

The Book of Ephesians
Ephesians 2:11-22
Session Twenty: One New Man

Previously, in vv. 1-10, Paul contrasted our previous-to-salvation condition with our after-salvation condition:

- Our previous-to-salvation condition – vs. 1
 - We were (spiritually) dead in trespasses and sins
- Our previous behavior – vs. 2
 - We walked according to the course of this world (CoW)
 - We walked according to Satan
- Our previous identity
 - We were, by nature, the children of wrath – vs. 3

Yes, God loved us while we were yet sinners, but once we are in Christ, God loves in a different way and to a greater degree than before. Before we were saved, God loved us based on us being His creatures who are made in His image. Therefore, God seeks to reconcile us unto Himself.

Once we put our faith in Christ's work on the cross, God began to exhibit His great love for us – vs. 4.

His love for us now is based on who He has made us to be in Christ. Therefore, His love for us in Christ, is unchanging, (it will be the same tomorrow as it is today) unconditional (God's love for us is not based on anything other than us being in Christ), and absolute (which means it is complete, entire and to its fullest degree (Oxford English Dictionary)).

That means that God cannot love you for a better reason than He does right now (that you are in Christ, His perfect Son) and He cannot love you more than He does right now.

While our love for God can increase over time, God's love for us cannot, for it is already at its fullest extent. Even throughout the ages to come, our love for our heavenly Father will continue to increase and abound.

Now, let's look at an outline of the vv. 5-10.

- Our new position in Christ
 - We are quickened – vs. 5 (made alive spiritually, we are now connected with God by His Spirit taking up residence in our spirit)
 - We are baptized into His death (breaking sin's hold over us and removing our old identity in Adam) – Romans 6:3

- We are raised up together with Christ (so we can walk in newness of life; His life in us) – vs. 6
- We sit together with Christ in HP (so that Satan's power and authority over us is broken) – vs. 6
- We are His workmanship (He is working to conform us to the image of His Son through whatever takes place in our life) – vs. 10

God has done all these things because of "His great love where with He loved us." These spiritual blessings are given to us based on His love for us and not on our merit – vs. 4. That means every saved person gets all of them.

All of this and more is now ours because we have been saved by grace through faith without works of any kind, at any time – vv. 8-9.

Now, let's pick up and read the next section. As we do, take notice that there is more contrast coming up here too.

Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; ¹² That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; ¹⁵ Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; ¹⁶ And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: ¹⁷ And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Paul starts off with a particular time in view; "time past."

Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye *being in time past* Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

The "time past" is about God's prophetic program with Israel up to and including the one-year Extension of Mercy (EOM) following Christ's death, burial and resurrection. So, that is the timing that Paul is referring to in vv. 11-12.

But who is Paul talking to, who does Paul have in mind when he writes about "time past?" He is talking about Gentiles and their condition before God back during Israel's program.

Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past **Gentiles in the flesh**, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

Gentiles before the dispensational change

- Who we were – vs. 11
 - Gentiles in the flesh (Uncircumcision)

This is not talking about our flesh in the sense of 1 Corinthians or Romans (not walking after the flesh), but it is talking about human heritage and ancestry. To be a Gentile in the flesh is describing everyone who is not a descendent of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

While Gentiles could be saved by becoming a proselyte to Judaism, Gentiles were at a distinct disadvantage for several reasons:

1. Gentiles received no direct revelation from God, as Israel did – Romans 2:14. And while Gentiles did have a conscience, a law is far more convicting than a conscience which can be weakened or seared.
2. The Jews considered Gentiles to be unworthy of God's blessings. While that was true for everyone, under the covenant, Israel was offered a way to be blessed by faithful obedience to the law. The Jews used this advantage as an excuse to despise the Gentiles, refusing to welcome them into their faith.
3. The Gentiles were the Uncircumcision. This is more than just name-calling. Under God's dealings with the nation of Israel, circumcision was the requirement for participation in the covenant (Genesis 17:13-14).

- Consequences of being Gentiles in time past – vv. 11-12
 - We were without Christ

Only Israel was promised a Messiah (Christ).

Matthew 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

While Gentiles could come under the protection and blessing of the covenant through Israel, they had no direct access to the Messiah.

- We were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel

In this sense, the commonwealth is the “general good, welfare or prosperity of the nation as a whole.” This “general good” is the various blessings of God promised only to Israel.

- We were strangers from the covenants of promise – which means that the covenants did not pertain to Gentiles in the time past of Israel’s program.
- We were without hope
- We were without God in the world
- We were far off (from God, in the way of God not dealing directly with Gentiles.)

Ephesians 2:13 **But now** in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

The “but now” is the dispensational change.

