

AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF EPHESIANS 2:11-22

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## 1. Verify Text & Translation – Section #1. Preliminary Passage Overview

- a. Study the passage in four different translations and identify any key differences or issues in the translations. Note variants.

- Translations selected for comparison: NASB95, ESV, NKJV, HCSB

- b. Write a passage overview identifying the following elements:

- i. Identify variants in the text

2:11

NASB “so-called circumcision”

ESV “what is called the circumcision”

NKJV “what is called the Circumcision”

HCSB “those called ‘the circumcised’”

UBS4 τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς

2:12

NASB “separate from Christ”

ESV “separated from Christ”

NKJV “without Christ”

HCSB “without the Messiah”

UBS4 χωρὶς Χριστοῦ

2:13

NASB “Christ”

ESV “Christ”

NKJV “Christ”

HCSB “Messiah”

UBS4 Χριστοῦ

2:14

NASB “the barrier of the dividing wall”

ESV “the dividing wall”

NKJV “the middle wall of separation”

HCSB “the dividing wall”

UBS4 τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ

2:15

NASB “thus establishing peace”

ESV “so making peace”

NKJV “thus making peace”

HCSB “resulting in peace”

UBS4 ποιῶν εἰρήνην

2:16

NASB “reconcile them both”

ESV “reconcile us both”

NKJV “reconcile them both”

HCSB “reconcile both”

UBS4 ἀποκαταλλάξι τὸς ἀμφοτέρους

2:18

NASB “in one Spirit”

ESV “in one Spirit”

NKJV “by one Spirit”

HCSB “by one Spirit”

UBS4 ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι

2:19

NASB “strangers and aliens”

ESV “strangers and aliens”

NKJV “strangers and foreigners”

HCSB “foreigners and strangers”

UBS4 ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι

2:21

NASB “being fitted together”

ESV “being joined together”

NKJV “being fitted together”

HCSB “being fitted together”

UBS4 συναρμολογουμένη

ii. Briefly summarize the passage

Both Gentiles and Jews were once spiritually dead, due to sins, but God has united Jews and Gentiles together in Christ, giving them spiritual life by His grace so that they can now produce good works to the glory of God.

iii. Summarize your current understanding of the theological impact of the passage

2:12

- In the previous dispensation involvement in the covenants of promise were tied to the commonwealth of Israel.

2:13

- In the present dispensation Gentiles can be brought near to God apart from citizenship in national Israel by being “in Christ Jesus.”
- The “blood of Christ” is the means by which Gentiles are included in Christ.

2:14-16

- The Law of Moses came to an end at the crucifixion of Christ.
- The Law of Moses had constituted a barrier between Jews and Gentiles that has now been removed.

- Being “in Christ” makes one part of a “new man.”
- Being “in Christ” established peace between Jew and Gentile.

2:17

- The preaching of the Gospel today by human speakers is the equivalent of Christ Himself personally speaking.

2:18

- Being “in Christ” gives the believer access to the Father through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

2:20-21

- The foundation of the church is the “apostles and prophets;” Christ is the cornerstone.

iv. Identify doctrinal presuppositions you have in approaching the passage

1. I believe firmly in Free Grace Salvation, not “Lordship Salvation.”
2. I am a committed Dispensationalist.
3. I am Calvinistic

## 2. Understand Background & Context - Section #2. Background/Context Summary

- a. Identify, defend, and explain the significance of literary form/genre (prophecy, historical narrative, epistle, poetic).

This is epistolary literature. The author is laying out a reasoned presentation of his doctrine.

- b. Research key questions regarding the background of the book (authorship, composition, purpose, etc.).

Though 1:1 clearly names the apostle Paul as the author (also 3:1), liberal scholarship has often questioned Pauline authorship of this epistle. One of the chief reasons has to do with the use of certain words and phrases that are taken to be non-Pauline. Of course this is somewhat circular reasoning! Pauline authorship of this epistle was universally accepted in the early church and not really questioned until modern times.

Recipients: The words “in Ephesus” are missing from many of the oldest and best mss. in 1:1. For this reason we cannot be certain about who the recipients were. Some scholars feel that this was an encyclical letter intended for the churches of the Roman Province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the chief city. This would explain the fact that Paul does not mention any individuals in the receiving church by name as he does in most of his other letters. Others think this may possibly be the lost letter to Laodicea referred to in Col. 4:16.

Apparently Tychicus delivered the letter, Eph. 6:21-22. Tychicus also delivered Paul’s letter to the Colossians, Col. 4:7-9.



Paul had wanted to visit Ephesus early on his second missionary journey, but was forbidden by the Holy Spirit, Ac 16:6-8.

The first Ephesian converts to Christ came near the end of Paul's second missionary journey when Paul stopped briefly at Ephesus, Ac 18:19-21.

In the early part of Paul's third missionary journey, Apollos, Aquilla, and Priscilla ministered in Ephesus, Ac 18:24-28.

Later on in the third missionary journey, Paul came to Ephesus and spent well over 2 years there, Ac 19:1-10.

When a riot erupted, Paul was forced to leave Ephesus, Ac 19:11 – 20:1.

Date of writing: Paul was a prisoner at the time of writing (3:4; 4:1; 6:20).

This probably narrows the possibilities either to his Caesarean imprisonment (Ac 23:23ff.) or his first Roman imprisonment (Ac 28:16ff.). There is also a possibility of an imprisonment in Ephesus itself (1Co 15:32; 2Co 1:8-10).

Purpose: No specific problem is mentioned in the epistle; however, either the noun or verb "love" occurs 19 times in Ephesians, which may point to a need the recipients had to be encouraged to demonstrate love in their lives. Compare this with Christ's warning to the church in Ephesus, "You have left your first love" (Rev 2:4), and the frequent mention of love in 1 John, also likely written to the church in Ephesus.

- c. Summarize background and context highlighting the following elements:  
historical, social, geographical, authorship, date, literary form.

For most of these points, see preceding section.

As to literary form, the book appears to be divided into two main sections, with 4:1 constituting the pivotal point. The conjunction “therefore” (οὖν) joins these two halves together, the terms “walk” and “calling/called” each characterizing the halves. Ch. 1-3 constitute a description of the believer’s calling in Christ. Ch 4-6 constitute an exhortation to walk in love. An analysis of the verb moods in these two halves of the epistle corresponds with this description: in chapters 1-3, only 0.8% of all verbs are in the imperative (ch. 1, 0%; ch. 2 2%; ch. 3, 0%), while 38.2% are indicative; whereas in chapters 4-6, 19.8% of all verbs are in the imperative (ch. 4, 15.3%; ch. 5, 23.9%; ch. 6, 20.4%).

- d. Identify how these findings are significant to interpretation of the passage.

This passage is roughly in the center of the doctrinal section of Ephesians. It is part of Paul’s argument in laying out the doctrine of the believer’s calling in Christ. As such it will lay a part of the foundation for the practical exhortations in part 2 of the epistle.

If indeed the purpose of the epistle has to do with the need to exhort the believers in Ephesus to display love, it is interesting that the immediate context of our passage has such abundant description of God’s attributes of mercy, love, grace and kindness (2:4-8).

### 3. Identify Structure - Section #3. Outline/Structural Summary

#### a. Outline the book, identifying major and minor divisions

Introduction, 1:1-2

#### I. Doctrinal, 1:3-3:21

a. The work of the Triune God in Redemption, 1:4-14

b. Paul's Prayer, 1:15-23

c. Jew and Gentile joined together in Christ, 2:1-22

i. Both Jew and Gentile spiritually dead by nature, 2:1-10

ii. Distant Gentiles brought near to the covenant Jews through the death of Christ, 2:11-22

d. Paul's Prayer 3:1-21 (Introduced by Τοῦτου χάριτι)

i. Digression, 3:2-13

“The administration of the grace of God”

ii. Resumption of Prayer, 3:14-21 (Note the repetition of Τοῦτου χάριτι)

#### II. Hortatory, 4:1-6:20 (Note the transitional marker οὖν)

a. Unity and Growth of the Body, 4:1-16

b. Put off the old man & put on the new man, 4:17-6:9 (Note the introduction of a new topic by Τοῦτο οὖν λέγω καὶ μαρτύρομαι ἐν κυρίῳ)

c. The Struggle Against Spiritual Wickedness, 6:10-20 (Note the transitional Τοῦ λοιποῦ)

Conclusion, 6:21-24

b. Identify structural keys/developments (development of narrative, development of argument, chiasm, etc.)

1	<sup>11</sup> Διὸ μνημονεύετε	
2	ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς ... <sup>12</sup> ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ,	[ID → 1]
3	τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί,	<app → 2>
4	οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς	<app → 2>
5	ἐν σαρκὶ	<spra → 4, περιτομ.>
6	χειροποιήτου,	<dsc → 4, περιτομ.>
7	ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ	<app → 2>
8	καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας,	<app → 2>
9	ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες	<app → 2>
10	καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.	<app → 2>
11	<sup>13</sup> νυνὶ δὲ <sup>α</sup> ... ὑμεῖς <sup>β</sup> ... ἐγενήθητε ἐγγύς <sup>γ</sup> ...	<adv → 1>
12	<sup>α</sup> ... ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ	<sph → 11>
13	<sup>γ</sup> ... ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.	<mns → 11>
14	<sup>β</sup> ... οἱ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν	<app → 11>
15	<sup>14</sup> Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν,	[cau → 11]
16	ὃ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμώτερα ἐν	<app → 15>
17	καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, ... ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ,	<app → 15>
18	... τὴν ἔχθραν	<app → 17>
19	<sup>15</sup> τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας,	[mns → 17]
20	ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον	[pur <sub>1</sub> → 15]
21	ποιῶν εἰρήνην	[res → 20]
22	<sup>16</sup> καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους	[pur <sub>2</sub> → 15]
23	ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι	[sph <sup>1</sup> → 22]
24	τῷ θεῷ	[goal → 22]
25	διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ,	[mns → 22]
26	ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ.	[cau → 15]
27	<sup>17</sup> καὶ ... εὐηγγελίσαστο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν	[con → 15]
28	... ἐλθῶν	[TC <sup>2</sup> → 27]
29	καὶ [sc. εὐηγγελίσαστο] εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς·	[con → 27]

<sup>1</sup> This phrase expresses sphere only if σῶμα is referring to the church, the “body” of Christ; however, if σῶμα refers to Christ’s physical body, then it would express means, and this would be a reference to His crucifixion.

