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Your goal as the leader of this study is straight forward. You should see your purpose exactly as is stated at the beginning of this session:

Make sure that the following is clear for all your participants—older children through adults:

What does God’s salvation do for us? God’s salvation gives spiritually dead people a new life.

Those who do not yet know Jesus as Saviour will receive God’s gift of salvation through a personal act of faith.

Those who are saved will seek to live lives of obedience to God.

All will grow in their appreciation for the grace of God offered in our salvation.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Saved to a New Life

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text:

Ephesians 2:1-16

Background Text:

Ephesians 2:1-22

Main Idea:

God's salvation gives spiritually dead people a new life.

Question to Explore:

What does God's salvation do for us?

Teaching Aim:

The hearer will receive God's gift of salvation through a personal act of faith.

Those who are saved will seek to live lives of obedience to God.

The hearer will grow in their appreciation for the grace of God offered in our salvation.

Connect with Life:

As the group gathers, ask for a testimony from someone in the group whose life was radically changed when they converted to Jesus. Have them briefly describe their life before they handed control of their life over to Jesus, then the change that took place once they found forgiveness and a new life.

Explain: God's salvation gives 'spiritually dead people' a new life in Christ. This passage explains how this happens. Therefore, we will ask and answer the question, "What does God's salvation do for a lost person?"

Guide the Study:

1. God's salvation gives spiritually dead people a new life (2:1-7).

Request someone to read verses 1-3.

Look for opinions: "What does the term 'dead' mean to you?"

From the Teacher Preparation material, explain the three different kinds of "deaths" the New Testament describes.

Ask: "What kind of 'death' would the phrase 'dead in your transgressions and sins' indicate?" [spiritual death]

Encourage an answer: "According to verses 2-3, whose standards do spiritually dead people follow?"

Add: Who exercises control over their lives?

Then ask the following questions:

According to the end of verse 3, what do they deserve as a result of how they are presently living?" [God's wrath]

"Do spiritually 'dead' people have the ability to help themselves?"

What is their only hope?"

Have someone read verses 4-7.

Search the group for help with these questions:

"What did God do for these spiritually dead people (v. 5)?" [made them alive with Christ]

"Why would God do that (v. 4)?" [because of his love and mercy]

"What does the Bible call this 'love' and 'mercy' that has saved us (v. 5)?" [grace]

"What does the phrase 'raised us up' imply (v. 6)?" [resurrection]

Explain from the Teacher Preparation material the concept of ***'the heavenly realms.'***

2. God's salvation enables us to live a new life (2:8-10).

Have someone read verses 8-10.

Ask: “Does salvation come from our initiative or God’s (v. 8)?” [God’s initiative]

Also: “What should our response be to God’s grace (v. 8)?” [personal faith]

Explain to the group: As individuals made in God’s image, **every person** has the ability, the freedom, and the responsibility to **make their own** decisions about God. Every person must personally **believe**.

Ask: “What is the difference between a ‘gift’ and ‘works’ (vv. 8-9)?” [one is earned, the other is simply given]

Include this question: “According to verse 10, why did God ‘create us in Christ Jesus’?” [to do good works]

Urge confirmation with this: “Do we do good works in order to gain salvation?” [no]

Add: “Then, why do we do good works?” [because we have salvation; that is why God saved us]

Explain: Salvation is all of God’s grace, but the kinds of lives we live for him is from our gratitude for what he has done for us.

Have someone in the group look up and read Matthew 5:14-16.

Ask: “Who should receive the glory for the good works people see in our lives?” [God]

3. God’s salvation creates a new community of faith (2:11-16).

Have another person read verses 11-12.

Point out that Paul is speaking to the Gentile Christians in Ephesus, calling them to remember what they were before they knew Christ.

Check for answers:

“What terms did Paul use to describe the Gentiles before unconverted?”
[Gentiles, uncircumcised, separate from Christ, excluded from Israel, foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope, without God]

“What did ‘circumcision’ indicate?” [a part of God’s covenant people]

“What kind of relationship did they have with God’s chosen people up to this point?”

What kind of relationship did they have with God? What kind of hope did they have?"

Have someone read verses 13-16.

Pose this question: "What is Paul's point with the phrase, 'But now' (v. 13)?" [the situation has changed]

Then ask: "What has the blood of Christ done for those who were previously excluded from God's covenant people (v. 13)?" [brought them near]

Explain from the Teacher Preparation material about the dividing wall in the temple separating the Jews from the Gentiles.

Ask: "According to verses 14-15, what has Jesus done to the barrier between Jews and Gentiles?" [he has torn it down]

Search for an answer to this: "According to verses 15-16, what was his purpose in doing this?" [to create one new man out of the two]

Look for conclusions to this: "What is Paul's point?" [in Christ, ethnic, social, and racial distinctions no longer matter]

Then ask: "What is the "one new man" (v. 15) and "one body" (v. 16) that he is referring to?" [the Church (1:22-23; 4:15-16)]

Also: "What is God's intention for every believer?" [to be joined into a community of faith]

Encourage Application:

In light of what we have studied in God's word today:

- 1. What would God have me to believe?**
- 2. What would God have me to do?**
- 3. Is there a promise here I need to claim?**
- 4. Is there an example here I need to follow? Or to avoid?**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Saved to a New Life **Ephesians 2:1-16**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Two of the verses studied today are essential ones to remember when sharing the gospel with another person. Work on memorizing it in your time together.

