

Made One in Christ – Part 3

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Paul expresses the unity of all believers in Christ as a temple for the dwelling of God
2. aim – to cause us to recognize our unified nature as followers of Christ despite our differences
3. passage – Ephesians 2:11-22

b. outline

1. The Predicament of the Gentile (Ephesians 2:11-12)
2. The Peace for the Gentile (Ephesians 2:13-18)
3. The Place with the Gentile (Ephesians 2:19-22)

c. opening

1. the **temple** metaphor in the next section of Ephesians (as *central* in the biblical storyline)
 - a. originally, as the tabernacle, constructed at the beginning of national Israelite history
 - b. constructed during the days of Solomon (although originally proposed by David)
 - c. abandoned and rediscovered again and again during the pre-exilic era
 - d. destroyed by the Babylonians in 586BC at the time of the exile
 - e. rebuilt under Zerubbabel by the remnant after their return from Persia (**the Second Temple**)
 - f. extensively remodeled by Herod the Great in the First Century BC
 - g. a significant aspect of the life of Jesus (**e.g.** his dedication, at age 12, his teachings & cleansing)
 - h. the destruction of the Second Temple under Titus in 70AD
 - i. the various symbolisms, analogies, and metaphors in the N.T. drawn from it (**e.g.** Revelation)
 - j. the present-day fascination with its rebuilding in Jerusalem (by Jews and dispensationalists)
2. the **lead-up** to the next section of Ephesians
 - a. in chap. 1, Paul prays that the Ephesians would fully come to understand the power of God
 - b. in chap. 2, Paul explains to the Ephesians how the power of God has come to bear over them
 1. in **vv. 1-10**, its **vertical** nature (with God), in **vv. 11-22**, its **horizontal** nature (with man)
 - c. Paul starts (**in vv. 11-12**) by specifically addressing non-Jews, and their **real separation**
 - d. Paul continues (**in vv. 13-18**) by announcing the **power of God** that has come to bear over them
 1. the work of God to break down hostility between disparate peoples, to bring real peace between them, to make them one, to accomplish *in Christ* a true unity regardless of background
 - e. **here**: Paul finishes (**in vv. 19-22**) with the **new reality** that flows from this work of Christ
 1. he uses three (3) imageries to describe (metaphorically) this new reality

III. The Place with the Gentile (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Content

a. our citizenship in a new kingdom (v. 19a)

1. “no longer strangers and aliens [sojourners]” = either a) complete foreigners or b) aliens allowed to stay under the assumption of a status “less” than full and regular citizens (**i.e.** the “undocumented”)
 - a. note how real this issue would be *for Paul* – as a Roman citizen appealing to Caesar
 - b. note how real this issue would be *for Jews* – no longer controlling a nation of their own
 - c. note how real this issue would be *for Gentile believers* – struggling as “outsiders” in the church
2. “fellow citizens with the saints” = the inclusion of all believers in a new kingdom in Christ
 - a. **note**: Paul *mentions* the kingdom of God in almost all of his letters (**commenting on Jesus**)
 1. its *advancement* is his life’s work and mission (**Col. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:18**)
 2. its *content* is the power of God in Christ over the world (**Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20**)
 3. its *inclusion* requires holiness and a repentance of sin (**1 Cor. 6:9f; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5**)
 4. its *purpose* is to draw together, in Christ, a *true* people (**Eph. 2:19; Col. 1:13; 2 Thess. 1:5**)
 - b. **reality**: there is a new kingdom being established in Christ, and the Spirit of Christ is drawing people from their “temporary” nations into a new citizenship, into a “higher” kingdom
 1. thus, we *defend* one another, we *protect* each other, we *serve* each other, we *build* together
 2. as dual-citizens, our allegiance is not to our *native* country, but to the citizens of our *new* nation
3. **principle**: the gospel of Jesus Christ establishes us together in utter loyalty to Christ **and to one another as citizens of the kingdom of God**

b. our membership in a new household (v. 19b)

