

Bible Basics Conference 2023

The House of God in Ephesians 2

Ephesians 2:19-22

19. So then ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but ye are fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God,
20. being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the corner-stone,
21. in whom all the building fitted together increases to a holy temple in the Lord;
22. in whom ye also are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

Paul at Ephesus

- Aquila & Priscilla as well as Apollos active there.
- **First prominent separation from the Jewish synagogue** system took place there (Acts 19:9).
- Paul spent 3 years there (Acts 20:31).
- Such an effect was produced through Paul's preaching there that worship of Diana (or Artemis) at her temple (one of the ancient wonders of the world) was seriously reduced and led to a riot (Acts 18:18-21).
- On his return from the third missionary journey he sent for the elders of Ephesus and gave a farewell address (Acts 20:16-38).

Ephesus was thus an important centre of Christianity where Paul's ministry was preached in power and accepted by a large number of former idolators of Diana.

The Ephesian epistle

- Written while Paul was in prison (AD 60-62).
- Not a corrective epistle (one of two such, along with Romans).
- Expounds the mystery of the church (e.g. 3:1-12) and therefore not co-written with any other saint, as it was a truth directly revealed by God to Paul.
- The House of God in Ephesians is therefore presented according to the divine thought of God, and so only what is real is contemplated.

So it is a good epistle to consider first if we look at a subject that runs throughout Scripture. We need to know what it is in God's thoughts before we can consider it in responsibility in the hands of man.

The Church in Ephesians 2

In this chapter the church is spoken of in 3 ways:

- 1. The Body of Christ** (see 1:23, 2:11-18). Composed of Jew and Gentile believers united to Christ in glory, forming one new man for the display of all that Christ is. “As His body, the church is His fulness, filled with all that He is in order to express all that He is.”
- 2. The Temple of God** (2:21). Composed of all saints of this dispensation, from Pentecost to the Rapture. For the **display** of the excellencies of God to mankind. It is viewed as increasing; “it *grows* to a holy temple in the Lord” and will not be complete until the Lord comes.
- 3. The House of God** (2:22). Composed of all saints on earth at any given time, forming the **habitation** of God for:
 - (a) the blessing of His people, and
 - (b) for a testimony to the world.
 - It has also a local aspect – the saints at Ephesus were God’s habitation (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16).

We need to distinguish these different aspects if we are to get the full picture of what the assembly is.

Introduction – Ephesians 2:10-12

“... For **we are his workmanship**, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has before prepared that we should walk in them. Wherefore **remember that *ye*, once**

1. nations in the flesh,
2. who are called uncircumcision by that called circumcision in the flesh done with the hand;
3. that ye were at that time without Christ,
4. aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,
5. and strangers to the covenants of promise,
6. having no hope,
7. and without God in the world: ...”

What we were before we were saved (7 points).

Introduction – Ephesians 2:13-18

“... **but now** in Christ Jesus *ye* who once were afar off

1. are become nigh by the blood of the Christ.
2. For *he* is our peace,
 - a. who has made both one,
 - b. and has broken down the middle wall of enclosure,
 - c. having annulled the enmity in his flesh,
 - d. the law of commandments in ordinances,
3. that he might form the two in himself into one new man, making peace;
4. and might reconcile both in one body to God by the cross, having by it slain the enmity;
5. and, coming, he has preached the glad tidings of peace
 - a. to you who were afar off, and the glad tidings of peace
 - b. to those who were nigh.
6. For through him we have both access by one Spirit to the Father. So then (*i.e. in conclusion*)
7.
 - a. ye are no longer strangers and foreigners,
 - b. but ye are fellow-citizens of the saints,
 - c. and of the household of God, ...”

What we are now “in Christ Jesus” (7 points).

Introduction Ephesians 2 – Summary

- A work of grace – see vv. 11-12.
- A work of Christ – see v. 13.
- Collective – see vv. 14-17 (Jew and Gentile together).
- *The House is a place where God the Father is fully known – see. vv. 18-19.*

The House of God in Ephesians (A)

“So then ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but ye are fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, ...” (2:19)

- A wonderful change, the work of God (no longer strangers and foreigners).
- Unity (fellow-citizens).
- Set apart for God (saints).
- Together with all saints form a dwelling place for God in this world.

The House of God in Ephesians (B)

“... being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the corner-stone, ...” (2:20)

- **Substance** of the House – saints (i.e. all believers).
- **Foundation** of the House – the New Testament apostles and prophets.
 - Their teachings (the New Testament epistles).
- **Corner-stone** of the House – Jesus Christ.
 - All takes character from the Lord Jesus.

Homework

- **Christ is... 1. The Foundation** (Matt. 16:18) – The assembly (as built by Christ) is built upon the truth of His Person as the Son of the Living God.
- **Christ is... 2. The Cornerstone** (Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20) – This sets all the angles in the building, it gives character to everything; in the NT it is revealed that this means that Gentiles as well as Jews are bound together through His work.
- **Christ is... 3. The Topstone** (Zech. 4:7; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:6-7) – This shows the building is straight, that the work is perfect; it puts the seal upon the work and demonstrates His wisdom and glory in bringing this work to pass.
- **Christ is... 4. Son over the House** (Heb. 3:1-6). It is His. No other mind is to be seen other than His.

The House of God in Ephesians (C)

“... in whom all the building fitted together increases to a holy temple in the Lord; ...” (2:21)

- **Purpose** of the House – Holy Temple. Display of Christ’s glory, God’s wisdom. A place where God’s greatness and holiness is seen.
- It grows (as saints are saved) to a holy Temple – in addition to a House, or dwelling-place, there are thoughts of display (cf. Matt. 24:1), and of approach in worship.

The House of God in Ephesians (D)

“... in whom ye also are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.” (2:22)

- “In Christ” (a precious and characteristic expression in Ephesians, used, with slight variations, ~20 times).
- All believers form ‘bricks’ in this building, fitting perfectly together.
- The purpose of the House is a dwelling-place for God on earth by the Holy Spirit.
- A verse where all 3 Persons of the Godhead are mentioned – showing a very precious and important truth.

Summary of Some Practical Points on the House of God from Ephesians 2

- Unity amongst the saints should mark us (v. 19).
- God's order is to be submitted to (v. 20).
- Christ is the Corner Stone – everything must be measured in relation to Him (v. 20).
- Holiness is to mark us (v. 21).
- “In the Spirit” – there should be room given for the Spirit to work and to lead us (v. 22).

The End