

Ephesians 2:19-22 by Wayne Barber

PREVIOUS

Ephesians 2:19: I'M SO GLAD I'M A PART OF THE FAMILY OF GOD!

by Dr. Wayne Barber

NEXT

I'm so glad that I am a part of the family of God. You know we sing that, but after you study Ephesians, you don't just want to sing it, you want to find a hill someplace and shout to the world, "I'm so glad I am a part of the family of God!" Remember, all of the words of Paul are written within the backdrop of cult worship. Ephesus in Asia Minor, at that time, was one of the key cities in the world. Thousands of people would come every year, even in the first century. The rivers had begun to silt and therefore, the seaport was moving further and further out, but that didn't cause the city to decline whatsoever. What was the

big deal? Why would everyone want to come to Ephesus? You see, that is where the Temple of Artemis, or Diana, was located. That was the center of cult worship for the goddess Artemis.

That is in the background as Paul writes the Ephesians. Paul is saying to this group of Christians, this small remnant of believers there, "You don't have to worry about anything concerning Artemis. You are rich in your salvation."

Chapter 1, beginning in verse 3, talks about the riches of our salvation:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

There is not one thing we lack in Jesus Christ. He is telling this to a group of Christians who are in the minority in an area where the occult worship is so strong.

In verse 4 he says,

"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world."

Verse 5 says,

"He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Him-self"

Verse 7 says,

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, [We have been purchased off of the slave block by the shedding of Jesus' blood] the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

In verse 9,

"He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him."

In verse 11,

"we have obtained an inheritance."

In verse 13,

"you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise."

And on and on and on. Chapter 1 is talking about the riches of our salvation.

In Chapter 2 we find the reasons for our salvation. In verses 1-3 we were helpless, dead in our trespasses and sins. Paul is speaking to Gentile believers. He is saying, "There was a time you were dead." Dead people can't do anything. They can't save themselves. Therefore, God had to do what He did. In verses 4-10, we find what He did. Verse 8 says,

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

So we were helpless, absolutely helpless. That is one of the reasons for our salvation.

Secondly, we were hopeless. It says in verses 11 and 12 of Chapter 2,

"Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by

the so-called 'Circumcision' which is performed in the flesh by human hands— remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

You see, we were helpless, and we were hopeless.

There is another reason for our salvation. I believe it is implicit in verses 13-22 that we were homeless. In regard to God and eternity, we were homeless. We were not of His household. We find now that we are members of His family. We have a home, an eternal home with God Himself. Since we were homeless, God has given us a sense of belonging. I am so glad I am a part of the family of God.

Well, verse 19 begins to summarize the result of all that God has done, this brand new identity that He has given to you and me. As we saw back in verses 14 and 15, this is all brand new. He has made us into one new man. He didn't make the Gentile a Jew; He didn't make the Jew a Gentile. This is a brand new race of people. It starts with Jesus Christ and Him alone. In Him we are a brand new creation, not known by external religious practices, as the Jew; not known as the Gentile; but known as now in Jesus Christ. We have our identity only in Him.

Verse 19 begins to describe that brand new identity. He says,

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens."

Now these two words are similar, but they are uniquely different. The word "stranger" there, *xenos*, speaks not of citizenship of a nation as the next word does. It speaks of family relationships. He says, "There was a time when you were not a part of the family. There was a time you were a stranger. You were a foreigner, a visitor, a guest, but you were not part of the family." That doesn't mean they didn't exist around people who belonged to the family of God. It meant that they had nothing in common with them. They were not blood kin. They had not been washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, I existed for a long time as a stranger to the people of God. I was a minister. I was not a pastor, thank the Lord. In His grace and sovereignty, He wouldn't allow that. I was in youth and recreation work for years, thinking I knew Jesus. I did not know Him. One night, I prayed to die. I am so grateful God doesn't answer all my prayers. The next morning I was still alive. I woke up at about a quarter to six, and Diana said, "Go in there and talk with God. Something is going on." I went in the den, got on my knees and said, "God, something is so drastically wrong inside of me." I couldn't understand what it was. I went back to a time when I was young and walked an aisle because I didn't want to go to hell. I mean, who wants to go to hell? I had never seen myself as a sinner, ever in all of my life. It wasn't long before I said, "God, would you show me what you see about me?" For almost three hours I cried while God showed me the filth of Wayne Barber. I have never been the same since that time. Isn't it interesting that I could be a minister in a church and be a stranger to the family?

I wonder how many people today have a relationship with the church but have nothing in common with the people of God because they have never been born into the family. It's not a club. You don't join it. It is a family, and you have to be born into the family. People have something in common when they are in the family. Paul says, "You Gentiles were once strangers. You weren't part of the family. You didn't belong to the family of God." The second thing he uses here moves it to a national citizenship. There is a difference in both words. They communicate two different things. The family communicates relationship.

The next word communicates responsibility or citizenship. Paul says, "you are no longer strangers and aliens." The word "aliens," *paroikos*, is the word that means you are not a citizen of a country. In other words, you are a foreigner to the extent that you are here on a passport or on a visa.

Paul says, "You Gentile believers used to be that way with God's family. You are no longer that way. You are now totally re-identified in Jesus Christ."

Verses 19-21 are just power packed. Verse 19 says we belong to the family. Verse 20 says we are built upon the foundation.