<sup>2</sup> Since both the participle and the main verb are in the aorist, the participle can express contemporaneous time. The “coming” here is probably a reference to the coming of Christ in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to preach the gospel through the apostles.

30	<sup>18</sup> ὅτι ... ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφοτέροι	[cau → 29]
31	... δι' αὐτοῦ	<agn → 30>
32	ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι	<agn → 30>
33	πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.	<goal → 30>
34	<sup>19</sup> ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι	[inf → 1-33]
35	ἀλλὰ ἐστὲ συμπολιταὶ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ,	[adv → 34]
36	<sup>20</sup> ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ	[cau/mns? → 35]
37	τῶν ἀποστόλων	[SubG → 36]
38	καὶ προφητῶν,	[SubG → 36]
39	ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,	[AC → 36]
40	<sup>21</sup> ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ ... αὕξει	[RC → 39, I.Xp.]
41	εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον	<goal → 40>
42	... συναρμολογουμένη	[man/mns → 40]
43	ἐν κυρίῳ,	<sph → 40>
44	<sup>22</sup> ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε	[RC → 39, I.Xp.]
45	εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ	<goal → 44>
46	ἐν πνεύματι.	<mns → 44>

Explanation of tags from preceding diagram:

AC	Attendant Circumstance
adv	Adversative
agn	Agency
app	Apposition
cau	Causal
con	Connective
dsc	Description
goal	Goal
ID	Indirect Discourse
inf	Inferential
man	Manner
mns	Means
pur	Purpose
RC	Relative Clause
res	Result
spa	Spatial
sph	Sphere
SubG	Subjective Genitive
TC	Time Contemporaneous

The passage divides into 3 sections, the main divisions occurring at verses 13 and 19. The first main division, at verse 13, separates the passage into past and present. Verse 11 opens with διὸ μνημονεύετε (“therefore remember”), which looks to the past. The shift to the present occurs in verse 13 with the words νυνὶ δέ (“but now”) which brings us into the present. The final section is a conclusion based on the preceding two sections and is introduced by the inferential phrase ἄρα οὖν (“therefore”). Thus a first level outline of the passage would be as follows:

- I. Past, 11-12
- II. Present, 13-18
- III. Conclusion, 19-22

The first section (Past) asserts via an indirect discourse clause, “you were without Christ.” The subject, “you,” refers to the recipients of the letter, and has in view the majority Gentile makeup of the church(es). The identity of these Gentiles is further delineated by a series of appositional phrases; they were: “Gentiles in flesh,” “called ‘uncircumcision,’” “alienated from citizenship in Israel,” “strangers from the covenants of promise,” “those who have no hope,” and “godless ones in the world.” Thus, the first main division may be expanded as follows:

- I. Past condition of the Gentiles, 11-12
  - a. Lacking the physical sign of membership in God’s covenant nation
  - b. Despised by the covenant people
  - c. Lacking legal status in God’s covenant nation
  - d. Having no relationship to God’s covenant promises
  - e. Hopeless

f. Godless

The second section (Present) includes both second person plural references and first person plural references (v. 14 “our peace,” v.18 “we have”). The second person references continue viewing the majority Gentile makeup of the church(es); whereas, the first person references bring in the minority Jewish makeup, and include even the author of the letter. What begins as a first person plural reference then continues as third person plural using ἀμφότεροι “both,” or οἱ δύο “the two.” Thus we see verse 13 describing the “bringing near” of the Gentiles, and verses 14-18 describing the joint participation of both Gentile and Jew in the Body of Christ:

- II. Present: Both Jew and Gentile Participate Equally in the Body of Christ, 13-18
  - a. Bringing the Gentiles Near, 13
  - b. Joint Participation of Both Jews and Gentiles, 14-18

The conclusion returns to the second person plural and drops the references to ἀμφότεροι and δύο; thus, the application is primarily to the majority Gentile population of the church(es). However, the interesting compounds συναρμολογέω (v. 21) and συνικοδομέω (v. 22) bring in references to the Jews as participating with the Gentiles in this application. This concluding section brings in the two metaphors of citizenship in a commonwealth, and of a building and a temple. This last metaphor sees both Jewish and Gentile believers as the building blocks, the apostles and prophets as the foundation, and Christ as the Cornerstone of the building.

III. Conclusion: Gentiles are included with Jews as the people of God, 19-22

a. Pictured as Citizenship in a Commonwealth, 19

b. Pictured as a Building and Temple, 20-22

i. The Foundation, 20a

ii. The Cornerstone, 20b

iii. The Building Stones, 21-22

c. Identify the importance of the structure in the interpretation of the passage

The structure of the passage indicates that it is addressed primarily to Gentile believers in Christ. This suggests the likelihood of a latent anti-Semitism among these Gentile believers that Paul was attempting to correct. These Gentile believers were to understand that the Jews, though they had not received Jesus as their Messiah, were still accounted as the covenant people of God, and thus were closer to God than the unbelieving Gentiles. As for those Jews who *have* believed in Jesus, believing Gentiles should consider themselves to be privileged to be related to them on an equal status, now that they are all “in Christ.”



#### 4. Identify Grammatical Keys – Section #4. Grammatical Summary

1. Identify historical/cultural references, figurative language, rhetorical devices, quotations, etc.

- a. Historical/Cultural References

- i. Jew/Gentile relationship in first century Asia Minor, v.11

Ac 21:28 illustrates the animosity between Jews and Gentiles.

- ii. Citizenship, vv. 12, 19
  - iii. Crucifixion, v. 16
  - iv. Building practices/materials, vv. 20-22
  - v. Temples, v.21

- b. Figurative Language

- i. v.14 “He is our peace” – Here is an instance of metonymy in which the effect is put for the cause. In this case, the noun “peace” is the result of His action of bringing about peace. Expressed literally, we would understand “He *effected* our peace.”
  - ii. v.14 “having destroyed the middle dividing wall” – Here we see metaphor. The literal “middle dividing wall” is likely a reference to the interior wall of the Jerusalem temple complex that separated the court of the Gentiles from the remainder of the court. Gentiles were not permitted beyond this dividing wall, on pain of death. In the figure, Christ is said to have destroyed the dividing wall by means of (ἐν) His flesh (crucifixion). What does the wall represent? This is answered in twin appositional phrases: (1) “the enmity” (ἔχθρα); and (2) “the law of the commandments in

ordinances” (τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν). This second appositional phrase appears to reference quite obviously the Mosaic Law. The point of the metaphor is that in His death, Christ destroyed the Mosaic Law as an institution that gave favored status to the Jews.

- iii. v.15 “one new man” (εἷς ἄνθρωπος κενός) – Elsewhere the uniting of various members in Christ is referred to by the metaphor of the “body” of Christ. Here the metaphor is slightly different; it is a “new man.” This might be synecdoche whereby the whole “man” stands for the part, namely the “body.” But one wonders why Paul used the adjective “new.” In Eph. 4:22, 24 there is a contrast between the “old man” and the “new man,” but there, the reference is to individual believers; whereas, here in 2:15, the reference is corporately to the church. In keeping with Paul’s theology as expressed in Rom. 5:12ff., perhaps the “old man” (unexpressed, but nevertheless implied here) would refer to “Adam” and the “new man” to Christ, as spheres in which men live, either in condemnation or righteousness.
- iv. v.19 “you are no longer foreigners and aliens” – The point of this metaphor is that, before they were in Christ, the Gentiles were not included in the blessings that attach to citizenship in the nation of Israel, but now, despite their Gentile status, they were recipients of God’s blessing. This figure might be understood in one of two ways: (1) In replacement theology, this would be taken to mean that faith in Christ brings one into full membership in the “true Israel,” and thus becomes a

partaker of God's covenant promises to Israel. This, of course, requires a non-literal interpretation of those covenant promises as expressed in the OT. (2) A dispensational take on this figure would be that, whereas before they came to faith in Christ, the Gentiles had no claim to God's promises of blessing, now in Christ they *do* have a claim to God's promises of blessing, but not to national citizenship in Israel. It is *as if* they had a claim to God's covenant promises, though strictly speaking, there is no *covenant per se* with these Gentile believers. The point of the metaphor is that once they were without God's blessing, but now they have a claim to God's blessing.

- v. v.19 "you are fellow-citizens with the saints" – This metaphor likens Gentile believers in Christ to citizens of a political commonwealth. Of course faith in Jesus made them neither actual citizens of the Kingdom of Judea, nor did it make them citizens of any other political entity. The point of the figure seems to be that, just as citizenship in national Israel brought one into a covenant relationship with God, so faith in Jesus brings believing Gentiles into a new relationship with God. They are now related to God along with all the "saints."
- vi. v.19 "you are members of the household of God" – This metaphor is similar to the preceding metaphor (citizens of a commonwealth) only here it is a "household" rather than a political commonwealth. By adding this figure, Paul makes it clear that these are not intended as literal references. He is referring neither to a literal commonwealth, nor to a literal house.

