

## Ephesians 2:11-22

### Verses 11-13:

--(11) **Therefore** ties in this new angle of the conversation. What we were as individual sinners—dead to God and alive to sin—is seen in a wider scope as spiritually lifeless Gentiles and Jews.

--So Paul says **remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh**. . . Bringing up the reality of where these Gentile Ephesians were in their sins. In a different place of lostness than the Jew.

--The Jews possessed the physical sign of circumcision as a marker of their national connection to the promises of God. Jews had the physical sign but not the spiritual reality it signified.

--(12) Focusing on where God had found them—**at that time**—they were in a very different place than the normal Jew. He lists the realities:

1) **Without Christ:** They did not have the prophetic hope of a coming Messiah. They didn't know about Christ. \*So sad that many have never even heard!\*

2) **Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel:** They were not a part of Israel. They were foreigners to the expression of God's truth as seen in the life and law of His people.

3) **Strangers from the covenants of promise:** They were not a personal part of the promises and covenants (some conditional and some unconditional) that God made with His people. Interestingly enough, they didn't even know what God said about foreign nations or His intentions for the Gentiles.

4) **Having no hope:** They had no true sure thing to lean on. Nothing but the reality of sin and death. \*Communion with death and sin\*

5) **Without God in the world:** In this world lost to the true God and deceived by false gods who were nothing more than demonic spirits at best! \*I need God in my life!\*

--(13) **But now in Christ Jesus!** What a wonderful change has come to them. Those who were without God in the world, far from Him, and likely happy to have it that way, now not only have God in their life, they are **in Christ Jesus** and **brought near**.

--Where are they now? **You who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

--We have been **brought near**. Not born near. Brought near. How? **By the blood of Christ.**

--What is nearness to God? It is certainly not geography as God is all-present so He is not far from anyone of us.

--Nearness to God in the Bible is likeness and communion. The blood of Christ has made a way for sinful men and women to be forgiven and walk with God.

**\*1 John 1:7: But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.\***

--Because of Christ's work on the cross nearness is encouraged!

**\*Hebrews 7:19: For the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.**

**\*Hebrews 10:22: *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.\****

**\*James 4:8: *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.\****

#### **Verses 14-15:**

--Here Paul now describes the peace that we have with God and the church has with one another despite being Jew and Gentile. \*There was a literal dividing wall in Herod's temple, part of which was discovered in 1871 by French archaeologist, M. Clermont Ganneau. An inscription on it read: "No man of another nation may enter within this fence and enclosure round this temple: whoever such is caught within these precincts will have himself to blame if his death ensues."\*

--The work of Christ has ***broken down the middle wall of separation*** and ***abolished in His flesh the enmity*** or hostility between the two groups which stood because of the law (things such as circumcision; dietary law; etc.).

--Now the question—particularly for the Jew—was: *If the law was set up by God how could it be removed?* The answer is because the law was fulfilled in its purpose and penalty when the Son of God and Son of Man was born under it and carried its curse (**Gal. 3:13; 4:4-5**).

--Having done so, Jesus has made something new—a new creation, a new wineskin, ***one new man***. He is the firstfruits of this new creation and with the law and ordinances gone there is nothing left in the Church to separate Jew or Gentile.

**\*Galatians 3:28: *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.\****

--What is required of us now? Nothing more and nothing less than faith in Christ Jesus.

--Sadly, this was still a battle in the early church—and even still in the church today! God was working to bring redemption to the world through Israel but they became prideful in their outer forms and hostile against those they should have been lights to! \*Still the same with isolationist modern cults that always claim to be "the only real church."\*

#### **Verses 16-18:**

--**(16)** The offering of the literal body of Christ made possible the reality of the Mystical Body of Christ—us eternally connected to Him and to one another.

**\*Colossians 1:20-22: *And by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death...\****

--Both groups are reconciled first to God and subsequently to one another. The only reconciliation that actually works happens when hostile groups meet at the cross of Calvary. And all the glory for the final reconciliation of all things will be His.

--**(17)** The message of the cross is the message of peace to men (**Acts 10:36**).

**\*John 20:19-20: Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.\***

--Both Jew and Gentile—lost far off and near—needed this message of peace from God.