Verse 21 says we are being fitted into the fixtures. We belong to the family. Do you know, if you are a Christian, you belong to the family of God? Eternally in Jesus you belong. You have a brand new identity. That's what he is trying to tell these Ephesians. You've got everything that you need in Jesus Christ.

Well, there are two things that are involved by belonging to the family. I've already mentioned them, but Paul puts them in reverse order in the last part of verse 19. One involves responsibility, and the other involves relationships. Isn't it interesting that at the beginning of the verse he starts off with relationships and ends with responsibility, but when he begins to work it out, he reverses it? He starts with responsibility and then ends up with relationships. You know, that's the way it always is in the Christian life. I am responsible to God first. I am a citizen of His Kingdom. I must obey Him in order to enjoy any privilege He gives to me. Once my

relationship is right with Him and responsible before Him, then it works itself out in my relationships to others. That is exactly what it does. He changes the words around and starts it a different way.

Look at the last part of verse 19:

"but you are fellow citizens with the saints."

First of all, we are fellow citizens of a holy nation. That's what it means to belong to God, to the family of God. We belong, but first of all we must know we are fellow citizens of the family of God. We are part of a brand new kingdom in Jesus Christ. We are citizens of the holy nation. As citizens we have the privileges, but as citizens we really have responsibilities. The Greek word is *sumpolites*. It comes from two Greek words, *sum*, which means together with, and *polites*, which means citizen. Now any time you talk about citizenship you always have, implicit in that, privileges. But you also have responsibility. Do you understand that? What are the privileges of being a citizen of His kingdom? Go back and study chapters 1-3. What are the responsibilities? They are in chapters 4-6. We have responsibility as being

a citizen.

You know, it is very difficult to preach this truth any more, because in America we have made Christianity a religion. We used to be aliens to God and to His kingdom. We were of the household of Adam and of this world. But now, because of Jesus, we have been lifted out of that. Now we are alien to the world, and we are a part of God's kingdom. To preach that in a society that has married the world with the church is very difficult. It is even difficult to provide a balance. I can't do it. God has to do that. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. Does that ever bother you? It bothers me. How far do I go in the world and not be of the world? If you don't have that responsibility of our relationship to Jesus, you will always be out of balance. God will balance it.

We have to start by being a citizen of His kingdom. I am a citizen of the State of Tennessee and proud of it. I'm happy to be in Tennessee. I'm a resident of the city of Chattanooga. I am in the United States of America. Do I have responsibilities? You bet. Do I have privileges? You bet. Well, which comes first, citizenship to this country or citizenship to His holy nation? Friend, there is no question. My citizenship to Him comes first. That governs everything that I am as a citizen of this country, of this state and of this city. I've got to be surrendered to Him. I have to obey Him first before any other citizenship ever comes into

play. It is so difficult to get into that mindset, isn't it? Someone said,

"A boat in the water is by design.

Water in the boat is disaster."

We are designed to be in the world, but not of the world. We have been lifted out of the kingdom of darkness, and we have been transferred, as Colossians says, into the kingdom of His dear Son. My allegiance is to Him first, not to the flag, but to Jesus. It has always got to be Him first. It has to be Him. It is an eternal family. It is an eternal kingdom.

In I Peter 1:1 Peter addresses those persecuted believers of Asia Minor, and he says he is writing to "those who reside as aliens" in the different cities of Asia Minor. That is what we are on this earth, aliens. We are looking for a city not built with human hands. Here is the point that I would like to make. Since we are dealing with citizenship first, responsibility ought to come first. I am responsible. I've been made a citizen of His kingdom, therefore, I must obey Him. If I obey Him, it is to the point of my obedience that I enjoy the privileges that are mine being a citizen of His kingdom.

The second thing he mentions here is we are children of a heavenly family. He goes on in verse 19 and says

"you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household."

Before I go any further, don't confuse the word "saints" with "Israel." Yes, Israel is a nation, and God is not finished with them. One day, Israel will be brought into His kingdom. When he says "saints;" he is talking about believers, those who have been made what they are by Jesus Himself, who is the chief cornerstone of this whole building, as we will see in the verses to follow. He says, "You are also members of the family." The word "household" is the Greek word *oikeios*. It means "to belong to a certain household."

Hey, we all have different houses, but we all belong to the same household. Isn't that neat? We all belong to the same household. We are blood kin. We are brothers and sisters in the family. We are of the same family even though we live in different houses. In other words, every time we come to church, Sunday morning, Sunday evening or whenever we come together, it is like having a family reunion. We've been put into a divine family. That means something. Our relationships are intimate with one another.

We had a family reunion in Diana's family recently. There are eight in her family. All of them are married, and all of them have children. When we have a family reunion, folks, it's a crowd. One of the things we noticed this year was the difference in our children when we all get together. Now if you have a reunion and invite me to come to it, I'm sort of a stranger. I am not blood kin, but I am a

friend. I come and get together with you. However, if you put a family together, blood kin, you watch cousins with cousins and brothers with sisters. It is fun to watch. There is something about family, folks. There is just a kindred spirit that we all love. It changes your whole behavior.

That is the way it ought to be in God's church. That is the way it ought to be in your church. If you have a problem with another brother or sister in the family, you had better get it right. You see, we will treat people differently than we treat family if we don't think we are related to them and not responsible to them. With family what goes around comes around, and we are going to handle things with care. We are all a part of the same household. We should have family reunions every time we get together.