- vii. vv. 20-22 a building, with foundation, cornerstone, and building stones – another metaphor. In this metaphor, the apostles and prophets are seen in their foundational role, establishing the church through their preaching and teaching; Christ is seen as the cornerstone, giving direction, definition and purpose to the building. The individual believers are seen as the stones in the building.
- c. Rhetorical Devices – The passage makes fairly abundant use of appositional phrases as a way of providing definition and description:
  - i. v.11 "you" defined as
    1. "Gentiles in flesh"
    2. "Those called uncircumcision"
    3. "Aliens from citizenship in Israel"
    4. "Strangers from the covenants of promise"
    5. "Those who have no hope"
    6. "Godless ones in the world"
  - ii. v.13 "you" defined as
    1. "who once were far away"
  - iii. v.14 "he" defined as
    1. "who made both one"
    2. "who destroyed the middle dividing wall"
  - iv. v.14b "the middle dividing wall" defined as
    1. "the enmity"
    2. "the law of commandments in ordinances"

v. v.17 "you" defined as

1. "who were far away"

d. Quotations

i. v.17 possible allusion to Isa 57:19

2. Identify key sentence structure, clauses, etc.

- a. The opening clause of verse 11 is inferential in force, as indicated by the conjunction  $\delta\acute{\iota}$ . The following content of this inferential clause makes a logical conclusion to verses 1-10. Their status of being spiritually dead has certain conclusions regarding their relationship to God. This relationship is spelled out in verses 11-12, especially as it pertains to God's covenant promises made to Israel.
- b. The  $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$  of verse 11 introduces the indirect discourse clause, spelling out the content of the preceding verb  $\mu\eta\mu\omicron\nu\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ . This content, then, is spelled out in the predicate adjective phrase  $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma$   $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  and its 6 appositional phrases. This results in a 7-fold description of the Gentile Ephesians' pre-conversion condition:
  - i. Without a Messiah.
  - ii. Gentiles in flesh, i.e., having no outward sign of a relationship to God according to the Mosaic covenant.
  - iii. Described as "uncircumcision" by the Jews; i.e., given a derogatory title by God's covenant people.
  - iv. Alienated from citizenship in Israel; i.e., having no legal claim to God's covenant promises with national Israel, viz., the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Land, David and New covenants.

- v. Being strangers from the covenants *of promise*; i.e., having no relationship to either the Abrahamic, Land, Davidic, or New covenants. These covenants are based on God’s promise alone, with no conditions laid on Israel; thus probably the Mosaic Covenant is not referred to in this statement.
  - vi. Having no hope; i.e., no positive certainty about their future.
  - vii. Godless in the world. This last phrase would have been something of a surprise to almost any Gentile in the first century Mediterranean world, for almost all were very religious, and most had many “gods” that they worshipped.
- c. The first clause of verse 13 is an adversative clause, indicated by the conjunction δέ, and makes a contrast with the indirect discourse clause of verse 11. In contrast to the seven-fold description in verses 11-12, they were now described as having “become near.”
- d. Two prepositional phrases explain in what sense the believing Gentile Ephesians were now to be considered “become near”:
- i. ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ expresses the *sphere* in which this is true.
  - ii. ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ expresses the means/instrument by which this is true.
- e. The participial phrase οἱ ποτε ὄντες μακράν is both appositional to the subject of ἐγενήθητε and also concessive to the verb itself. In other words, *in spite of the fact* that they had been μακράν, they were now ἐγγύς.

- f. The γάρ clause of verse 14 is causal to verse 13. The reason these believing Gentiles have now become near to the covenant people of God is through the peacemaking work of Christ. The fact that this explains verse 13 makes it clear that the “peace” referred to here, is not so much peace between God and man, but peace between Jew and Gentile. This also explains why Paul switches here from the 2 pers. pl. to the 1 pers. pl.; whereas before, he was describing the condition of unsaved Gentiles, he now is discussing the close relationship of Gentiles and Jews, Paul himself being a Jew.
- g. “our peace” in verse 14 is described through two appositional phrases:
- i. “who made both one”
  - ii. “who destroyed the middle dividing wall”
- h. The ἵνα clause of verse 15 is compound. Its two subjunctive verbs provide a twofold purpose of Christ’s being our peace.
- i. Purpose #1: To create in Himself one new man
  - ii. Purpose #2: To reconcile both [Jew and Gentile]
- i. The reconciling of both Jew and Gentile in verse 16 is modified by a succession of 3 prepositional phrases:
- i. “in one body” probably expresses the sphere in which the reconciliation takes place, with “body” likely referring to the body of Christ, the church.
  - ii. “to God” expresses the goal of the reconciliation. Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to each other, only because they are separately reconciled to God.

- iii. “through the cross” expresses the means by which the reconciliation takes place.
- j. The final section of this paragraph is introduced in verse 19 by the inferential expression ἄρα οὖν, a slightly different inferential expression than the one introducing the entire paragraph in verse 11 (διό). Perhaps the difference can be explained in that ἄρα οὖν is used internally to the pericope; whereas, διό introduces the entire pericope.
- k. The second clause of verse 19 is adversative, expressing a strong contrast (ἀλλά) to the first clause of the verse.
- l. The statement of verse 19b that the believing Gentile Ephesians were now “fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God” is explained by means of two parallel participial phrases expressing either the cause or means of 19b. The two participial phrases describe: (1) the foundation (= the apostles and prophets), and (2) the cornerstone (= Christ). What is left to be implied is the metaphorical position of the believing Jews and Gentiles (other than the apostles and prophets, that is). To fill out what is left of the building metaphor, the figure implies that the believing Jews and Gentiles constitute the building stones of this structure, since they are “fitted together” (συναρμολογουμένη, v.21). One is reminded of 1 Peter 2:5.
- 3. Summarize the importance of these grammatical keys to the interpretation of the passage

The grammatical keys make it clear that the believing Gentiles being addressed had not been brought into the covenants God had instituted with Israel, but that Israel’s covenant relationship serves as a suitable point of reference for the metaphorical



comparison. Gentiles, who once had no relationship with God, now had a covenant-like relationship. They had not replaced Israel, but had been brought *near*.

## 5. Identify Lexical Keys - Section #5. Lexical Summary

### 1. Identify key words

- i. πολιτεία, v.12
- ii. ἄθεος, v.12
- iii. εἰρήνη vv.14, 15, 17
- iv. μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, v.14
- v. ἀποκαταλλάσσω, v.16
- vi. προσαγωγή, v.18
- vii. συμπολίτη, v.19
- viii. ἀκρογωνιαίος, v.20
- ix. κατοικητήριον, v.21

### 2. Do a full word study on at least one key word in the passage

- i. πολιτεία, v.12

#### 1. Cognates

- a. πόλις *city*
- b. πολίτευμα *commonwealth, state*
- c. πολιτεύομαι *to be a citizen, to have one's citizenship; to rule; to live, to lead one's life*
- d. πολίτης *a citizen, fellow-citizen, compatriot*
- e. πολῖτις, ἡ *a citizen, citizen of great luxury*

#### 2. Diachronic Study

- a. 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC

- i. *“the condition and rights of a citizen,”*  
*“citizenship,”* equivalent of the Latin, *“civitas.”*  
Herodotus, Thucydides.
  - ii. *“the life and business of a statesman,”*  
*“government,” “administration.”* Aristophanes,  
Thucydides, etc.
  - iii. *“civil polity,” “the condition or constitution of a*  
*state,”* Thucydides, etc.
- b. 4<sup>th</sup> cent. BC
- i. *“the life of a citizen,” “civic life,” “the measures of*  
*a government.”* Demosthenes.
  - ii. *“the body of citizens.”* Aristotle.
  - iii. *“a form of government.”* Plato, etc.
  - iv. *“a republic.”* Xenophon
- c. 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC
- i. *“walk, conduct.”* Athenaeus
- d. LXX, 3<sup>rd</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC (8x, only in Maccabees)
- i. *“religious conduct or way of life”* (in keeping with  
the Law of Moses). 2 Macc 4:11; 8:17; 4 Macc  
4:19; 8:7; 17:9.
  - ii. *“civil rights.”* only in 3 Macc 3:21, 23
- e. Papyri
- i. *“rights of a citizen.”* P Oxy VIII.1119<sup>21</sup> (AD 254)

- ii. “*citizenship.*” Gnomon 47 (ca. AD 150); P Flor I.95<sup>9</sup> (AD 375)

### 3. Synchronic Study

#### a. Outside the NT during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD

- “*citizenship.*” Jos., Ant. 12, 119; Wars 1.194; Dio Chrysostom
- “*state,*” “*people,*” “*body politic.*” Appian, Bell. Civ. 2, 19 §68
- “*way of life,*” “*conduct.*” TestAbr

#### b. In the NT this term occurs only twice:

- Acts 22:28 The commander of the garrison at Antonia Fortress in Jerusalem, responding to Paul states, “I acquired this *citizenship* (πολιτεία) with a large sum of money.” The context strongly implies that the commander had in mind particularly the *rights of citizenship.*
- Eph 2:12 (the passage we are currently studying).

- #### 4. Conclusion: In the context of Eph 2, though πολιτεία might possibly refer to the “people” of Israel, it most likely refers to the “rights of citizenship” in Israel.

### ii. ἄθεος, v.12

#### 1. Cognates

- a. θεά *god/goddess*

- b. θεῖος, -α, -ον *divine, supernatural*; subst. *divine being, divinity*
- c. θεϊότης *divinity, divine nature, divineness*
- d. θεοδίδακτος, ον *taught/instructed by God*
- e. θεοδρόμος *God's runner*
- f. θεολόγος *God's herald*
- g. θεομακάριστος, ον *blessed by God*
- h. θεομακαρίτης *divinely blessed*
- i. θεομαχέω *to fight against God, to oppose God*
- j. θεομάχος, ον *fighting against God*
- k. θεόπνευστος, ον *inspired by God, breathed out by God*
- l. θεοπρεπής, ἐς *worthy of God, revered, venerable, godly*
- m. θεοπρεσβευτής *an ambassador of God*
- n. θεός *God, god, goddess, deity*
- o. θεοσέβεια *religion, piety, godliness, worship*
- p. θεοσεβέω *to have reverence in God, to worship God*
- q. θεοσεβής, ἐς *god-fearing, devout*
- r. θεοστυγία *hatred/enmity toward God*
- s. θεότης *divine character/nature, deity, divinity*
- t. θεοφιλής, ἐς *beloved by God, loving God*

## 2. Diachronic Study

- a. 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC
  - i. “godless,” “ungodly.” Lysias

- ii. “*abandoned of the gods.*” Sophocles
- b. 4<sup>th</sup> cent. BC
  - i. “*without God,*” “*denying the gods.*” Plato
  - ii. “*godless,*” “*ungodly.*” Xenophon (in the superlative, -ώτατος)
- c. LXX, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC (not found)
- d. 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD
  - In the Martyrdom of Polycarp (preserved in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*) the battle cry “away with the atheists” (αἶρε τοὺς ἀθέους) was sounded by the heathen mob against the Christians (cf. also, Just. *Apol.*, I, 13, 1), but when Polycarp is asked renounce his faith in Christ or die, he replies: αἶρε τοὺς ἀθέους, i.e., If I die, I will be taken away from the atheists!
  - “*atheist,*” “*god-denier,*” (in the sense of “one who disdains or denies God or the gods and their laws”) possibly in Sextus Empiricus.