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast Ephesians 2: 8-9

Other important verses to know in order to be able to share with others about Christ's salvation are John 3:16; Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Romans 5:8; Romans 10:13; Romans 10: 9, 10.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Saved to a New Life***
Ephesians 2:1-16**Beginning the Service:**

Sing songs about God's grace.

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

Khartoum, Sudan is a capital city circled into three smaller cities by the White Nile and the Blue Nile rivers which flow north into the River Nile. A city with an estimated population of more than 3 million people, Khartoum is home to people from 120 different languages or Arabic dialects. There are also a large number of refugees from surrounding countries. Great spiritual darkness covers Khartoum as the people live life working to earn a place in paradise. Practicing many religious rituals, they have no assurance or true hope of eternal salvation. Almighty God, Creator of the Universe, open the hearts of the people living in Khartoum that they may know the Truth.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for guiding worship.

Incomparable Riches Expressed in Kindness

Ephesians 2 is one of the most beautiful and meaningful chapters in all of Paul's writings and in the Bible itself. It is in fact, part of the incomparable riches which God has given to us.

In verse 6-7 Paul says ***And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 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.*** This amazing word picture shows us that we have been taken out of a sinful condition and allowed to reside with Christ in a spiritual realm and experience incomparable riches expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. This spiritual realm in which we exist refers to life after death, but it also describes the life we have with Christ here on this earth.

We are daily recipients of the incomparable riches expressed in kindness. Incomparable indicates that nothing else is like these riches. We cannot imagine anything as good, as complete, or as meaningful.

In April of 2011, many people all over the world watched the wedding of William and Kate in Westminster Cathedral. We might say that was an example of “incomparable” riches of history, beautiful architecture, clothing, and ritual. In earthly terms, it was for most of us a fairy tale, magical view into a life very different from our own.

We may keep the “magic” alive by re-watching scenes of the wedding on tape or on the internet. Many will follow the lives of this young couple as they are called upon to serve their country in the role of heir to the British throne.

In reality, however, it is far removed from the ordinary life that we live.

The “incomparable riches” given to us in Christ, however, form the very substance of the everyday life we live.

Some, though certainly not all, of what comprises these riches include glorious grace – freely given (Ephesians 1:6; 28-9); the privilege of doing good works (2:10); being full of hope (2:12); and having peace (2:14-18).

You may have something precious to you which you take out and examine from time to time. This may be antique dinnerware, beautiful jewelry, trophies won at athletic events, pictures of family and friends or trips taken. For each one of us, those precious things will be different. But all believers share in the incomparable riches listed above. Let us take a look at them one by one.

Our Bible study has led us to think about the glorious grace – freely given. Salvation came to us by our choice to believe in Christ. But it was God at work in our lives which enabled us to make that choice. Pause now to thank God for the circumstances which led to your accepting Christ as Saviour. Perhaps you were raised in a home where Christ was loved and honored and it was not a difficult choice for you to accept him as Lord of your life. Perhaps God intervened in your life in a miraculous way by bringing someone to share the gospel with you across cultural and religious barriers. Some have come to Christ through his speaking to them through dreams. Whatever your

reality, it was glorious grace freely given which led to salvation. Incomparable riches – God’s glorious grace.

We spoke earlier of William and Kate’s beautiful wedding. The task ahead of them as a couple is to represent the monarchy and the British people in a multitude of tasks many of which involve doing good works. It is the privilege and responsibility of their position.

Our royal position as sons of God gives us the privilege of doing good works as well. Many people in the world are involved in doing good works. That is not unique to us as believers. But our purpose is to glorify Christ in the works we do. If possible, we would do good works with no recognition for ourselves. And this will bring us great joy. It is part of the incomparable riches we have in Christ Jesus.

Another part of the riches we experience is the hope we know for our life on this earth and for the future. Hope fills our life as we experience suffering and pain. Hope fills our life as we anticipate the future for people we love – children, young people, newly married, older people. All of these experience challenges which are often difficult. It is with hope that we look forward to God guiding in the difficult choices they make, the pain they may experience, the disappointment that comes. It is with hope that we look toward our eternal experience of life after death. That hope sustains us in the death of those we love.

Closely related to this gift of hope is that of peace. Hope brings peace in difficulty. Among the many Biblical references to peace is that found in Philippians 4:7 ***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*** Most people have experienced difficult life experiences in which peace was not present. Beth Moore describes a lack of peace in her book on the fruit of the spirit as “churning, burning, tossing, turning,” How wonderful it is when God’s peace which transcends all understanding is present. It is truly a gift of incomparable riches given to us in kindness by Christ himself.

Let us read of these riches once more: glorious grace – freely given (Ephesians 1:6; 2:8-9); the privilege of doing good works (2:10); being full of hope (1: 12; 2:12); and having peace (2:14-18).

He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and that not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not of works so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

In order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

For he himself is our peace, who has made us two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of two thus making peace and in this body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to you those who are near.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 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.

Call to Commitment:

Sing

Grace Alone, The Worship Hymnal #112; CCLI # 2335524

Amazing Grace, The Worship Hymnal #104; CCLI # 22025 Public Domain

Concluding the Service:

Ask the group to stand and then read this benediction to close the service:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and fellowship in the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” Amen.

(2 Corinthians 13:14. The New English Bible)

Reader 1:

He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Reader 2:

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and that not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not of works so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Reader 3:

In order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

+++++(Cut here)+++++

Reader 1:

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

Reader 2:

For he himself is our peace, who has made he two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of two thus making peace and in this body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to you those who ere near.

Reader 3:

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 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.