As a matter of fact in verse 16 it says that we are so much a part of each other that we are a body. It says, "and might reconcile them both [both Jew and Greek, whoever receives Christ] in one body to God through the cross." We are a body. We are so needful of one another. It is like a body.

Can you imagine if my liver decided it was just going to check out because it didn't like my kidney! I mean if my liver quits, that's it, folks. The whole body goes. We need each other. There is no such thing as a healthy body with selfish organs in that body. Ephesians 4:12 says that body is the body of Christ:

"for the equipping of saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

Oh, how diversified this body is. Red and yellow, black and white. We have got every gift, every color you can think of, in the body of Christ. We are a part of one another. We need each other. That's our new identity in Jesus.

Part of the responsibility of being right with God and the way it works out in our relationships with others is that we begin to realize that diversity. You are going to see this in Ephesians. We are all gifted differently with different temperaments, personalities, and everything else. God uniquely made us as individuals, and He did not throw away that individuality when we accepted Jesus. Isn't that wonderful? We have to learn to accept the differences in one another and quit trying to make everybody like ourselves.

The body is diverse, folks. We are different. We've got to learn to accept each other's differences. We've got a responsibility. We are citizens. We've got brand new relationships. We are part of the family. This family is not like us. We are all uniquely different, and we've got to learn how to live with one another with all the gifts and all the diversity that is in the family. What a beautiful truth! I now belong to the family of God! I am gifted. I am being fitted. We are going to see that in verse 21. I am already being fitted into the family. I am built upon the foundation. One of these days that building is going to be complete. It is going to be a dwelling of God, the Holy Spirit Himself.

Oh, I can look at the Temple of Artemis with those wonderful, magnificent 58 foot columns and gorgeous construction. All that is going to burn. I'm a part of a spiritual build-ing that absolutely is filled with responsibility, relationships and all the privileges that go therein. That's enough to shout about for me folks. Aren't you glad you're a part of the family of God, washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood? You see, that is what it means to be a believer. I don't think there is one ounce of evidence to support one single gripe that a Christian could ever utter from his lips if he understands the new identity he has in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:19-22: WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD

by Dr. Wayne Barber

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We have been talking about the brand new identity we have in Jesus Christ. As we have studied in chapter 2, Christ did not make the Jew a Gentile. He did not make the Gentile a Jew. He took both of them as they became believers and made them into one brand new body, one that has never before been seen. Christians are unique. It is a brand new identity that Christ gives to those who believe in Him.

Look in Ephesians 2:14-15. Paul says,

"For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man."

That new man is a body of believers. I have a brand new identity when I receive the Lord Jesus Christ. I am birthed into something that is qualitatively brand new, originating only from Christ Himself.

Paul says in II Corinthians 5:17,

"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he a new creature,"

He is a new creation. That's what I think Paul is bringing out here in Ephesians. He wants these Gentile believers to understand the

brand new identity they have in Jesus Christ. He uses three word pictures of this new identity we have in Jesus Christ. We looked at two of them in the last study in 19:

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household."

First of all, we are **citizens of a heavenly kingdom**. He does not mention the kingdom, but he mentions the fact that we are citizens with responsibilities. We are of a brand new nation. We are fellow citizens. The word "citizen" always refers to responsibility. Yes, privilege is involved, but much more is responsibility. So implicit in that verse is that we are part of a holy nation, a kingdom that is Christ's and Christ's alone. That is part of our new identity.

The other picture he gives us is that we are **children of a heavenly household**. We have been brought into the family. I love where he says we "are of God's household." The word "household" means "family." Actually you can translate it either way. We are a part of God's family. I am a child of a heavenly household.

We said it last time, but I want to say it again. The family of God is not a hotel which you can pay a price to get into. Oh, no. It is a family, and you have to be birthed into the family. You either are or you aren't. Paul wants to give the Ephesians this picture of this brand new identity.

The third picture Paul shows us is that we are **His Holy Temple**. That's incredible. Verses 20-22 give the whole picture of our being His Holy Temple in which He dwells on this earth. We need to know **WHOSE** we are, and we need to know **WHO** we are when it comes to living in this world. We are brand new creatures. We are His Kingdom. We are His family, but we also are His Holy Temple in which He dwells.

Well, let's begin to look at it. In verse 20, we are going to look at three things. First of all we are going to look at the foundation of this Holy Temple. Secondly, we are going to look at the cornerstone of this Holy Temple. And thirdly, we are going to look at the stones that are in this Holy Temple.

Verse 20 says,

"having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

What is the foundation of this holy temple of God? Each one of us who are believers are a part of that holy temple of God. Something is happening to us as God is constructing that temple.

First of all, what is the foundation: "having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets"? When you first read this it appears to contradict another verse that ought to be familiar. It appears to say that the apostles and the prophets are the foundation of this holy temple. Go back to I Corinthians 3:11:

"For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." So we know that the foundation is Jesus Christ."

Well then, what is he doing telling us that the apostles and the prophets are the foundation of this holy temple? Paul is not talking about the same thing in Ephesians that he is talking about in I Corinthians. He is talking about part of it, but he is not focused the same way. When he says that Jesus is the cornerstone, in a few moments, that is his focus in Ephesians. When he says the foundation, he is talking about the revelation the apostles and the prophets were given which they gave to us in its written form. That is called the New Testament. He speaks of the fact that they were not really the foundation, but they were the ones given the command to lay the foundation.