### 3. Synchronic Study

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> cent. outside the NT, “*godless*” (in the sense of one who denies God’s sovereignty by acting and planning according to his own will) Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* I. 49.
- b. N.T. – *hapax legomenon.* In Eph 2:12.

## 4. Conclusion:

It is highly improbable that this could mean anything like theoretical atheism (i.e., denial of the existence of a divine being), since such a philosophical view was virtually unknown in the ancient world. In the context of Eph 2, it is probably not describing immoral conduct either (though it may in fact have been true about the Gentile Ephesians). Everything else in the context has to do with being cut off from the true God who was worshipped by Israel. Most likely, therefore, ἄθεος here means something like, “having no relationship with the one true God.”

## iii. εἰρήνη vv.14, 15, 17

## 1. Cognates

- a. εἰρήναρχος *chief of police, police captain* (cf. our “peace-officer”)
- b. εἰρηνεύω *to reconcile; to live in peace, to be at peace, to keep the peace*
- c. εἰρηνικός, ἦ, ὄν *peaceable, peaceful*
- d. εἰρηνοποιέω *to make peace*
- e. εἰρηνοποιός, ὄν *making peace; subst. a peacemaker*
- f. εἶρω *to fasten together in rows, to string together*

## 2. Diachronic Study

- a. 8<sup>th</sup> cent. BC
  - i. “peace,” “time of peace.” Homer

- b. 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC
  - i. “*peace*.” Herodotus
- c. 4<sup>th</sup> cent. BC
  - i. “*peace*.” Herodotus, Demosthenes
- d. LXX, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC (291x)
  - i. “*peace*.” Gn 15:15; 26:29; Ex 18:23; Lv 26:6; Nu 6:26; etc.
  - ii. “*peace treaty*.” Ezr 5:7
  - iii. “*prosperity*,” “*welfare*.” Jdg 6:23; Lv 26:6
  - iv. “*eternal rest*.” Wis 3:3
  - v. “*health*.” Jdg 18:15
  - vi. The usual translation of εἰρήνη, explaining meanings iii, iv, and v *supra*.

### 3. Synchronic Study

- a. εἰρήνη occurs 92x in the NT; 43x in the Pauline Epistles (at least once in each of the Pauline Epistles; 7x in Ephesians).
- b. Outline of definitions from BDAG:
  - i. A state of concord, *peace*, *harmony*
    - a) between governments, opp. πόλεμος
    - b) harmony in personal relationships *peace*, *harmony*
    - c) *good order*
  - ii. A state of well-being, *peace*



- a) corresp. to Hebr.  $\text{וְשָׁלוֹם}$  *welfare, health* ... *In the formula of greeting*  $\text{עִי. הָמוּיִן=וְשָׁלוֹם}$  ...

A new and characteristic development is the combination of the Greek epistolary greeting  $\text{χαίρειν}$  with a Hebrew expression in the Pauline and post-Pauline letters  $\text{χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη}$ ....

- b) Since, acc. to the prophets, peace will be an essential characteristic of the messianic kgdm. ... Christian thought also freq. regards  $\text{עִי.}$  as nearly synonymous w. messianic salvation....

c. Occurrences of  $\text{εἰρήνη}$  in Ephesians:

- i. 1:2  $\text{χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.}$

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.*

Probably to be understood as the equivalent of  $\text{וְשָׁלוֹם}$  the standard Hebrew greeting.

- ii. 2:14  $\text{Αὐτὸς γάρ ἐστιν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν, ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμώφτερα ἐν καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ}$

$\text{λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ,}$

*For he himself is our peace, the one who made both*

*one, and destroyed the middle dividing wall, the enmity, in his flesh.*

Since this is one of the verses being studied, judgment as to meaning here will be suspended until the conclusion *infra*.

- iii. 2:15 τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας, ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην  
*having abolished the law of commandments in ordinances, so that he might create in him[self] the two into one new man, thus making peace*

Since this is one of the verses being studied, judgment as to meaning here will be suspended until the conclusion *infra*.

- iv. 2:17 καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσαστο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς·  
*And he came and preached peace to you, those who were far, and [he preached peace] to those near.*

Since this is one of the verses being studied, judgment as to meaning here will be suspended until the conclusion *infra*.

- v. 4:3 σπουδάζοντες τηρεῖν τὴν ἐνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ συνδέσμῳ τῆς εἰρήνης·

*being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Here εἰρήνης appears to be a subjective genitive, yielding the paraphrase: “peace binds us into a unity.” This unity, in turn, is authored, promoted, and caused by, the Holy Spirit (either subjective genitive or genitive of source). Since the recipients of the letter are urged to be diligent to *keep* this unity, there appears to have been a threat to the unity of the church – perhaps even divisions, such as those that afflicted the churches in Corinth (1 Co 1:10ff.) and Philippi (Phil 4:2-3). This exhortation is likely directly linked to the doctrinal section of Eph 2:14-17.

vi. 6:15 καὶ ὑποδησάμενοι τοὺς πόδας ἐν ἐτοιμασίᾳ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς εἰρήνης,

*and having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,*

Here εἰρήνης is likely an objective genitive yielding the paraphrase, “the good news about peace”; however, exactly what kind of peace is being referenced is not quite so obvious. If previous references to peace in this epistle have referred to

peace between Jew and Gentile (see conclusion *infra*), it may be possible to see this also as a reference to the effect that the gospel can have on uniting disparate people groups, and having the feet shod with this gospel could prevent the devil's attack on the church by means of promoting disunity. On the other hand, it seems more likely in light of the immediate context of the other pieces of armor (truth, righteousness, faith, salvation, the word of God) that this is a reference to peace between God and man.

- vii. 23 Εἰρήνη τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς καὶ ἀγάπη μετὰ πίστεως ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.  
*Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God, [the] Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.*
- Assuming that the implied verb here would be the optative of εἰμί, this verse amounts to a prayer that both peace and love be granted to the brothers from God. As such, this is probably a reference to peace between believers (“brothers”) rather than to peace between God and man.

#### 4. Conclusion

The context of Ephesians argues strongly for the εἰρήνη in chapter

2 as being a reference, not to peace between God and man, but to peace between Jew and Gentile in Christ. Though the LXX introduced to the idea of εἰρήνη concepts such as “health,” “wholeness,” and “well-being” (via οὐλῆ), here, the original sense of the word as cessation of hostility is retained. Being “in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:13) brings both Jew and Gentile into a new relationship, not only with God, but with each other. The old enmity is gone. They are fellow-partakers of God’s blessings, equally guilty before God, and equally justified in Christ; neither Jew nor Gentile is either nearer or farther from God than the other.

iv. μεσότοιχον τοῦ φράγμοῦ, v.14

This exact phrase is unattested apart from Eph 2:14. Even the word μεσότοιχον is quite rare in the literature, though its meaning is quite clear, since it is a compound of μέσος, “middle” and τοῖχος “a wall.” φράγμος is more common, being found as early as Sophocles and Herodotus in the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC, meaning “a fence,” “wall” or “partition.”

Josephus uses an expression almost identical to the term μεσότοιχον in his description of the building of Solomon’s temple. In *Antiquities* 8.71 he says,

“Now when the king had divided the temple into two parts, he made the inner house of twenty cubits [every way] to be the most secret chamber, but he appointed that of forty cubits to be the sanctuary; and when he had cut a door-place *in the midst of the wall* [τὸν μέσον τοῖχον], he put therein doors of cedar, and overlaid them with a great deal of gold, that had sculpture upon it.”

The second temple, as expanded by Herod the Great, had a Court of the Gentiles at the outside perimeter of the temple compound. A wall separated the Court of the Gentiles from the interior courts which were only for Jews. There were passageways that permitted Jews to pass beyond the Court of the Gentiles into these inner courts, but Gentiles were forbidden to pass on pain of death. It should be remembered that Paul probably wrote this epistle from his Roman imprisonment which was due to his being charged with bringing Gentiles into the inner temple courts (Acts 21:28). It is therefore highly likely that Paul had in mind this barrier separating the Court of the Gentiles from the inner temple courts when he used the phrase μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ.

3. Summarize key concepts arising from key words

- a. πολιτεία, v.12 – Concept: Beginning with Abraham, God began to single out from mankind one nation through whom He would administer His affairs on earth. His administration (dispensation) is spelled out in five covenants God made with Abraham and the nation of Israel: Abrahamic Covenant, Mosaic Covenant, Land Covenant, Davidic Covenant, and New Covenant. These covenants were made with national Israel, and apart from national Israel one had no relationship to these covenants. Thus, citizenship (πολιτεία) in Israel was a necessary prerequisite for covenant blessings. The Gentiles lacked this privileged status.
- b. ἄθεος, v.12 – Concept: The ancient world was a very religious world. In the first century Greco-Roman world there was the official Roman religion which supremely worshipped the Capitoline gods -- Jupiter, Juno and Minerva, and also

worshipped a host of lesser gods and demigods. There were also regional gods who were associated with local religions. To be ἄθεος might mean to live in such a way as to be displeasing to one's god/gods, i.e., to be immoral, but it might also mean to worship the wrong god/gods. From the perspective of Ephesians 2, the Gentiles, before coming to faith in Jesus, were worshipping false gods, and, even if very religious, were still ἄθεος.

- c. εἰρήνη vv.14, 15, 17 – Concept: From ancient times εἰρήνη had signified “peace,” i.e., the cessation of hostilities between parties (individuals, cities, city-states, etc.). Though the LXX introduced to the idea of εἰρήνη concepts such as “health,” “wholeness,” and “well-being” (via εὐλοΐα), here, the original sense of the word as cessation of hostility is retained. Being “in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:13) brings both Jew and Gentile into a new relationship, not only with God, but with each other. The old enmity is gone. They are fellow-partakers of God's blessings, equally guilty before God, and equally justified in Christ; neither Jew nor Gentile is either nearer or farther from God than the other.
- d. μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ, v.14 – Concept: The Mosaic Dispensation's temple complex was designed in such a way as to keep Gentiles at a distance by means of a “dividing wall.” That believing Gentiles are now brought near to God by faith in Jesus is referred to metaphorically as Jesus' destroying the “dividing wall of the fence.”

