



The Book of Ephesians

Ephesians 2:14-26

Session Twenty-one: God's Fitly Framed Building

Ephesians 2 is a chapter of contrast. The first 11 verses contrast who we were before we trusted Christ with who we are after we trusted Christ.

In Ephesians 2:11-22, we have another contrast. This time, it is comparing who we Gentiles were back in Israel's program with who we are now in this dispensation of gentile grace (DoGG).

Verses 11-12 give us the time past of us being the Uncircumcision.

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:

We covered all the elements of vs. 12 in session 20. Verse 13 gives us the transition into the "but now" time of the DoGG.

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

And now we take up with vs. 14ff.

Ephesians 2:14 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.

These five verses are talking about the distinction between the circumcision and the uncircumcision being removed by Christ's work on the Cross. The ordinance of circumcision given to Abraham in Genesis 17:10-14, and other laws that made Israel God's special people (like dietary laws in Leviticus 11), have been nailed to the Cross.

Colossians 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

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:

- **He is our Peace**

Christ is the basis of peace between Jew and Gentile. In other words, no matter what distinctions may exist between believers, those do not matter. The bond and kinship we have in Christ is what God is concerned with.

- **He has made both one**

Israel has fallen to the level of the Gentiles and God is not working with them as a nation today. Therefore, God can have mercy on individual Jews and Gentiles.

What Christ has done on the Cross is so great that circumcision does not matter in the body of Christ. What does matter? The only thing that matters is “faith that works by love.”

Galatians 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

- **He has broken down the middle wall of partition**

The distinctions between Jew and Gentile have been done away with and replaced with Jew and Gentile being made one in Christ. This does not mean we Gentiles are now an extension of Israel's program; we are not. There has been a cessation of that program and God is now doing something new and previously unknown.

The “wall” that Christ has broken down is that which previously separated Jews and Gentiles. This barrier symbolized the Gentile's lack of access to God, but Christ has done away with that by His work on the Cross. God no longer sees Jew or Gentile as in Israel's program, but once we are “in Christ” God only sees the members of Christ's body.

- **He abolished the enmity**

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;

Does this mean God has done away with the Law? No. The word “abolish” here means to render the law useless or idle. The law still plays a role in convicting sinners.

1 Timothy 1:8 **But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;** ⁹ Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

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.

- **He made in Himself of twain, one new man**

This is the new entity that God created by virtue of the cross-work of Christ. I believe this is what Paul was referring to in 2 Thessalonians 2.

2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until **he** be taken out of the way.

The “he” who is holding back the man of sin from being revealed is the “one new man.” When “he” is taken out of the way (at the Blessed Hope)...

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And **then shall that Wicked be revealed**, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

...then the antichrist will be revealed. There is a question about which revealing this is talking about, and I tend to think of his coming on the world scene, and not his being revealed in his true character as the son of perdition.

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 Old Testament (OT). Gentiles did not become spiritual Jews.

- **He reconciled both in one body**

Ephesians 2:16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

That one body is a reference to the body of Christ. Every Jew or Gentile who has believed Paul’s gospel is made to be a part of the body of Christ with no more distinctions between them.

Notice it says “**by the cross**,” not “**at the cross**.” That may sound like a trivial issue, but “at the cross” gives credence to the idea that everyone’s sins were forgiven at Calvary. “By the cross” sees that forgiveness being given to those who are “in Christ” on the basis of the cross. The cross is the basis for forgiveness, but not the timing of when people receive it.

- **He preached peace to both**

Ephesians 2:17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

This is not referring to the earthly ministry of Jesus, for at that time, He taught...

John 4:22 ...we know what we worship: for **salvation is of the Jews.**

It was only after Israel’s rejection of Christ and His kingdom in the opening chapters of Acts that God turned to the Gentiles and offered reconciliation to Jews and Gentiles alike through Paul’s message of grace.

- **He gave us access unto the Father**

This is an access that is unparalleled because it is “by one Spirit.”

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

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 OT prophets, as most would assume. Why not?

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

If Paul laid the foundation, then it could not be the OT prophets and the “12” who walked with Jesus, as Paul wasn’t even saved yet.

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 the apostles and prophets, with Jesus being the chief corner stone. Paul says that he laid the foundation (vs. 10). Christ is the underlying foundation and on Him are built the two programs of God; the earthly and the heavenly. But here in Ephesians 2, what is being built is a “holy temple in the Lord” which is a reference to the body of Christ. We are being “fitly framed together” into a habitation of God through the Spirit. We are built together into a single body.

2. The “apostles and prophets” of vs. 20 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.

There are two sets of apostles and prophets; one for the prophetic program and one for the mystery program. So, which one is Paul referring to in vs. 20? As I said in the point above, it cannot be the OT prophets and the “12,” because the ones Paul refers to in Ephesians 4 did not exist prior to 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, as a body.

Just as an application, do not let this just be information that you hear today and do nothing with it. Study these things, get familiar with them, and let them grow your love and appreciation for your heavenly Father. Integrate them into your prayer life.

And this brings us to the end of Ephesians chapter 2. Thank you for joining us today for this study.