If you will look at 1Corinthians 3:10 where Paul says,

"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it."

Paul is an apostle. They laid the foundation by transferring to us the divine revelation of truth that God gave to them as apostles and as prophets. I believe what he talks about here as the foundation is the doctrine that we hold to of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the foundation, and the apostles and prophets laid that foundation. He refers to our doctrinal inheritance.

Jesus Himself said that the seed that falls into a person's heart has got to be the Word of God. You get saved when the Word of God falls into your heart and reveals to you that Jesus died for you and that you are a sinner. Once you see that, understand that, open the door and let Jesus come into your life, that is salvation. Therefore, we all go back to what the doctrine of the New Testament says to us about the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. In that sense, the apostles and prophets were the foundation of the holy

temple. They were the ones who were given the divine revelation of Christ who is the one that saves each of us.

Well, if the foundation he is referring to is the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, who are these apostles and prophets? We know for a fact that they were a specific group mentioned together three different times in the book of Ephesians. In 2:20, they are the doctrinal foundation. They are laying the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. In 3:5 it says,

"which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit."

It appears to be a specific group that is being referred to. In 4:11 he still continues to be specific. He says,

"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets."

They were the two groups that he is talking about, or the one group made up of apostles and prophets, to whom the divine revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ was given. We are founded upon that divine revelation. This leads us to another question. We can figure out who the apostles are; can we figure out who the prophets were? Are they the Old Testament prophets? Some people say that, but I don't believe this is a reference to the Old Testament prophets. There are three reasons why I don't. First of all, there is the order in which he puts them. He says, "Apostles and prophets." If he were talking about the Old Testament prophets, he would put the prophets first and then the apostles.

Secondly the statement that the apostles and the prophets are the foundation of the church. The fact that they are the foundation of the church disqualifies the Old Testament prophets. Why? Because in this foundation we are talking about here in Ephesians, it is not just Israel, it is including the Gentiles. That was not a part of the message of the Old Testament prophets. As a matter of fact, they didn't even understand this body that we are now in. They didn't understand the church.

Thirdly in 3:5, the fact that it says, "it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets," shows me that they are not the Old Testament prophets. This was a fresh, brand new revelation given to those prophets who stood before the others and proclaimed that which God gave them.

So who are the apostles and the prophets? Let's see if we can get a better understanding. Both groups were Christian teachers, but they were not identical. There were many prophets who were not apostles. The apostles are distinctly different than the prophets in the fact that they were the immediate messengers of Christ, invested with infallible authority as teachers and supreme power as rulers of the church. That makes the difference between the apostle and the prophet. The prophets were a class of teachers who spoke by inspiration from time to time as God directed.

What was the role of the apostles and prophets at the time that the New Testament era began, when the New Covenant became in effect? Their function was to authoritatively speak the Word of God to the church during the years before the New Testament canon came to be complete. They had a definite role. They didn't have the New Testament like we have today. They were the ones God used to put together the New Testament. The fact that they are mentioned with the foundation relates them to that era of Christianity. They are the ones who laid the foundation by the divine revelation given to them by the Lord Jesus who is, in fact, the foundation.

So **the foundation of the church**, the holy temple of God, is the doctrine of Christ which was given to us by the apostles and prophets. In that light, they are a part of the foundation. Jesus is the substance of the foundation, and the apostles and prophets laid the foundation and told us about Him through the divine revelation God had given to them.

Secondly, I want you to see **the cornerstone of this temple of God**. In my study of the New Testament every time Jesus is called the foundation, the cornerstone is not even mentioned. Every time He is called the cornerstone, He is not referred to as the foundation. I think it is because both of them complement one another. All the way through they add a little dimension to what the other leaves out. Each one of them speaks of the fact that the church rests upon and depends upon the Lord Jesus Christ, whether you talk about Him as our foundation or you talk about Him as our cornerstone. Oddly enough in my study, I found that in ancient times, the cornerstone was actually more important than the foundation. The cornerstone was the major structural part of ancient buildings and was the first stone that was laid. So really, when you talk about Him as the cornerstone, you move it up just a notch. Not only is He that which the building rests upon, but He is the first stone of the building that was laid. He is the chief cornerstone. It had to be strong enough to support what was built on it, so it had to be precisely laid. Every part of the structure was oriented to the cornerstone.

There appears to be two functions of the cornerstone of the ancient times. First of all, for support as the whole building would rest upon it. Secondly, and much more so, it was for structure. That is the most important part of it. The whole building depended upon the cornerstone for measurement and for unity.

So you see, you begin to get a picture of Christ being the cornerstone of the holy temple. The doctrine of Christ is our foundation in this passage, but Christ, much more so, is the cornerstone. We rest upon Him, but we totally depend upon Him. We are measured by Him, not by men. Every dimension we have as a believer has to resort back to Christ. We are being conformed into the image of Christ Jesus. He sets the standard. He is the first stone that was laid. He is the one who gives us this brand new identity. Everything about the Temple of God is governed by the cornerstone, who in this passage is Christ Himself. All the growth, all the unity, everything depends upon the cornerstone.

You may be Jewish, but you say, "The Messiah has not yet come. I don't believe in the New Testament." Well, friend, go back to the Old Testament and Isaiah 28:16. Isaiah, hundreds of years before Jesus ever came to this earth, prophesied by the Spirit of God that there was going to be a cornerstone.