## 6. Identify Biblical Context - Section #6. Biblical Context Summary

### a. Briefly identify the theme of the book

Leading concepts occurring repeatedly throughout the Book of Ephesians include: peace 7x; love 19x; unity (of Jew and Gentile in Christ, ch. 2-3; of the body of Christ, ch. 4). These suggest that the theme is: The unity and peace of the Body of Christ expressed through a life of love.

### b. Summarize the immediate context surrounding the passage

The immediately preceding context (2:1-10) describes the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This salvation brings the believing sinner out of death and into life as he is raised with Christ and seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

The paragraph following our passage begins with a prayer (3:1); however, this prayer is suspended while Paul digresses to discuss the administration of the grace of God among the Gentiles that God has entrusted to Paul (3:2-13). This administration of grace among the Gentiles was not a subject of Old Testament revelation (3:5,9), which may explain why some Jews had such a difficult time understanding how so many Gentiles could now be coming to faith in the Jewish Messiah, while relatively few Jews were doing so. Paul's ministry made Gentiles "fellow-heirs and of the same body and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus." Thus, this digression is a sort of addendum to, or continuation of, Eph 2:11-22.

With 3:14, Paul resumes the prayer begun in verse 1. This prayer asks that God might grant the Ephesian believers (1) that they be strengthened in their inner man; (2) that Christ might dwell in their hearts; (3) that they might be able to comprehend the immense love of Christ; and (4) that they might be filled with all the fullness of God. The



realization of this prayer in both the Jewish and Gentile members of the church would go a long way toward promoting love and unity between these two groups.

- c. Summarize how the passage contributes to the overall theme of the book

Though the church in Ephesus began with Jewish believers (former disciples of John, Acts 19:1-7; later, those converted from the synagogue, Acts 19:8-10), the lengthiest recorded ministry of Paul took place as he taught for two years from the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9) in a very Gentile setting. This mixed Jewish/Gentile makeup of the church likely set the stage for divisions within the church, as old prejudices between Jew and Gentile carried over into the social life of the congregation. Thus, as Paul exhorts these two groups to strive to maintain the unity that God had already established positionally, he, in 2:11-22, lays out the doctrinal foundation for this unity.

## 7. Identify Theological Context - Section #7. Theological Context Summary

### a. Identify theological principles in the passage

- i. Under the Law Dispensation, Gentiles were without a covenant relationship with God, 2:11-12.
- ii. In Christ, Gentiles who were previously without a covenant relationship, have now come “near” (ἐγγύς). The text does not say they have been brought into Israel’s covenants, nor that they even *have* a covenant with God, only that they have now come near.
- iii. In Christ, Jews and Gentiles are made one. This is not Israel becoming the church, nor is it the church becoming Israel; this oneness is described as a “new man” (καὶνὸς ἄνθρωπος, v.15); it is also the “one body [sc. of Christ]” (εἰς σῶμα, v.16).
- iv. The church comes into existence through the redemptive work of the cross (διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ, v.16).
- v. The Mosaic Law has served its purpose; it came to an end at the cross (vv. 14-16).
- vi. In the present dispensation, there is no need for human priests, since we have access to the Father through the Spirit (v.18).
- vii. The Church is based on Christ as the cornerstone, and the apostles and [NT] prophets as the foundation (v. 20).

### b. Connect the principles to the overall context of the book

- i. Under the Law Dispensation, Gentiles were without a covenant relationship with God, 2:11-12.

Contextual Connection: The favored status that the Mosaic Law gave to the Jews under the previous dispensation resulted in their forming an unfavorable opinion

of Gentiles. This is likely part of the reason for a rift between Jewish believers and Gentile believers in the church at Ephesus. Such prejudice on the part of the Jews is unwarranted, and Paul alludes to this in 2:3 when he points out that the Jews were just as guilty before God as were the Gentiles.

- ii. In Christ, Gentiles who were previously without a covenant relationship, have now come “near” (ἐγγύς). The text does not say they have been brought into Israel’s covenants, nor that they even *have* a covenant with God, only that they have now come near.

Contextual Connection: Now that the Gentiles have come near, Jews can claim no superiority over them in their relationship to God. In the present dispensation, relationship to God is not based on covenant, but on faith in Jesus, equally for both Jew and Gentile. The principle that now binds the people of God together is the union “in Christ” (cf. 1:1,3,7,11,13; 2:6,7,10,13,21,22; 3:6,12,21; 4:32). Joined to one another in Christ, both Jew and Gentile reflect this unity through Christ’s great law of love, 4:2-6.

- iii. In Christ, Jews and Gentiles are made one. This is not Israel becoming the church, nor is it the church becoming Israel; this oneness is described as a “new man” (καὶνὸς ἄνθρωπος, v.15); it is also the “one body [sc. of Christ]” (εἰς σῶμα, v.16).

Contextual Connection: Here the contextual connection is practically identical with the previous one. The “new man” and the “one body” are ways of expressing the principle of union between believing Jew and believing Gentile, and provides the doctrinal basis for their giving diligence to preserve this unity (4:2-6).

- iv. The church comes into existence through the redemptive work of the cross (διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ, v.16).

Contextual Connection: This goes back to the redemptive plan as expressed in chapter one. It also marks the event which brought an end to the Mosaic Law. It was the Mosaic Law, principally, that prompted within the Jews the kind of prejudice that resulted in the very enmity that this epistle is attempting to correct.

- v. The Mosaic Law has served its purpose; it came to an end at the cross (vv. 14-16).

Contextual Connection: As with the previous points, the Mosaic Law not only could not save, it promoted within the Jews an unspiritual attitude of superiority. By stating that the Law has come to an end, the main support for the Jews' prejudicial attitude toward the Gentiles is removed, and the way is prepared for a description of the administrative terms of the new dispensation.

- vi. In the present dispensation, there is no need for human priests, since we have access to the Father through the Spirit (v.18).

Contextual Connection: The temple, as a part of the Mosaic institution, likewise was used to promote Jewish superiority over the Gentiles. This is seen quite clearly in the wall that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the inner courts of the temple complex. The Gentiles simply did not have access to God's presence. Of course, the common Jew, who might draw nearer than the Gentiles, still did not have direct access to God. Only the High Priest on *Yom Kippur* was permitted into God's direct presence, but still he *could* go into the Holy of Holies once a year and represent the covenant people. So this matter of access to God likely represented a focal point of Jewish prejudice against Gentiles. Now, in the current

dispensation, not only has the Mosaic Law been done away, it has been replaced with a new way of access to God, whereby both Jews and Gentiles have direct access, any time, anywhere, through Christ. This, likewise, provides a significant part of the theological foundation for the message of unity in the Book of Ephesians.

- vii. The Church is based on Christ as the cornerstone, and the apostles and [NT] prophets as the foundation (v. 20).

Contextual Connection: In first century building technology, the cornerstone was no mere piece of decoration. It was a large stone skillfully cut to be perfectly square and plumb. It was carefully set as the first stone on the foundation, so that the entire rest of the building could use it as its frame of reference for what was truly square and plumb. As such, the cornerstone provided the direction and purpose for the entire building. In the Book of Ephesians, a significant part of the argument for unity lies in the fact that the old standard, the Mosaic Law, could not produce harmony between Jew and Gentile, and had thus been removed. There is a new standard in the present dispensation. That new standard is Christ. From Christ, the entire church receives its direction and purpose. He achieved redemption for the church (ch. 1); He is the mystery of the present dispensation, unknown in the past dispensation (ch. 3); He is the one who gifts the church so that it can pursue unity (ch. 4a); He, as the forgiver of men, is the basis of our forgiving one another in the church (ch. 4b); He is the measure of the love in which we are to walk (ch. 5a); He is the one to whom we submit, and this provides the standard of submission in Christian society (ch. 5b-6a); and He is the

one who provides us with the spiritual armor we need to withstand the devil in the evil day.

c. Summarize theological themes based on context

The theological themes of Ephesians 2:11-22 have to do chiefly with the new dispensation (administration) that has been instituted since Christ's redemptive work on the cross. The previous dispensation had served its purposes for nearly 1,500 years, but under that dispensation, the covenant people of God (Israel) had developed an unhealthy and unspiritual prejudice against the Gentiles. The new dispensation involves a doing away with the institutions that were abused by the Jews in supporting this prejudice, viz., the Law, the Priesthood and the Temple. In the present dispensation, believers in Jesus are united through faith in Christ's redemptive work on the cross. They are brought together in the body of Christ on an equal basis with one another. Christ himself has created this unity, something that the Mosaic Law could never accomplish.

## 8. Secondary Verification - Section #8. Correlation Summary

### a. Utilize five commentaries covering the passage

- i. Anders, Max. Vol. 8, *Galatians-Colossians*. Holman New Testament Commentary; Holman Reference. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999.

Biographical Summary: Max Anders (B.A., English Education, Grace College; Th.M. Dallas Theological Seminary; Th.D. Western Seminary), Senior Pastor Castleview Baptist Church, January 1999, author of 22 books (incl. original developer and general editor of *The Holman NT Commentary*); former college professor, as well as instructor with Walk Thru the Bible Ministries. Max and his wife, Margie, live in Indianapolis with their two children, Tanya and Christopher, whom they adopted from Russia.

#### Citations:

- v.12 “Christ” – “Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior of the Jewish nation. The nation of Israel had been given promises (covenants) by God that they would have a Messiah. This gave them hope and afforded an avenue to God for them. Not being Jews, the Gentiles did not have these advantages. A Gentile might convert to Judaism; but then he would no longer be a Gentile but a converted Jew.” (p.114).
- v.15 “Jesus’ death satisfied the law and therefore eliminated it as a barrier. Since neither Jew nor Gentile had to obey the law to find salvation, the means of distinguishing between the two kinds of people vanished. Again, this created peace between hostile parties.” (p.114).

