

## The Church God's Dwelling Place

**Text:** Ephesians 2:19-22

### Introduction:

1. Review: In verse 1-10 of this chapter Paul has described the salvation experience of individuals. Now he expands the theme further, exploring how that as believers we are not left by ourselves but are united with other believers into one body, the church.
2. Harold Hoehner summarizes it well, "Individual sinners have obtained the gracious gift of salvation on the basis of God's grace by faith. That is not the end. They are not left alone but are united with other believers into a corporate unity. In Eph. 2:11-22 Paul discussed this union of redeemed Jews and Gentiles in the church, Christ's body." Or as Harry Ironside puts it, "We have already examined the past, present and future of the individual believer. In this section the Apostle addresses converted Gentiles collectively and speaks of converted Jews collectively."
3. In Vs. 11-18 the primary figure used to describe the church was that of a body. Now the Apostle will now use three more figures to describe the church, majoring on the picture of a building.
4. Review of main outline

### **I. THE REALITY BEFORE THIS UNION (VS. 11-12)**

- A. Despised (Vs. 11)**
- B. Destitute (Vs. 12)**

### **II. THE RECONCILIATION OF THIS UNION (VS. 13-18)**

- A. The Payment for our Reconciliation (Vs. 13)**
- B. The Peace from our Reconciliation (Vs. 14-16)**
- C. The Proclamation of our Reconciliation (Vs. 17)**
- D. The Privilege of our Reconciliation (Vs. 18)**

### **III. THE RESULTS OF THIS UNION (VS. 19)**

- A. What we are no longer (Vs. 19a)**
- B. What we are now (Vs. 19b-22)**

We will now delve more into the third point concerning the blessed results of our union with Christ. "In these last four verses of the chapter the Apostle Paul lists some of the overwhelming new privileges of believing Gentiles." (William Macdonald)  
There are three figures/pictures the Apostle uses to discuss these privileges.

#### **I. A NEW CITIZENSHIP (VS. 19A)**

##### **A. What we are no longer (Vs. 19a)**

1. "Now therefore" = "Paul brings to their conclusion the statements made in Vs. 14-18, and draws from them the natural, comforting inference." (Expositors)
2. "no more strangers and foreigners" = all who were not citizens. This connects back to Vs. 12 where their previous life is described as them being "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise".

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### C. What we are now (Vs. 19b)

1. We are now “fellow citizens”. The word means “a native of the same town, figuratively, a fellow Christian.” (Strongs)
2. When we get saved we get a new citizenship! You are no longer a European, Asian, Indonesian, Englishman, Indonesian, Australian, Indian, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, African, American etc. you are a CHRISTIAN!

## II. A NEW HOUSEHOLD (VS. 19B)

### A. The Picture of the Household – ‘household’

1. ‘household’ = one’s own household, family. When used of persons it means “of one’s family, strictly of kinsmen, sometimes loosely of familiar friends.” (A.T. Robinson) “It implies a close intimate family” (Hoehner). The same word is translated “household of faith” (Gal. 6:10) and “those of his own house” (1 Tim. 5:8).
2. You might say “I am saved but I am not sure if I fit in or if I am a part of the church family.” The truth is if you are saved, you ARE a part of the family!

### B. The Person of the Household – “of God”

1. The church is none other than the household of the living God.
2. This truth should both comfort and challenge us. It should comfort us as we consider that we belong in God’s family. It should challenge us to have the right attitude to God’s church.

## III. A NEW BUILDING (VS. 20-22)

This is the figure Paul majors on in this section. Observe three truths about this spiritual building which is the church:

### A. The Foundation of the Building (Vs. 20)

1. The Support Stones – “the apostles and prophets” (Vs. 20a)
  - a. The Apostles – the office of the apostle was limited to those divinely appointed to that office. It was a temporary office for the establishment of the church. See Acts 1:21-22 for the qualifications of an Apostle. The church is built upon the foundation of Apostolic doctrine as found in the Epistles. It is interesting to note that the Apostles names are in the 12 foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:4).
  - b. The Prophets – a reference to the N.T. prophets as opposed to the O.T. prophets. Remember, the church was a mystery hidden from the Old Testament saints (Eph. 3:1-6). The prophet’s role was one of forthtelling and foretelling. Like the Apostle’s, their role was for that early church period before the canon of Scripture was complete. The gift of prophet is listed in Romans 12 alongside the other gifts such as exhortation, serving etc... The only sense in which one has this gift today is in the forthtelling aspect, the need for direct revelation no longer needed in light of the fact we now have the completed New Testament.
2. The Supreme Stone – “Jesus Christ himself” (Vs. 20b)
  - a. The fact the N.T. apostles and prophets are called the foundation in this passage does not in anyway diminish the

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position of Christ in the foundation of the church. In fact, He is the most important part of the foundation as an understanding of the role of the corner stone in an ancient building will demonstrate.