"Therefore, thus says the Lord God, 'Behold I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.'"

Isaiah didn't even understand what he was prophesying. We know that from Hebrews. They prophesied in part and in portion. They never fully got the picture of what they were talking about. They knew a Messiah was coming, but they didn't understand all the ramifications of what He would do and the deliverance He would bring.

Jesus uses Psalm 118 to speak to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew. Psalm 118:22 says,

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone."

That is in the Old Testament. We are not in the book of Ephesians. This was prophesied way back in the Old Testament.

Jesus, in talking to those old skeptical Scribes and Pharisees said to them in Matthew 21:42-43:

"Did you ever read in the Scriptures, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone'?"

This came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it." Jesus is beginning to speak already of that holy nation that He is going to effect after His death and resurrection on the cross. Well, the apostle Peter puts them all together. In 1 Peter, he puts Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22 and another one, Isaiah 8:14, together in one passage. Isaiah 8:14 says,

"Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

In other words, he is saying Christ is going to be a stumbling block to the Jew. They thought Jesus would come and set up an earthly kingdom. They couldn't understand that it was by His stripes and His death upon the cross that we would be healed, spiritually. They missed all of that. Therefore, they were looking for something else. He became a stumbling block to them, especially when He went to the cross. They could not fit that into their theology.

Peter says in 1 Peter 2:6-8,

"For this is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." 7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe. But for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER stone," 8 and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed."

Jesus is the cornerstone. You can't have a building that fits or stands up without a cornerstone. He is the foundation, yes, but even more importantly, He is the cornerstone, the first stone that is laid, the stone that determines the measurement of all the other stones.

See how this fits in Ephesians 1 and 2? He talks about how we are saved by grace, not of works lest any man should boast. Everything that we are hooks right back into the doctrine of Jesus and the person of Christ. We can boast in nothing else. We can only boast in the Lord Jesus Himself. He birthed us into His kingdom. He birthed us into His family, and He is building us into His holy temple on this earth.

Do you remember back in the Old Testament when God came to dwell with the people? He dwelt in a Tabernacle. It was a tent of meeting. They folded it up and carried it. There were certain responsibilities about that. Then later on, they moved to a permanent structure called the Temple. In Malachi, God was so mad at the people He withdrew His presence. For four hundred years there was not a word from God. It was called the four hundred years of darkness. Then Hebrews said, "He broke the silence and has spoken to us in this day through His Son, Jesus Christ."

Jesus, while He was here on this earth, never went beyond the Court of the Gentiles in the Temple of Herod. Why? Because God didn't dwell in that building anymore. He was there in human flesh. Jesus walked on this earth as the Holy Temple of God, His flesh being the house that God lived in while He was on this earth. We put Him to death on the cross. Jesus said, "When you believe in Me, I will come to live in you. You now are the Temple of God upon this earth." Individually and collectively, we are the Holy Temple of God, and Jesus is the cornerstone of that Temple. We would not be what we are except for Him who determines the measurement, the unity, and the support. Everything we are, or are going to be, is determined by the cornerstone, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the foundation, as I understand it, is the doctrine of the holy apostles and prophets who gave forth the divine revelation, which when put together in written form is the New Testament. We are grounded and founded doctrinally by what God said, not by what man said. Not only that, the cornerstone is Jesus Himself. We are governed, grown, and united because of Him, the first stone that was laid.

Well, thirdly we are going to begin to look at the stone of this holy Temple of God. Now, Paul does not use the word "stone." Simon Peter does, but Paul doesn't. He implies it, because in their culture, you didn't have a temple made out of wood. You had a temple made out of stone. It was the stones that built the temple. It is implied that we are living stones, if you please, who are being built into this Holy Temple.

Let's go over to I Peter and see how Peter talks about it. He's saying the same thing, but he says it in a way that is a little clearer. He wants us to know that we are living stones. By the way, have you ever thought about the fact that if you are dead in sin, you are a stumbling block to somebody? You are a stone, but you are not the living stone. If you are a Christian, you are a living stone, and you can still cause people to stumble. I would rather cause them to stumble because I know Christ than because I am leading them astray from Him. I Peter 2:5 says,

"you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

We are living stones, and we are being fitted into this spiritual edifice which is called the Holy Temple of God.

Let's talk about that for a second. Ephesians 2:21 says,

"in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord."

What does it mean to be fitted together? In construction terms, in that day and time, that word meant the whole process that stones go through in order to be fitted together. Something is going on in our life. God is fitting us.

Now wait a minute, what do you mean? If you will look at the Old Testament temple, something comes to your mind. In the Old Testament, when they fitted those stones in place, there were no sounds of a hammer or chisel. Why? Does that mean a hammer and chisel had never been used? Oh, no. They were used back in the quarry, but when they came to putting the stones in, the stones were absolutely perfect. They fit into where they needed to fit. The construction term means "the cutting, the rubbing, the testing of the surfaces until they are completely made smooth." It is the using of the chisel and the hammer and the sandpaper to rub off all the rough edges so that when they are fitted in, they fit in exactly like they are supposed to fit. This includes preparing the little dowel holes that they would use. Then they would put dowels in it and seal it with molten lead. All of this was a part of being fitted, a preparation, so that everything is exactly to order as it is being fitted into the building.