- v.18 “in one Spirit” – “The Spirit became the means of immediate access to God the Father.” (p.114).
- v.19 “fellow citizens with the saints” – “Most likely, it is a general reference to people of God from all generations and uses the contrast of the Gentiles’ previous state to enhance the understanding of their present state. Alienated foreigners with no citizenship papers, they have joined the people of God with heavenly citizenship.” (p.115).
- v.20 “corner stone” – “The question is which building stone is meant: the cornerstone to which all other stones of the foundation are connected, or the capstone or keystone which is the last stone placed in the top of the structure over the gate. Isaiah 28:16 apparently refers to the foundation or cornerstone, but Psalm 118:22 may refer to the top keystone. Ephesians can be interpreted in light of either imagery, but the setting of Christ as head over all things (1:10, 20–23) may point to the keystone interpretation as the most appropriate here.” (p.115).

ii. *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: The Greek Text With Notes and Addenda*. Edited by Westcott, Brooke Foss, bp. of Durham and John Maurice Schulhof. New York: Macmillan and co., limited; The Macmillan company, 1909.

Citations:

- v.12 “at that time” – “Καίρῳς retains its qualitative sense: ‘under those circumstances,’ ‘at that season,’ and not simply ‘at that point of time.’” (p.35).



- v.12 “without Christ” – “The thought is of the personal relationship now recognised and not of the national hope.” (p.35).

*Evaluation:* The promises to national Israel are most likely in view here. God had promised a Messiah to national Israel, but the Gentiles were excluded from this due to their exclusion from citizenship in Israel. This accords better with the context.

- v.13 “by the blood of Christ” – “The offered life was not only the means of reconciliation (διά), but the atmosphere, as it were, in which the reconciled soul lived.” (p.36).

*Evaluation:* It cannot be both means and sphere. Though both might make sense, that doesn’t mean that both were true in this context.

Here, it is probably the expression of means/instrument. The sphere is expressed by ἐν Χριστῷ.

- v.14 “both” – “St Paul speaks first of the two organisations, systems (τὰ ἀμφοτέρα), under which Jews and Gentiles were gathered as hostile bodies, separated by a dividing fence...” (p.36).

*Evaluation:* The neuter does not express “two systems,” because the two systems were not made one! Rather, the neuter refers to Jews and Gentiles as persons, but has reference to their general qualities of “Jewishness” and “Gentileness” as described in the preceding verses.

It is Jews and Gentiles that have been made one, not the Jewish system and the Gentile system.

- v.19 “fellow-citizens with the saints” – “συνπ. τῶν ἁγίων] fellow-citizens (v.l. *conceives*) with the saints of the spiritual Israel.” (p.40).  
*Evaluation:* This comment reveals a non-dispensational perspective. Clearly, he sees the church as “Spiritual Israel.” But the passage has made clear that what Christ has created is a “new man,” neither Israel nor the Gentiles, but something new.

iii. Abbott, T.K., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897.

Citations:

- v.12 “covenants of promise” – “The plural is used with reference to the covenants with the patriarchs, but the Mosaic covenant is not excluded, although it was primarily νομοθεσία.” (p.58).
- v.13 “became near” – “Accordingly in the following verses we have two points of view combined, viz. the reconciliation of the Gentiles to God, and their admission to the πολιτεία of Israel, namely, the true Israel – the Christian Church.” (pp.59-60).  
*Evaluation:* This explanation sums up the essence of replacement theology, but Paul has carefully laid out a different explanation. The Church has not become a “new Israel,” but a “new man” that is neither Jew nor Gentile.
- v.14 “he is our peace” – “The context shows that what is primarily intended in the union of Jews and Gentiles; but as it was not this union of itself that was of importance, but the essential basis of it, as the

union of both in one body of Christ, it is manifest that the idea of peace with God could not be absent from the mind of the apostle in writing ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν.” (p.60).

*Evaluation:* This is erroneous, since it reads a dual meaning into these words. It either refers to peace between Jew and Gentile, or it means peace between man and God. It cannot mean both at the same time. Abbott has already conceded that the context shows that it means the former. Paul will take up the latter under the language of “reconciliation” a little bit later in this passage.

- iv. Hoehner, Harold, “Ephesians” in John F. Walvoord, & Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-.

Citations:

- v.12 “without Christ” – “not only personally (true also of many Jews) but also in that they had no national hope of the Messiah.” (II.625).
- v.14 “abolishing ... the enmity” – “Some translations (e.g., KJV, NASB) give the idea that the Law was the enmity, but that is wrong; the Law was the cause of the enmity. Christ “destroyed” the barrier (hostility) by making the Law inoperative.” (II.626).

- v. Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

Citations:

- v.12 “covenants of promise” – “The Mosaic law cannot be thought of as a covenant of promise for it is a conditional covenant, meaning that God would bless the nation Israel when it collectively obeyed him. In fact, the Mosaic law and the promise to Abraham are starkly contrasted in Rom 4:13-17 and Gal 3:6-4:31. Also, Paul lists the Mosaic covenant separately from the covenants (of promise) (cf. Rom 9:4). Finally, the Mosaic Law has been rendered inoperative for those who are in Christ (Rom 7:1-6; 10:4; Gal 2:19; 3:24-25). How could it be a covenant of promise if it has been replaced by the new covenant?” (pp.358-59).
- v.14 “he is our peace” – “... the peace is primarily between the Jewish and Gentile believers and secondarily between human beings and God.... One must keep these priorities in order. It is true that we personally have peace because of what Christ has done, but it is wrong in this context to make that the primary thing, as does Wulf, when the primary point of ‘our peace’ refers to the peace between Jews and Gentiles who are in Christ, that new person that Paul will develop in v.15.” (p.367).
- v.15 “law of commandments” – “Since the whole Mosaic law has been rendered inoperative for Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ, it is a false dichotomy to distinguish between the moral and ceremonial laws, making only the ceremonial laws inoperative. Christ is the end of the whole law for believers (Rom 10:4) and we as believers are no longer

under that pedagogue (Gal 3:25). In fact, we have died to the law (Rom 7:1-6). Does this mean that there are no laws in the Mosaic Law that the believer of today is obligated to obey? Only those that have been reiterated in the NT.” (p.376).

- v.15 “one new man” – “It is not that Gentiles become Jews as Gentile proselytes did in pre-NT times nor that Jews become Gentiles, but both become ‘one new person’ or ‘one new humanity,’ a third entity.” (pp.378-79).
- v.22 “in the Lord” – “The final prepositional phrase ἐν κυρίῳ does not modify the main verb ἁγιάζει for that would be redundant. It could modify ναόν, which would then be rendered ‘a temple holy in the Lord,’ but more likely it modifies ναὸν ἅγιον, ‘holy temple in the Lord.’” (p.411).
- v.22 “in the Spirit” – “There are three interpretations of this phrase. First, some commentators render it adjectively as ‘spiritual,’ meaning God’s spiritual dwelling place (NEB, NRSV). They were thinking of a spiritual temple as opposed to a stone one built by the Jews, similar to 1 Pet 2:5 where the believers are built into a ‘spiritual house’ (οἶκος πνευματικός). ‘But there is no suggestion of this in the context; and as the whole is so distinctly figurative, it would be worse than superfluous to add this definition.’ [Abbott, 76]. In the context there is a contrast made between the enmity between Jews and Gentiles before Christ’s redemptive work and the peace they enjoy since his death, but

no contrast between the two kinds of temples. Second, some think ἐν πνεύματι indicates the more means of συνοικοδομεῖσθε and is rendered ‘you are being built together by means of the Spirit’ (AV). Calvin combines this interpretation with the first one. The problem with the second interpretation is that it is far removed from the verb it modifies. Third, most interpreters think it does not modify the verb ‘being built together’ but rather the immediately preceding words regarding ‘God’s dwelling place,’ indicating that the holy temple is God’s dwelling place ‘by the Spirit’ (TEV, NIV) or ‘in the Spirit’ (RV, ASV, RSV, NASB, JB, NJB).” (p.414).

- vi. Wood, Skevington, “Ephesians” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Vol. 11* Frank E. Gaebelin, gen. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.  
Biographical Summary: Skevington Wood: B.A., University of London; Ph.D., University of Edinburgh; Principal, Cliff College, Derbyshire, England.  
Citations:

- v.14 “peace” – “There is an echo here of Micah 5:5. ‘Peace’ is recognized by the Talmud as a name for God. So Paul can announce that Christ is peace as well as life (Col 3:4) and hope (Col 1:27). The ‘I am’ sayings recorded in the Fourth Gospel provided a foundation in the claims of Jesus for such assertions.” (p.39).

*Evaluation:* This as opposed to it being synecdoche. But it is one thing for Jesus to say “I am the life” but another when Paul says, “He

is our peace.” The addition of the modifier “our” makes this a different kind of saying.

- v.15 “new man” – “... the new humanity of which he himself as the second Adam is the Head.” (p.40).
- v.17 “came and preached peace” – “Was it not rather by the Spirit and through the apostles, as the missionary program of the infant church was inaugurated in obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:20)?” (p.41).
- v.22 “by the Spirit” – “All this is achieved not only *by* but *in* the Spirit. He is at once the means and the element.” (p.42).

*Evaluation:* It can mean one or the other, but not both. The sphere is expressed by ἐν ᾧ, thus, “by the Spirit” probably expresses means, not sphere.

vii. Lincoln, Andrew T., *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 42, “Ephesians.”*

Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Note: Lincoln rejects the Pauline authorship of Ephesians.

Citations:

- v.13 “became near” – “... the language of coming near ... does not mean that these Gentile Christians, like proselytes, have now become members of the commonwealth of Israel, but rather that they have become members of a newly created community whose privileges transcend those of Israel, as vv. 19-22 in particular make apparent.” (p.139).

- v.14 “made both one” – “the neuter ... is best explained as a remnant of the traditional [hymnic] material which originally referred to heaven and earth.” (p.140).

*Evaluation:* The idea that this verse was based on an original early Christian hymn is highly speculative, and, in part, based on Lincoln’s view that the book is post-Pauline.

