

The Pearl of the Epistles – Ephesians

Holy Temple, a Habitation of God

Ephesians 2:19-22

Ephesians 2:19-22 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; **20** And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; **21** In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: **22** In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Introduction

The Apostle Paul wrote most of the New Testament. He is credited with writing fourteen books (including Hebrews which has some critics). He wrote two sets of letters to the churches at Corinth and Thessalonica. His letters to the church at Corinth contain a lot of information on what a church should and should not do.

Today Paul refers to the body as a “habitation of God”. In 1 Corinthians 6:19, he makes a plea for Christians to live a pure life because their bodies are the “temple of the Holy Ghost.”

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Paul details how bodies are special and should be treated as such.

Ye Are a New Family

Ephesians 2:19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Previously, Paul built the case that there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but a new “nation” called Christians. In those verses he extolled the blessing of peace that can only exist through reconciliation with God.

“*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners.*” Paul uses two terms, ‘strangers’ and ‘foreigners’ to describe their previous status. The word “stranger” means ‘a guest in a home’. Strangers were visitors with no rights or privileges. And “foreigners” were people who dwelt in the city and were accorded customary privileges as neighbors without the rights of citizenship.

In this verse he proclaims there is but one nation in the “household of God.” This new nation is the Church. The Apostle Peter also spoke of the change that takes place in the Christian:

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Mankind has been divided since the Garden of Eden because of sin, but the Holy Spirit of God unites Christians into one nation, one country.

“*...but fellowcitizens with the saints.*” The gentiles are no longer short term residents, but are now permanent dwellers with the Jewish saints. They belong like family.

“*...and of the household of God.*” Citizenship is not of this world or lands, but instead, citizenship is in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ye Are a New Building

Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

“*And are built upon the foundation.*” Throughout scripture, it is a common practice to compare the church to a building. And the grandest of all buildings was the Temple. In a city filled with poor, the Temple was extravagant. The average home was small in contrast the Temple mount is vast. Where life was filled with the worldly sins, the Temple was sacred as that is where God dwelt on earth.

The foundation is “*the apostles and prophets.*” God used ordinary men to spread the Gospel message to the world. The church, figuratively speaking, is built on the work of the apostles. The apostles were those that were with Jesus during His ministry, and saw His death, burial and resurrection. The prophets are those that proclaim divine revelation from God to man. It is upon the work of the apostles and prophets that the church was built.

“Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” While the Apostles and prophets built the church, they laid the foundation from a corner stone, and that cornerstone was Jesus Christ. The Gospel message preached by the Apostles and prophets was the atoning work of Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection.

The corner-stone is the most important component of buildings in New Testament times. The corner-stone must be made of the correct material and size otherwise the building would be insecure and not withstand the storms of time.

The corner-stone holds an honorable position in the building. Many times the building name, year built and testimonies of those involved are engraved on its surface.

Jesus being the chief corner stone meets and exceeds these requirements. Jesus is the Son of God and Savior of the world. His message has withstood the storms of time and is just as true and strong as it was in His time. He is unchanging and the church has not faltered but continues to grow.

The church’s chief corner stone displays for all to see. He holds the most honored place in the church. His church carries His name and testifies of Him being King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

The foundational stones for the Temple in Jerusalem weighed in excess of 160,000 pounds and still stand. The Temple mount was huge, 1,555,000 square feet, and 1,500 feet long. The foundation for such a massive structure had to be built on a precise foundation in order to stand the staggering weight.

Ye Are a Holy Temple

***Ephesians 2:21** In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:*

Now that the foundation is laid (by the Apostles and prophets) and that foundation based on accuracy of the chief corner stone of the Messiah, the building is ready to be erected and assembled. The building materials, the stones of the church, are the brothers and sisters in Christ. The building is built stone by stone, Christian by Christian.

My neighborhood is almost complete. There are just a few more homes to be built and then the community will be complete. I have enjoyed watching each house built. The clearing of the land, and laying of the foundation are exact sciences. After the foundation is completed, the carpenters and stone masons begin. I really am impressed with the work of brick layers. They can take stacks of loose bricks

and fit them to make a beautiful house. The work is precise. Each brick is fit to the spot and mortared into place. Once fit, the walls can withstand great storms, extreme heat and cold without failing.

“...groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” Paul now compares the building of the church, to the Temple. It is this mental picture that the Apostle Paul draws their attention. Like the building of the Temple, stone by stone, the church is built believer by believer. Each stone in the Temple was properly and expertly laid into position. Each believer is properly fitted in the church onto the foundation of Jesus.

The Temple is the most sacred place on earth for the Jew. That is where God dwelt, between the cherubim on the Mercy Seat. To draw a further comparison between the Temple and the believer is to understand that the believer is where the Spirit of God dwells.

Ye Are a Habitation of God

***Ephesians 2:22** In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

“*In whom ye also are builded together...*” Again, Paul reminds the brethren in Ephesus that they are where God now dwells by the Holy Spirit of God.

Conclusion

In this chapter Paul builds the case for the church being the habitation of God.

- Jews and Gentiles alike have been made alive because of Christ (2:5).
- Jew and Gentile have been raised together to sit in heavenly places (2:6).
- It is by God’s grace that Jew and Gentile believers are saved (2:8).
- Together, Christians are called to do good works (2:10).
- The Gentiles were in the past aliens and strangers from the covenants of God but not anymore (2:12-13).
- There have always been two races, Jew and Gentile, but now through Jesus, they are joined together as one (2:14)
- The joining of these two, Jew and Gentile, have brought peace instead of hostility (2:16).
- Jew and Gentile believers have access to God in the same way, through the Holy Spirit (2:18)
- Jew and Gentile believers are now fellow citizens (2:19).
- Jew and Gentile believers are the building implements of the Body of Christ, His church (2:20).

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