As a living stone, I've got no choice but to be sandpapered and chiseled, because you see, right now, I am in the quarry of life. As a living stone, I am still in the quarry. That is what life is all about down here. We call it sanctification. It means the same thing. While I am down here, God knows exactly the vacuum to create in my life that will rub off the rough edges and will sandpaper off all of the things that don't fit in what He wants me to fit into eternally. Therefore, He creates that vacuum so I have to come to Him and confess sin in my life. I have to see the ugliness of my pride. God tests me and proves me and rubs me and scrapes me and chisels me in the quarry so that I am being fitted. It didn't say you have already been fitted, it says "you are being fitted." We are being fitted into this holy temple of God. There is a process going on.

If you are a living stone and you are going through something right now that you don't understand, relax, friend. Just rest a while. The cornerstone is busy fitting you into the temple, which is the holy, spiritual, eternal, temple of God.

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Ephesians 2:19-22: WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD—Part 2

by Dr. Wayne Barber

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Will you turn with me to Ephesians 2? We are still talking about the fact that "We Are the Temple of God," that in which He dwells on this earth. If you will look at Ephesians, Paul talks about the riches of the salvation that He gave to us. In Philippians he talks about the fact that Jesus is our life, that He is our sufficiency. Then in Colossians he talks about the fact that we are complete in Jesus Christ. Here is a man that is just totally overwhelmed by his salvation and overwhelmed by his Lord. He is in prison, and he is not even concerned about it. All he thinks about here in Ephesians is the excitement he feels about the salvation of those Ephesian believers.

In Ephesians 1:1 he makes a statement that we are developing in 2:19-22. He says,

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus."

Now, obviously, saints can be faithful, but saints can also choose to be unfaithful. He is writing to the faithful saints at Ephesus.

Now the word "saint" means to be lifted out of the mire of sin. If you put it in Christian terms, it means to be washed in the blood of Jesus, and set apart for God's use. It is a person who has been delivered from the old dead-end street of sin, has been brought out, had his feet put on a rock and has been given a brand new song. He is now a vessel for God's use. That is what it means to be a saint. I am either faithful to let God do what He wants to do in my life, or I am not faithful. Paul is writing to those that are faithful.

If you want to see what it means to be set apart, that is what we are looking at in verses 19-22 of chapter 2. Talk about being set apart! Talk about a brand new life! Talk about a brand new identity! That is what he is saying here. He uses three word pictures to describe this new identity, how we have now been set apart unto something we knew nothing of before when we were dead in our sins.

The first picture is in verse 19. We are now citizens of His kingdom. He says,

"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints."

Now, as we have already shared, when you talk about being a citizen, you don't just talk about privilege, you talk about responsibility. The word carries a heavy thought of responsibility. I certainly have privileges being a citizen of His kingdom, but only to the degree I am responsible and do what He has told me to do. I am now a citizen with brand new responsibilities. Yes, I have new privileges, but hinging on those privileges are responsibilities.

Second, he says we are

"Of God's household"

The word "**household**" can be translated family. Isn't that wonderful? Think of our country and how the family system and structure has been totally ripped apart. A person grows up with stepparents or whatever else. Usually the people who are most effected are the children. They desperately need to hear that somebody loves them. God is screaming at them through the Scriptures and saying, "I love you. I love you. I love you. I want you to be a part of My family." As a matter of fact, He not only births us into the family, as we know from John, but He also adopts us into His family. Both give us a picture of what He has done for us. By adoption He made us secure. Roman law says that if you adopted someone, you could never disown them. If you are worried about your eternal security, folks, you have been birthed into the family. You are eternally secure in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are a part of His family. Now, as citizens we have new responsibilities. As family members, we have a brand new relationship. Wherever you go, you find brothers and sisters in Christ. The third metaphor he uses here is that we are stones in His Temple. Now he doesn't use the word "stones," we borrowed that from Simon Peter in his first epistle. He implies stones, because you don't have a Temple without stones. He says we are in the Temple of God; we are the Holy Temple of God in which He dwells on this earth.

That is where we stopped last time, looking at this Holy Temple that we are becoming, that God is making us. The **foundation** to this Temple in verse 20 is the doctrine given to us by the apostles and prophets. Of course, 1 Corinthians 3:11 says that Jesus is the foundation. When he names the apostles and prophets as the foundation, certainly he is pointing to their doctrine. They laid the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have it in written form today as the New Testament. He said in verse 20,

"having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets."

Then we saw the **cornerstone**, which is Jesus. In their culture, the cornerstone was more important than the foundation. Now that is interesting. In our culture, it is a little bit different. We don't always have a cornerstone in every building. In their culture, the cornerstone moves it up a notch, pointing to how important Jesus Christ is to all that is going on in our life. The whole structure rests

upon the cornerstone, the whole structure depends upon the cornerstone. He is our cornerstone. We would not even be in the building if it weren't for Him. He was the first stone that was laid, and everything that happens depends upon Him. Now that is the key.

Third, we saw the **stones in the Temple**, and the fact that we are being fitted into the Temple. Verse 21 says, "in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord." That "being fitted together" was the term we ended with last time. I want to start with it here.

The word "fitted" there is rendered in most places in the passive voice, so when you think of being fitted into the holy temple, you think of the fact that God is doing it. Certainly He is. That is a truth. But there is another understanding of that: not only is God fitting us, we have the responsibility to put ourselves into a position so that He can fit us into that holy temple. That makes the rest of Ephesians make a whole lot of sense, doesn't it? That's why we have to choose to be filled with the Spirit of God. It is very important to realize, yes, God is fitting us, but we are responsible to put ourselves into a position to be fitted into this holy temple.