- v.15 “law of commandments in ordinances” – “Some provide the dogmatic gloss that it was only the ceremonial and not the moral law that was abolished (cf. Hendriksen, 135). Others suggest that it is simply the legalistic, casuistic use of the law that is done away with (cf. Schlier, 126). Still others hold that only one aspect of the law, the law in its divisiveness, but not the law itself, has been annulled (cf. Barth, 287-91). But these efforts to absolve the writer from an alleged antinomianism or supposed contradiction of the major Paulines will not do as an interpretation of τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας.... But it is clearly the law itself and all its regulations, not just some of them, which are in view.... But to make divisiveness one aspect of the law, and the only aspect which is abolished misses the thrust of v 15.” (p.142).
- v.15 “one new man” – “The new community of which the Gentiles have become a part is not simply a development out of Israel, according to this writer. Instead, it took a new creation to produce it.... The concept of the Church here is, in fact if not in name, that of the



‘third race,’ neither Jewish nor Gentile .... Interestingly, the position of the Ephesians turns out to be more like that produced by the sharp logic of Paul’s polemic in Galatians, with its stress on the discontinuity in the history of salvation and its assertions that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek (3:28), that the heavenly Jerusalem has replaced the present Jerusalem in God’s purposes (4:25-27), that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision count for anything, but a new creation (6:15)....” (p.134).

*Evaluation:* Stresses the discontinuity between Israel and the Church.

- v.15 “so making peace” – “The peace in view at this point is between the two old enemies, not with God, and making peace here, as in Col 1:20, is a synonym for reconciling....” (p.144).
- v.16 ἐν αὐτῷ - “Some take ἐν αὐτῷ in its present context as a reference to the cross, as the most immediate antecedent.... But in the light of the force of αὐτός in its various forms throughout vv 14-16 it is better to take this use as a reference to Christ himself, though it will be his death which is particularly in view (cf. ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, “in his flesh,” v 15). In his own person given over to death, Christ put to death the hostility bound up with the law.” (p.146).

*Evaluation:* But the closer proximity of σταυρός and the parallel with Col 2:14 make it almost certain that Lincoln is incorrect here.

- v.17 “preached peace” – “But what is the nature of the peace which is proclaimed? Is it peace between the two groups or is it peace with

God, which v 16 has brought into the picture? ... The wording of the verse, which in fact has peace preached to the two groups separately, tips the scales against a horizontal reference for peace as the primary one. The force of the rewording is that a vertical reference for peace now becomes the primary one. Since v 16 has made clear that both groups, ‘the near’ as well as ‘the far,’ require reconciliation with God, it is likely that v 17, by talking of a proclamation of peace by Christ to each of the groups, has this vertical dimension primarily in view.” (pp.147-48).

*Evaluation:* But this requires switching the meaning of “peace” within the same context. It seems better to me to understand in v. 17 a metonymy in which the effect is substituted for the cause. I.e. reconciliation between God and man is preached, and this results in peace between men.

- v.18 ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι – “The sphere of the flesh (cf. v 11) produced only division between Gentile and Jew, but now in the sphere of the Spirit both have access.” (p.149).

*Evaluation:* The preposition ἐν might express sphere in some contexts; however, here in Eph 2, the sphere of Christian position and walk in the mind of the author is ἐν Χριστῷ (cf. v. 13). To be “in the Spirit” in the sense of sphere denotes concept of mysticism that is absent in this passage. It is used, for example, of the prophetic state of John in Rev 1:10. ἐν in this passage probably denotes means or instrument.

- viii. Calvin, John, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, transl. William Pringle. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.

Citations:

- v.11 “called uncircumcision” – “Since, therefore, God usually connects his grace with the sacraments, their want of the sacraments is taken as an evidence that neither were they partakers of his grace.” (p.232).

- v.14 “he is our peace who hath made both one” – “He now includes Jews in the privilege of reconciliation, and shews that, through one Messiah, all are united to God.” (p.235).

*Evaluation:* This is just backwards. Paul is not arguing here that Jews have been included, but rather that the Gentiles have been included in something the Jews already had!

- v.14 “he is our peace” – “If Christ *is our peace*, all who are out of him must be at variance with God. What a beautiful title is this which Christ possesses, -- the peace between God and men!” (p.235).

*Evaluation:* Calvin fails to understand here that the peace Paul speaks of is peace between Jew and Gentile.

- v.15 “the law of commandments contained in ordinances” – “What had been metaphorically understood by the word *wall* is now more plainly expressed. The ceremonies, by which the distinction was declared, have been abolished through Christ. What were

circumcision, sacrifices, washings, and abstaining from certain kinds of food, but symbols of sanctification, reminding the Jews that their log was different from that of other nations . . . . ceremonies have been abolished.” (p.237). “It is evident, too, that Paul is here treating exclusively of the ceremonial law; for the moral law is not a wall of partition separating us from the Jews, but lays down instructions in which the Jews were not less deeply concerned than ourselves.” (p.238).

*Evaluation:* Calvin understands that only the ceremonial aspect of the law has been abolished.

- v.17 “came and preached peace” – “But here Paul dwells chiefly on this circumstance, that Gentiles are united with Jews in the kingdom of God.” (p.240).

*Evaluation:* This represents Calvin’s understanding of the church as a spiritualized kingdom of God.

- v.20 “foundation” – “... in the strictest sense of the term, Christ is the only foundation.” (p.242).

b. Identify hermeneutic method of the commentators

- i. Anders – Literal, for the most part, but with a tendency to read in some realized eschatology (kingdom now) theological presuppositions.
- ii. Hoehner – Quite literal, very consistent. Good grasp of legitimate use of figurative language.

- iii. Calvin – Generally literal, especially when viewed from the perspective of his historical context. Calvin made tremendous strides in advancing literal hermeneutics, as opposed to the allegorizing tendency of medieval Roman Catholic interpreters. However, some anti-Semitic bias may be detected, and a lack of understanding of the distinction between Israel and the Church leads him to some nonliteral interpretations in places.
  - iv. Abbott – Mostly literal; however, an attachment to Covenant Theology colors his interpretation at places.
  - v. Lincoln – Pleasingly literal.
  - vi. Wood – Mostly literal; however he sometimes finds dual meaning in the language.
  - vii. Westcott – Mostly literal, but clearly nondispensational. Westcott sees the church as spiritual Israel.
- c. Summarize agreements & differences in the interpretations of the commentators  
See cited passages above for agreements and differences.
- d. Defend your interpretation or alter it in light of your findings.  
See Exposition below.

## 9. Exposition - Section #9. Analysis & Impact

- a. Provide verse analysis - running commentary on the passage

### Introduction:

Ephesians 2:11-22 carries a message that is foundational to the overall theme and message of the Book of Ephesians. The first converts to Christ in Ephesus were from among the Jews (converts from the synagogue, and converts from among some disciples of John the Baptist, Acts 18:19-21; 24-28; 19:1-8). Later, after being forced out of the synagogue, large numbers of Gentile converts came to faith while Paul taught from the facilities of the local philosopher Tyrannus (Acts 19:9-10). This resultant ethnic mixture in the church apparently led to strained relations as ancient Jewish prejudice toward the Gentiles (and *vice versa*) found its way into the fellowship of believers. Paul writes to the Ephesians in large part to counter this problem. He reminds the members of the congregation that they have been united in Christ and are now on an equal basis before God. Paul argues that the rationale the Jews had used to justify their anti-Gentile prejudice was based on their reliance upon the Law of Moses which has now been done away in Christ. In its place, during the present dispensation, both Jew and Gentile are related to God on exactly the same basis, no longer by means of the covenant promises of the Old Testament, but solely by faith in the redemptive work of Christ.

As he develops his argument, Paul begins by granting that the past condition of the Gentiles was precisely as the Jews had presumed; they were in fact separated from God's covenant blessing (2:11-12). However, he then proceeds to

move into the present and describe a new kind of administrative arrangement (i.e. “dispensation”) that has been established since Christ’s redemptive work on the cross (2:13-18). This new administrative arrangement treats both Jew and Gentile as equals before God, neither one having a preferential position because of the covenants. Finally, Paul concludes that, in Christ, both Jew and Gentile form a unified entity, pictured under two metaphors: (1) citizenship in a commonwealth (2:19), and (2) building stones in a temple structure (2:20-22).

Outline:

- I. Past condition of the Gentiles, 11-12
  - A. Lacking the physical sign of membership in God’s covenant nation, 11a
  - B. Despised by the covenant people, 11b
  - C. Lacking legal status in God’s covenant nation, 12a
  - D. Having no relationship to God’s covenant promises, 12a
  - E. Hopeless, 12b
  - F. Godless, 12b
- II. Present: Both Jew and Gentile Participate Equally in the Body of Christ, 13-18
  - A. Bringing the Gentiles Near, 13
  - B. Joint Participation of Both Jews and Gentiles, 14-18
- III. Conclusion: Gentiles are included with Jews as the people of God, 19-22
  - A. Pictured as Citizenship in a Commonwealth, 19
  - B. Pictured as a Building and Temple, 20-22
    1. The Foundation, 20a

2.The Cornerstone, 20b

3.The Building Stones, 21-22

Commentary:

*I. Past condition of the Gentiles, 11-12*

A. Lacking the physical sign of membership in God’s covenant nation, 11a

Διό] This inferential conjunction connects the current paragraph to the preceding. In 2:1-10 Paul had argued that both Jew and Gentile are equally guilty before God (Gentiles, 2:1-2; Jews, 2:3), and that both Jew and Gentile are saved on the basis of faith alone in Christ alone (2:4-10). 2:11-22 draws a logical conclusion from this; if both are equally guilty, and both are saved on the same basis, then there should be no racial division within the congregation.

μνημονεύετε] Pres. Act. Impv. 2pers. Pl. μνημονεύω, “to remember,” “to keep in mind.” This verb, occurring frequently in the NT (21x; 7x in Paul; only here in Eph), has its content expressed either by περί τινος (Heb 11:22), ὅτι (Ac 20:31; here, Eph 2:11; 2Thess 2:5), or an indirect question (Rev 2:5; 3:3).<sup>3</sup> Paul commands the recipients to hold continually before their minds the following doctrinal truths. In this first doctrinal half of the Book, imperatives are quite rare,<sup>4</sup> making this command stand out as all the more significant.

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<sup>3</sup> BDAG, s.v. μνημονεύω.

