

Preliminary Considerations: God's Ultimate Agenda

§ 1 • God's Plan to Create One Eternal People

§ 1.1 • Paul's Gentile Readers Have Been Rescued by God's Plan for Extending Mercy to Sinners

PART 4

5 Now, as for you—you were dead in your transgressions and sins. 2•In these you formerly walked, in conformity to the time of this established order, in accord with the ruler over the power of the atmosphere in which we live, over the intangible force that is now at work among the sons of disobedience.

2:1-2

6 Among them we too all formerly conducted our lives by the desires of our *sarx*⁵, doing the things chosen by the *sarx* and its intentions. 2•We were, in truth, children of wrath by nature, even as the rest of mankind. 3•But God was rich in mercy! 4•Because of his abundant love with which he loved us—even though we were dead in our transgressions—he gave us Life together with the *messiah*.

2:3-5a

7 You have been saved by this very same grace!

2:5b

8 Indeed, in Messiah Jesus, he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the divine realm—meaning that, in the ages to come, he will exhibit the surpassing wealth of his grace consisting in his kindness toward us who are in Messiah Jesus.

2:6-7

9 Now, in view of your belief, you are individuals who have been saved by this grace. 2•And this does not stem from you—it is the gift of God. 3•It does not stem from your works, with the consequence that no one can boast. 4•For we are his handiwork, created—since we are in Messiah Jesus—for good acts that God had set out beforehand to the end that we would walk in them.

2:8-10

§ 1.2 • God's Plan for Rescuing Sinners Through His Messiah Combines Jews and Gentiles into One Eternal People of God

PART 5

10 Therefore, remember that, formerly, you Gentiles by birth—the ones called the “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision” (though it is merely by human hands on the physical body)—remember that—at that time, being outside the Messiah—you were excluded from the community of Israel and were strangers to the covenants of promise, you were without any hope and were without God in the world. 2•But now, being in Messiah Jesus,

⁵The word *sarx* means “flesh” (that is, the meat that hangs on the skeleton of a human or animal). However, it is typically used as a synecdoche for the present state of our physical existence as human beings, taken as a whole. That is, it stands for human existence in our flesh here and now. And here, as it most often does, it stands for the wickedness and depravity that characterize the moral condition that we are currently find ourselves in as human beings in our present physical and material state in the here and now. In this statement here, we could paraphrase “the desires of our *sarx*” as “the desires that arise naturally from who we are as natural-born human beings in our present state as sons of Adam.”