1. **note:** whereas *national* identity is somewhat “disconnected,” *family* identity is much more intimate
2. “members of the household” (*oikeios*) = a relative; family member; lit. of the house
 - a. the idea of sons and daughters, but also including cherished family servants (treated as sons)
 1. **e.g.** Eliezer of Damascus as Abraham’s *presumptive* heir (**Gen. 15:2**)
 - b. the picture in chap. 1 of adoption (**v. 5**) and inheritance (**v. 14**) – the *family* of God (**i.e.** our Father)
 - c. **reality:** those in Christ belong to the intimate family of God, where Christ is the elder brother
 1. a *commonality* that gives us all a new “name” (**i.e.** family moniker)
3. **principle: the gospel of Jesus Christ establishes us together in a family relationship, which is built on the everlasting love of the Father for the Son, and (in him) to all in his extended family**

c. our inclusion in a new temple (vv. 20-22)

1. **note:** this is the imagery most carefully developed here by Paul (as a **metaphor**)
 - a. Paul describes here the **Third Temple** that God has commissioned to be built
 - b. parallel: **1 Peter 2:6-7**, imagery: **Matt 21, Mark 12, Luke 20**, prophetic core: **Psalm 118:22f**
2. the **metaphor** employed here:
 - a. its **foundation** (“*apostles and prophets*”) = the Word of God; his revelation as given through the men set aside to deliver it to the world; the *truth* of God about his eternal decree (**Eph. 4:11ff**)
 1. **i.e.** the gospel of Jesus is built upon *objective truth*, not *subjective feelings*
 - b. its **cornerstone** (“*Christ Jesus himself*”) = the anchor-block upon which the rest of the structure depends for its support, consistency, levelness, straightness, etc.
 1. **i.e.** Jesus was originally a “*stumbling block*” to the Jews (**Rom. 9:32**)
 - c. its **building-blocks** (“*being joined together*”) = the individual “*living stones*” (**1 Pet. 2:5**) being fashioned together by the Spirit of God into a “*growing*” structure, being “*built together*” (**v. 22**)
 1. **i.e.** a new temple being built out of *believers*, joined together from every walk of life
3. the **connection** assumed here – Paul is *clearly* referring to the **church**
 - a. he is writing to a church, he speaks in the *present tense*, and he is *clearly* commenting on Jesus’ words “*I will build my church*” (**Matt. 16:18**) – the **application** is to the *church*: local **and** universal
4. the **characteristics** of the (Israelite) temple (or tabernacle) pictured here:
 - a. where God resided (**i.e.** the Holy of Holies; the cloud of **Exo. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10f**)
 - b. where the people came to meet with God, to seek him and to worship him
 - c. where the sacrifices for sin and atonement came together (**i.e.** mercy seat)
 - d. where the priests of the Lord served him and taught the people his truth
 - e. where the wealth of the nation was stored (**i.e.** the golden interior; **1 Kings 7**)
 - f. where the nation of Israel found its identity and unity (**i.e.** as the social/cultural center of a people)
5. the **parallels** to the church discovered here:
 - a. the church is where God resides (**i.e.** where the Spirit dwells; **v. 22**)
 1. the elect are **permeated** by the Spirit’s presence, both alone and together
 - b. the church is the people who are God’s worshippers (**i.e.** in Spirit and truth; **John 4:21-24**)
 1. the elect have a life **dedicated** to worshipping God, as their very *existence*
 - c. the church is for those who have had permanent atonement made (**i.e.** **Heb. 10:12**)
 1. the elect find their satisfaction **only** in the completed work of Christ, not religion
 - d. the church is filled with the new priesthood (**i.e.** offering salvation to the world; **1 Pet. 2:5,9**)
 1. the elect offer **true and abiding** salvation (by faith) to others, in the preaching of the gospel
 - e. the church contains the wealth of God in redemption (**i.e.** the riches of our inheritance; **1:18**)
 1. the elect possess the fullness of God’s eternal wealth *in him*, sealed with his presence
 - f. the church is the institution through which God’s redemptive plan is clearly identified
 1. the elect are the people at the center of God’s decree, set apart from the world in his image
6. the **application** to the church needed here:
 - a. **the goal of the gospel isn’t just to “break down dividing walls,” but to create something new and different, to form us together into something never before seen in this world**
 1. the **Third Temple** has a beauty that infinitely surpasses the previous ones (**Matt. 24:1-2**)
“Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, ‘You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.’”
 - b. **our relationship as “living stones” in the Third Temple is not just to “tolerate” one another, but to grow together into the true magnificence of a structure holding the very presence of God himself and through which his glorious gospel goes out into the world**
 1. brought together from disparate backgrounds, stripped down to our lowest common denominator (rebel sinners in need of mercy), and added to this magnificent structure ...
 2. our relationship to one another is *far, far more* than just “getting together on Sunday”