- Consequences of the Dispensational Change – vv. 13-17
 - Gentiles are made nigh – that Gentiles have been made near in that now, in this dispensation of Gentile grace (DoGG), they can come to God directly through Christ, with nothing standing in their way.

Being a Gentile is no longer a disadvantage as we now have our own apostle and message (Romans 11:3).

Circumcision in the flesh is no longer an issue – Philippians 3:3. In fact, none of the previously mentioned disadvantages apply to us Gentiles today, in this DoGG.

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

- Christ is our peace (with Jews)

Ephesians 2:14 **For he is our peace**, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

Paul is revealing God’s hidden plan to create peace between Jews and Gentiles and form a new entity – the body of Christ. And how has He done this? By the following:

- Christ has made both Jews and Gentiles one – in the sense that God is including us in His direct dealings
- Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile

This means that Christ made the law useless as a way of access to God. The Law of Moses (particularly the ordinances) set Israel apart from Gentiles. The Gentiles who were not proselytes did not participate in the sin offerings and were considered “sinners of the Gentiles.” On every point, the law made Israel different from Gentiles.

- Christ abolished the enmity of the commandments

Ephesians 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

- Christ preached peace to Jew and Gentile – vs. 17
- Saved Gentiles in this DoGG – vv. 14-22
 - are part of the one new man

The fact that Jews and Gentiles together now make up this “one NEW man” shows us that Gentiles were not simply added to the Jewish program that was in existence from the OT. Gentiles did not become spiritual Jews.

The joint-union of Jews and Gentiles was not a continuation of the kingdom program for Israel.

Gentiles:

- have access to God by His Spirit
- are fellowcitizens of God’s kingdom
- are of the household of God
- are part of an edifice which God is building with Jesus being the chief corner stone
- are growing to be an habitation of God through the Spirit

Ephesians 2:19 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.

I want us to talk about that last sentence which runs from vs. 19 to vs. 22.

We know about Solomon’s temple. Solomon wondered if the God of heaven could dwell on the earth in a “house” which men built.

In this DoGG, God’s temple today is a building not made with hands, as He dwells in men, the very bodies of every believer in Jesus Christ.

In the final verses of Ephesians 2, Paul describes the body of Christ in terms of a building, God’s temple. As he does this, he will talk about the foundation, the framework and the filling of this temple.

The foundation is found in vs. 20.

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

Which apostles and prophets is Paul referring to? Upon examination, it cannot be the “twelve apostles” and the Old Testament (OT) prophets, as most would assume. Why not?

1. Paul tells us that he laid the foundation in this DoGG.

1 Corinthians 3:10 **According to the grace of God which is given unto me**, as a wise masterbuilder, **I have laid the foundation**, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Paul did not say he was the foundation, he said the foundation was Jesus Christ. And, he says that he laid the foundation. Christ is the underlying foundation and on Him is built the two programs of God; the earthly and the heavenly.

The earthly kingdom program was spoken about from the beginning. The heavenly mystery program was kept secret from the foundation of the world.

2. The “apostles and prophets” cannot be the 12 and the OT prophets because in Ephesians 4, it says that the apostles and prophets which pertained to the body of Christ were given after the ascension of Christ.

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and **gave gifts unto men**.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

These were given after Christ’s ascension, not before; therefore it could not have been the “12” or the OT prophets.

3. Look at the order in which these offices are mentioned. If it is about the “twelve” and the OT prophets, the bible mentions prophets first and apostles second, since that is the order they appeared in history.

Luke 11:49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them **prophets and apostles**, and *some* of them they shall slay and persecute:

2 Peter 3:2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by **the holy prophets**, and of the commandment of **us the apostles** of the Lord and Saviour:

See the order? It makes sense seeing that in Israel’s program, the prophets came first and then the apostles.

But in the grace program, Paul says that the apostles came first, and then the prophets.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, **first apostles, secondarily prophets**, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

So, when they are listed together in Paul's epistles, the apostles are listed first and the prophets come after.

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

The apostles and prophets of the DoGG are located in the foundation of this "temple" to which Paul refers in Ephesians 2:20-22. That is to say, these apostles and prophets were given at the beginning of the DoGG to "lay the groundwork" (receiving revelation from God and establishing early local churches).

Now that we have a completed revelation of scripture, there is no more need for these foundational gifts. We will see more of this in chapter 4 of Ephesians.

The framework of the temple is found in vs. 21.

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

Here, Paul is talking about individuals being "framed together" in order to form the whole of the temple collectively. Paul is describing the building up of the larger temple with building blocks of individual members.

There is a lot more we could say about this, but let's move on to the filling of the building.

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

The amazing thing here is that God Himself will fill this building. He is in us individually but He will also be in us corporately.

And this brings us to the end of Ephesians chapter 2.