What does it mean to be fitted? Well, in construction terms, it is the whole process of what they would do with a stone to make it fit into the temple. Remember when they brought the stones to fit them into the Temple, there was not a sound of hammer or chisel. Does that mean God just developed the stones in heaven and dropped them on the earth so they could go and find them, pick them up and build the Temple? Oh, no. There was a quarry somewhere, and there was a lot of hammering and chiseling and rubbing and sand papering and getting the rough edges off. Some were too big, and some were too small. They had to be exactly measured to the design of the Master Architect, who is the cornerstone. He is the one who has the design. He is the only one who can oversee the process.

The fitting is not too much fun to talk about. We are in the quarry. Last time we talked about what it meant to be a nursery Christian. A lot of Christians are in the nursery. They are the ones who are in the quarry, but they don't want to be fitted. They are fighting against the hammer, and they are fighting against the chisel. They don't understand that everything in their life is overseen by the master architect who is Christ Himself. They would rather blame the devil. They would rather go off and chase something else. They don't realize that everything going on in their life is a process, and God, the Architect, is seeing to it that a chiseling process can be useable in their life. The nursery folks are the whiners. They are the ones who are always griping and judging everybody else.

You are in the quarry whether you like it or not. When you get saved, you are put in the quarry. Now the key is, are you going to let God fit you or are you going to fight Him in the process? The key is, bow down, come out of the nursery, quit whining and go on and let God work in your life. You see, one of the things about a stone is, he doesn't get to choose the chisel God uses in his life to make him like He wants him to be. A lot of us have different tools in our life that God is using. I might be one in your life, I don't know. God is using a lot of things and circumstances. Go on and trust Him. Find your sufficiency in Him. That is what it is all about. God will mold you, make you and conform you into the image of Christ Jesus. The hammer that drives the chisel appears, to me, to be the Word of God. If you will go over to Ephesians 4:16, he uses the same exact phrase in a different context. It says in verse 16,

"from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

That is in the context of God giving apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers to the church. They are equipping the body for the work of the ministry. So the Word of God appears to be the hammer. It's either the studying of it, the preaching of it, or the teaching of it. Somehow that's where we find the hammer that drives that chisel that is conforming us into the image of Christ Jesus.

We want to see two more things as we finish out the temple that we are in Christ Jesus. Fourth, there is the growth of the temple. I want us to see that in verse 21: "in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord." Verse 21 says that it is **growing**. That term "is growing" is the word *auxano*. Now that word is very interesting, and I want you to understand it. It is something that man cannot do. Whenever you talk about church growth, the word in Greek that means to grow is something that a man cannot do. It is what God alone can do. God is causing it to grow. Now, He is using living stones as we will see later on, but it is God who gives the growth. It is God who causes the growth of the temple. It is in the present tense which means it is going on right now. The church, the living temple of God, is in the development stage.

What does that mean? It means that it is not finished yet. It means there is still room in the kingdom. There is still room in the family. There is still room in the temple. It is not finished yet. You see, the word "growing" means it is increasing. It is being added to consistently. Oh, the Gentiles of Ephesus that Paul was writing to, were just a small speck in the gigantic building that God was making here on this earth, that spiritual dwelling, that spiritual house that He wanted to live in. When the last Gentile is brought in, then God is going to turn His attention towards Israel. Right now, the Gentiles are coming in and coming in and coming in. That is what he is trying to tell the church at Ephesus: You can come in now. The building is still under development.

You see, a lot of folks misunderstand. In chapter 2, it says the Jew and the Gentile had been made one in Christ Jesus. He didn't say Israel. He said the Jew. You see, a Jew is an individual. Israel is a nation. Israel as a nation has shut down the process because

they have rejected Christ as the Messiah. That doesn't mean that God has gotten them out of His mind. He made an everlasting covenant with Abraham. He's got them on a shelf right now. He's got them on hold right now. He is in the process of bringing in the Gentiles. When that last Gentile comes in and He takes us out of here, then He will put His whole attention upon Israel.

If you will look in Romans 11:25, to me it is so clear. Paul says,

"For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in."

What is going on with Israel right now? There is a mask over their faces. They can't see it. Why? They rejected Christ. Through the whole Old Testament and up until the book of Acts, the Gentiles were shut out. They were strangers to the covenant of promise. Now the wall has been torn down. Now the doors have been thrown open, and God has appointed the apostle Paul with a ministry to the Gentiles. He is saying, "Listen, guys, this is now open to you. It is open to all the world and to whoever will come to Christ. There is room in the kingdom. There is room in the family. There is also room in the temple."

I tell you, this ought to excite us to missions like nothing else. One of the things that worries me sometimes is when I preach I can't convict hearts. I might convince you, motivate you, inspire you, but as soon as you walk out of here, all of that burns out. Somehow, someway, we have got to be overwhelmed with our salvation to the point that we realize it could be offered to others. The family still has room. The kingdom still has room. The temple still has room. Folks, you need to get excited about the fact it is just growing now. There is still room! There are people in your family who are desperate to hear this. There are people in your neighborhood who are desperate to hear this. What is wrong with us? We don't even think about the fact that there is a lost world out there. The family has room. The kingdom has room. The Temple has room. It is in the development stage. There are others who can come in! If you can't take the first chapter of Ephesians and the second Chapter of Ephesians and get pumped up about the fact that there are people who are lost out there in this world, then something is wrong in your life. Let me just run through some things for you. In 1:1, do you think that they need to hear that they can be a saint? Do you think they need to hear that they can be lifted out of the mud and mire of their sin and be washed and set apart and be useable to God? Did you come to know Christ later in life? Let me ask you this. Right before you came to know Christ did you think perhaps you had completely ruined your life and there was no hope for you?