--(18) This **access** into fellowship with Him as Father is proof of our peace with God. The Greek word for **access** (*prosagoge*) is used only here, **3:12** and **Romans 5:12**. This is access in to the very presence of our Creator because of His grace and kindness in Christ Jesus.

--Here we see the Trinity in the work of the Son, fellowship with the Father, and activity of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity in theology, logic, and creed may be a dry topic but the Trinity in our personal and corporate experience (ignorant or not) is a blessing!

--We experience God as our loving Father and cry out to Him as sons and daughters. We experience the work of Christ on the cross and His grace in our lives through the communion of the Holy Spirit and the experience of new birth. May we grow in this more and more!

#### **Verse 19:**

--**Therefore**. . . because of all this, look at where we are! We are now **fellow-citizens** (which is the singular Greek word *sympolites* used only here in the NT) and **members** of a family.

--We are now an outpost of heavenly citizens in this world. Strangers and pilgrims who know they are simply passing through.

--Even more wonderful, we are members of the family of God. A family is even tighter than a nation of citizens. Blood ties are strong and a blessing. Eternal blood ties are stronger.

--I believe Paul is trying to capture the corporate and more personal aspects of our salvation in Christ Jesus. Either way, the church is not divided into first and second class individuals. \*These realities do not need to be created—they need to be lived out and acknowledged.\*

#### **Verse 20:**

--The Church has Christ as its Chief Cornerstone (**Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16; Mt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Cor. 3:11**) and sure foundation.

--Christ has built His work in the Church through His apostles and prophets. Apostles are clear but prophets seem to be more directly in reference to the NT prophets and not just the OT version. This NT office of prophet is referenced again in **3:4-5 + 4:11**.

--I personally believe the other Biblical writers which were not apostles (such as Luke, Jude, or the writer of Hebrews) could be considered prophets for the Spirit's insight and truth-telling through them.

--The Church of God is built upon and built up with the truth of God.

**\*1 Timothy 3:15: I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.\***

## Verses 21-22:

--In Christ, the entire structure of the Church, grows together harmoniously. Jesus brings about the Church's existence but also tends and watches over the Church's growth. **\*Rev. 1\***

--It is worth taking note of the phrase Paul uses here in reference to the building up of the Church. He says that this happens **in the Lord**. That phrase is used only here and in **1:15** in chapters 1-3 but is used at least 5 times in 4-6. The phrase **in Christ** is used over 20 times in chapters 1-3 but only once in 4-6 (**4:32**) in the same fashion.

--Why does this matter? When Paul is talking about the heavenly blessings and riches that are ours by standing in grace he speaks of us as being **in Christ**. When Paul is talking about our duty or response to this great love and grace he speaks of us as being **in the Lord**. The first requires our faith and the second our obedience.

--Christ as our Savior commands our faith. Christ as our Lord commands our obedience. God's grace and government are not to be confounded. He is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So the typical flow is that we begin this new life in faith and we grow in obedience.

--Notice that we are **being built together**. This is a description of the current tending activity of the Holy Spirit in the Church. This is happening all over the world!

**\*2 Corinthians 6:16: For you are the temple of the living God.\***

**\*1 Peter 2:5: You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.\***

--The presence of the Spirit is the presence of God. A Church service can rightly be considered "big" by the manifestation of the presence of God in the hearts of His people in that place—not by sheer numbers. The presence of God will be that of a Holy, Holy, Holy God in a holy temple.

*\*Tozer (Men Who Met God): "Is it possible that the Christian church is now satisfied to accept God as simply the God of history? Does it feel no need for individuals to meet God in living, personal experience? We do have God in history and Christ in history. But where is the emphasis on the need for a transforming encounter with the living God who transcends history? In what I have to say I may not be joined by any ground swell of public opinion, but I have a charge to make against the church. We are not consciously aware of God in our midst. We do not seem to sense the tragedy of having almost completely lost the awareness of His presence."\**

--The saddest thing that could ever be said about a church gathering is that it is no longer **a holy temple in the Lord** or **a dwelling place of God in the Spirit**.

--Ultimately, the eternal temple of God will simply be God dwelling with His people.

**\*Revelation 21:3+22: And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. . . But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.\***