- b. The Cornerstone (as explained by Harold Hoehner): In ancient times it was the **first** stone laid. The builder was very careful to properly set this stone. "The cornerstone is the primary foundation-stone at the angle of structure by which the architect fixes a standard for the bearings of the walls and cross-walls throughout." (Lloyd) The cornerstone was the most important stone in the whole building. All the other stones were to be in line with it. It was that stone by which every other stone in the foundation and the superstructure was measured. Thus, the building of the new person, the church, must be in conformity with the cornerstone, Christ Jesus. The Apostles and prophets were to be correctly aligned with Christ and the same applies for the saints which form the walls of the building.
- c. The theme of Christ as the corner stone is a reoccurring theme in the New Testament:
  - i. Mark 12:10 Jesus said, "And have ye not read this scripture; **The stone** which the builders rejected is become the **head of the corner**:"
  - ii. Acts 4:11 "This is the **stone** which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the **head of the corner**."
  - iii. 1 Peter 2:6-7 "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the **stone** which the builders disallowed, the same is made the **head of the corner**,"
- d. Note: Christ is everything to the church. He is to be central in all things. He is our reference point and we need to regularly check that we are in line with Him and His will as revealed in His Word.

### B. The Formation of the Building (Vs. 21)

1. The Person of its formation (Vs. 21a)
  - a. "in whom" = refers back to Christ the corner stone (Vs. 20). Christ is the sphere of the church's development.
  - b. The church owes its existence to Christ. He is the one building it.
2. The Process of its formation (Vs. 21b)
  - a. "fitly framed together" = it means to join or fit together. Today stones in a building are fitted together with mortar but in that day, there was an elaborate process of cutting and smoothing the stones so that they fit exactly next to each other." (Hoehner) Christ is the Master Craftsman. He takes our lives as rough stones out of the valley of death and with loving tenderness and

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perfect skill, shapes and molds us into living stones and places us in His building.

- b. 'together' = this word occurs also in the next verse (Vs. 22). This growth process is experienced in the company of others. We see that God's way for you to grow is not to leave you isolated by yourself but to place you in one of His local churches. To grow as a Christian, you need to be a member of a local, Bible believing Church where the headship of Christ is embraced.
  - c. 'groweth' = this building is alive! It is a living organism. The word is in the present tense indicating an ongoing process.
3. The Purpose of its formation (Vs. 21c)
    - a. 'unto' = this word shows the purpose or direction of the growth.
    - b. "an holy temple" = 'holy' means that which is consecrated and set aside for God's use. The Apostle's use of the word 'temple' is significant when you remember that the Ephesians used to be connected with the unholy, vile temple of Diana.
    - c. "in the Lord" = the church is God's spiritual temple.
    - d. Note: The kind of church Christ is working to build is a church that is consecrated, distinct and separate from the world.

### C. The Function of the Building (Vs. 22)

"Verse 21 speaks of the building process whereas Vs. 22 speaks of the people who make up the building." (Hoehner)

1. The People of the church at Ephesus (Vs. 22a)
  - a. "ye are builded together" = Paul now moves from describing the process of how Christ builds his church to the Ephesian church in particular. We note that the local church is primary in this passage. Paul is writing to the Ephesian church, a local, visible assembly.
  - b. "builded **together**" = these former pagans and religious Jews were now united together in one local church body.
2. The Purpose of the church at Ephesus (Vs. 22b)
  - a. 'for' = points to the purpose for which Christ had formed the Ephesian church.
  - b. 'habitation' = the word means a dwelling place and has the sense of "a deep or settled dwelling." (Hoehner)
  - c. "of God through the Spirit" = the church is the dwelling place of God. He indwells the church in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

### Conclusion:

1. Find your place in the local church! Let God place you in the wall where he wants you.
2. How important is your church to you? If it is God's dwelling place, don't you think you should give it the preeminent place in your priorities each week?