It is the greatest message in the world to realize God loves you. He can take your past and cleanse you from your sin. He can put you into His service, and He can use you as a vessel from this point on. The world needs to hear that. It is growing. It is not filled yet. Go tell somebody.

In 1:3, they can find every spiritual blessing that they ever would look for in Jesus Christ and Him alone. They don't have to go over and stand on their head with yoga and that kind of stuff. They don't have to sit for hours in meditation. They don't have to find their little demons so they can lead them into a higher stage of conscientiousness. They can find every spiritual blessing they ever thought about looking for in Jesus Christ. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus.

In 1:4 they can be part of the elect. I don't know how many people get hung up in that. "Oh, my goodness. God didn't elect me." Friend, when you are drawn, it means you are chosen. When they begin to hear the gospel and their heart is drawn towards God, they begin to realize, "All I've got to do is bow down, and I'll become a part of His elect."

In 1:5, they can learn that they can be adopted into His family. Now I can't say enough about that. They say, "Do you mean someone would want me?" You'd better believe somebody would want them. God can bring them into the family. There is room for whoever will come, if we will just get the Word out. There is room in the family, room in the kingdom, and room in the Temple.

In 1:7, they need to realize they have been purchased by His blood. They are already purchased. The price has already been paid. I don't know how many people I have witnessed to who have said, "Well, I don't know. I've been so bad." I want to say, "So what! God has already paid the price. You can't do anything bad enough that He hasn't paid the price for on the cross."

In 1:13, they can realize they can be sealed with His spirit. Do you know what that means? It means to put into a container, the container is shut over you, locked shut and then sealed with the insignia so only the one who shut it can ever open it. That is not a bad deal on security for your salvation, is it? I still have people saying to me, "He can put me in there, but I can walk out." The mentality of that blows me away. People won't go on and listen to what God says. He will seal us. In 4:30 it says,

"You are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Well, in 2:6, it says you can be seated with Christ in the heavenlies, always victorious in Him. You can ask people in this world, "Listen, do you want to have victory? All you have got to do is come to Jesus Christ. From that point on, He leads you in His triumph. You just sit down, friend, and do what He tells you to do. He leads you in His triumph for the rest of your life." You can live in absolute victory knowing Jesus Christ. They need to know there is still room in His kingdom, still room in His family and still room in His Temple. I don't know what that says to you but it ought to say something to us in these days.

Folks, we have the luxury of studying the book of Ephesians together. What about the people out there? They don't know they can have victory in Christ. They don't know all these things about being secure in Him. They don't know that He wants to adopt them into His family. They don't know that He has paid the price on the cross and redeemed them into His family. Somebody has got to tell them! Whenever we finally wake up and get overwhelmed by our salvation and by our Lord Jesus, I think finally we are going to understand that we are in the development stage. Isn't it going to be fun to be a part of God's instrument through which He begins to bring others into the family, into the kingdom and into the Temple?

The final thing I want to share with you before we close out chapter 2 is this, the Purpose of the Temple. What is a Temple for? Now he tells you very clearly in verses 21 and 22:

"being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

The normal word for temple is the word *hieron*. It means the whole complex, all the precincts of the temple. This word is the word *naos*. It is the word that doesn't describe the whole temple, it describes the Holy of Holies where God would meet with man and dwell and fellowship with man.

So, what is this temple all about? What is our purpose of being put into this temple? That God might indwell us, that God might commune with us, that God might fellowship with us. God desires to fellowship with us, and He wants us to be the vessel on this earth that He indwells. He wants to meet with us. He is the architect. He wants to give us His design. He wants to empower us for His ministry and His work.

You know, in the Old Testament, God came down to dwell with the people in the Tabernacle. That is what "tabernacle" means, the dwelling of God. Wherever they would go, they would fold up that Tabernacle and carry it with them. It was a tent of meeting, and inside that Tent of Meeting, there were two rooms. One of them the priests could go into, but one only the High Priest could go into, once a year, and meet with God in representation of the people and atone for their sins by the sacrifices that he would make. That went on and went on and went on. Once a year man could meet with God. Finally it moved into a permanent Temple which was a little different, but it had the same basic idea and still had that Holy of Holies, that inner sanctum, that *naos*, where God would meet with man based on the sacrifice, based on the blood that had been shed.

In the book of Malachi, however, God decided not to dwell with man anymore. Man be-came so stubborn and so hard-headed that God withdrew the fire out of the Temple. For 400 years it was a period of darkness. Now obviously God was here. He is omnipresent, but He didn't allow man to know that He was there. He said nothing for 400 years. Then finally, He broke the silence. This time the Temple didn't come with brick and mortar and stone. It came in the body of human flesh. It was born in a manger. The Temple on this earth, God's dwelling with man on this earth, was the Lord Jesus Himself. He said, "I am going to tear this Temple down, and in three days, I am going to raise it up." He was talking about His own body and being God inside of a body.

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