

# Chapter 2

## 1. “*And you being dead in your trespasses and sins.*”

This is a literal translation of this verse. There is no justification for adding anything to it. Paul’s purpose in verses 1-3 is to set forth the fact that both Jews and Gentiles were spiritually bankrupt, dominated by Satan, and sinners by nature before God expressed his mercy toward them. These verses give us a brief glimpse into the dilemma of the human race, man’s total depravity, and his *inability to be other than what he is* apart from God’s grace.

The phrase, “and you being dead,” implies three things. First, the pronoun “you” (*υμας*) indicates that Paul is *writing to believers* who were once dead. Second, the present participle translated “being” (*οντας*) means that they were previously *existing* and *continuing* in a state of spiritual death. Third, the Greek noun for “dead” (*νεκρους*), as used here, refers to those who are *morally and spiritually dead* (Col. 2:13), to those who are alienated from the life of God (4:18).

Now let us consider the reason all men are dead prior to the bestowal of God’s mercy upon them. Speaking to them, Paul says, you were “dead in your trespasses and sins.” We may interpret this to mean that they were dead *in* their trespasses and sins (locative case), or that they were dead *by means of* their trespasses and sins (instrumental case). The locative case looks at them as being dead *in the sphere of* or *in the midst of* their sins. The instrumental case looks at them as being *put to death by means of their sins*, i.e., *their sins were what killed them* spiritually. Regardless of which interpretation we may prefer, one thing is certain, their trespasses and sins resulted in their spiritual death.

Paul’s emphasis here is not that they died as a result of Adam’s sin, as it is in Romans 5:12, but that they died *because of their own*