<sup>4</sup> An analysis of the verb moods in the two halves of Ephesians (chh. 1-3 doctrinal; chh. 4-6 hortatory) bears this out: in chapters 1-3, only 0.8% of all verbs are in the imperative (ch. 1, 0%; ch. 2 2%; ch. 3, 0%), while 38.2% are indicative; whereas in chapters 4-6, 19.8% of all verbs are in the imperative (ch. 4, 15.3%; ch. 5, 23.9%; ch. 6, 20.4%)



ὅτι] The conjunction introduces the indirect discourse (i.e. content) clause after μνημονεύετε. The clause becomes interrupted by a lengthy appositional phrase, then resumes with a repeated ὅτι at the beginning of verse 12. See comments *infra* at verse 12.

ποτέ] This temporal indicator is used to fix the time-frame of the first division of this paragraph. Though this particle is sometimes used in a generalizing fashion meaning “*ever*” (Gal 2:6), here it has its usual force of indicating past time, “*once*,” “*formerly*,” as is made obvious by the contrasting νυνὶ δέ (*but now*) in verse 13. The time reference is not to the Ephesian believers’ individual conversion, but to the change of administration/dispensation that occurred following Christ’s redemptive work on the cross. In the mid-first century, when Paul wrote this epistle, some of the Ephesian converts may in fact have been alive on earth before the crucifixion, but Paul is speaking generically of the condition of Gentiles before the cross in these first two verses.

υμεῖς] Nom. Pl. 2<sup>nd</sup> Personal Pronoun. The antecedent is specifically the Gentile majority of the Ephesian congregation. This differentiation between Gentile (referred to in the 2 pers. pl.) and either Jew or both Jew and Gentile (referred to in the 1 pers. pl.) was established in the preceding context; see 2:1-2 (2 pers. pl.) and 2:3 (1 pers. pl.).

τὰ ἔθνη] Nom. Neut. Pl. definite article + Nom. Neut. Pl. ἔθνος “*nation*,” “*Gentile*,” “*custom*.” The article is used here to refer to the class, i.e., Gentiles as a class of people. Ἐθνη, though occasionally used to refer to

the nation of Israel (Jn 11:48, 50ff; 18:35), usually refers to the Gentile nations, and was used normally in the LXX to translate  $\text{גוֹיִם}$  (*Goyim*). The nom. pl. is used to place this noun in apposition with ὑμεῖς. It is the first in a series of six appositional nouns or nominal phrases used to describe the Gentile majority in the Ephesian congregation.<sup>5</sup> Paul uses apposition frequently throughout this paragraph as a means of describing and clarifying some significant noun.<sup>6</sup>

ἐν σαρκί] Preposition ἐν “in” + Dat. Fem. Sing. σὰρξ “flesh.” The prepositional phrase is adjectival, modifying ἔθνη and makes reference to the physical sign of the Jewish covenant relation to God, viz., circumcision. As will be seen in the following phrase, these Gentiles were “marked” as ἀκροβυστία, *uncircumcision*. ἐν here has a locative significance. Beginning with Abraham, all Jewish males were to indicate their inclusion in the covenants of God by receiving the sign of circumcision normally on the eighth day following birth.

#### B. Despised by the covenant people, 11b

οἱ λεγόμενοι] Nom. Masc. Pl. definite article + Pres. Pass. Ptcpl. Nom.

Masc. Pl. of λέγω frequently “to say,” “to tell,” “to speak,” but here, as in many other places, “to call,” “to name.” The article has a substantivizing force and makes the participle substantival, placing it in

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<sup>5</sup> The others are: οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία κ.τ.λ., ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἀπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες, and ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

<sup>6</sup> Other uses of apposition can be seen in v.13 οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν; v.14 ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφοτέρω ἐν, [ὁ] τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, and τὴν ἔχθραν.

apposition with τὰ ἔθνη. For the passive of this participle, as here, see also Mt 13:55; Heb 11:24; 1Co 8:5. The masculine appears to be ungrammatical, since it ought to agree either with the preceding neuter ἔθνη or, possibly, with the following feminine ἀκροβυστία. However here the masculine is a *constructio ad sensum*, describing a people group which would be considered masculine. On the other hand, see the following λεγομένης!

ἀκροβυστία] Nom. Fem. Sing. “*uncircumcision*.” This serves as the predicate nominative to λεγόμενοι and functions essentially as a proper name.<sup>7</sup> In this case, it was a derogatory term thrust at the Gentiles by the Jews. Found only in Biblical and ecclesiastical Greek, the term is probably a corruption of ἀκροποσθία.<sup>8</sup> Calvin spiritualizes this to mean “their want of the sacraments” as evidence that “neither were they partakers of his grace.”<sup>9</sup> Such a sacramental view cannot possibly be read into this context. Circumcision (and, therefore, uncircumcision) has reference to the covenant relation of Jews under previous dispensations and has nothing to do with the church.

ὑπό] This preposition when followed by a genitive object expresses the agent of a preceding passive verb. In this instance “that which is called

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<sup>7</sup> BDF §412(2).

<sup>8</sup> BDAG, s.v. ἀκροβυστία. ἀκροποσθία from ἀκρο, “*tip*” or “*top*” + πόσθη, the *membrum virile*.

<sup>9</sup> John Calvin, “Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians” in William Pringle, transl. *Calvin’s Commentaries*, Vol. XXI (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979) 232.

the circumcision” is the agent of “those who are called ‘uncircumcision.’”

τῆς λεγομένης] Gen. Fem. Sing. article + Pres. Pass. Ptcpl. Gen. Fem. Sing. of λέγω “to say,” “to call.” The article has substantivizing force making the participle substantival. See comments *supra* on οἱ λεγόμενοι. Here, however, the expression is genitive so as to function as the object of the preceding ὑπό, and its gender is grammatically correct, being in agreement with the following περιτομῆς.<sup>10</sup>

περιτομῆς] Gen. Fem. Sing. περιτομή “circumcision” (lit. “a cutting around” in both the Greek and Latin etymologies). Like ἀκροβυστία *supra*, this noun is a predicate genitive of λεγομένης and functions as a proper name. The title was borne as a badge of honor by the Jews.

ἐν σαρκί] See comments *supra* where it modified ἀκροβυστία. Here, it modifies περιτομῆς.

χειροποιήτου] Gen. Fem. Sing. χειροποίητος “made by human hands.” This two-termination adjective is found as early as Herodotus in the fifth century BC referring to such things as buildings and temples that were *made by human hands*. Here, however, it refers to circumcision as that which is man-made. Paul may have added this qualifier to infer that their circumcision had more to do with man than with God. As early as Deuteronomy 10:16 Israel was urged to circumcise their heart, not merely their flesh. The heart cannot be circumcised by the hand of man.

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<sup>10</sup> A noun which one might think should be masculine!

If Paul had a verse like Deut. 10:16 in mind, then he was likely inferring by use of this adjective, that the Jews' hearts in fact had *not* been circumcised.

C. Lacking legal status in God's covenant nation, 12a

ὅτι] The ὅτι resumes the ὅτι of verse 11; i.e., it continues the indirect discourse after a somewhat lengthy and complex description of the uncircumcised condition of the Gentiles. Now, as the indirect discourse clause continues, Paul moves on to the next appositional noun phrase.<sup>11</sup>

ἦτε] Imperf. Ind. 2 Pers. Pl. εἰμί "to be." This forms the main verb of the indirect discourse ὅτι clause, and may therefore be supplied as the verb of the ὅτι clause in verse 11 as well. The imperfect describes their continued existence throughout the previous administration/dispensation.

τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ] Dat. Masc. Sing. definite article + Dat. Masc. Sing. of καιρός "time," "period," and ἐκεῖνος, Dat. Masc. Sing. of Demonstr. Pronoun "that." The article is in the normal position for a demonstrative pronoun in the attributive position. This Dative of Time marks the time-frame when the descriptions being employed by Paul here in verses 11-12 were true. The previous administration/dispensation is marked temporally by the adverb ποτέ

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<sup>11</sup> See comment *supra* on τὰ ἔθνη.

in verse 11, the Imperfect Indicative of ἦτε in this verse, and by the Dative of Time in τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ.

χωρὶς Χριστοῦ] Preposition χωρὶς “without” + Gen. Masc. Sing. Χριστός “Christ,” “Messiah.” This prepositional phrase is adjectival and functions as the predicate adjective to ἦτε. χωρὶς, when used as a preposition<sup>12</sup> takes a genitive object. Χριστός here probably means “Messiah,”<sup>13</sup> rather than “Christ.” Although by the time Paul writes his prison epistles the term Χριστός has largely taken on the attribute of a proper name, in this particular context (Jew vs. Gentile) it most likely has reference to the fact that there was no Messianic promise given outside of Israel (Ro 9:4,5). In Daniel 9:25 Χριστός (cognate to χρίω “to anoint”) appears in the LXX as the translation of מָשַׁח (from מָשַׁח “to anoint”). Interestingly, in Daniel 9:26 the MT has the same מָשַׁח, but the LXX translates it as χρίσμα “an anointing.” This Messiah of Daniel 9 is the one who will usher in God’s kingdom, and, though the OT includes Gentiles in the kingdom, it is only as nations who are subject to Israel. The Messiah is primarily Israel’s Messiah, and the Gentiles only receive blessing secondarily.<sup>14</sup> Thus, as Paul

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<sup>12</sup> It is found as an adverb as early as Homer in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, but occurs only once in this usage in the NT in John 20:7. Its most frequent use in the NT is as a preposition with the genitive, following its object in the phrase οὐ χωρὶς (see BDF §216,2).

<sup>13</sup> Holman Christian Standard Bible.

<sup>14</sup> Westcott views this as a reference to “...the personal relationship now recognised and not of the national hope”, Westcott, Brooke Foss, and John Maurice Schulhof, ed., *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: The Greek Text With Notes and Addenda* (London; New York: Macmillan and co., limited, 1909) 35. However, the promises to national Israel are most likely in view here. God had promised a Messiah to national Israel, but the Gentiles were excluded from this due to their exclusion from citizenship in Israel. This accords better with the context.

describes the former condition of the Gentiles, he describes them as being “without a Messiah.”

ἀπαλλοτριωμένοι] Perf. Pass. Ptcp. Nom. Masc. Pl. from ἀπαλλοτριόω “*to estrange,*” “*to alienate.*” The parallel passage in Col 1:21 combines this same word with ἐχθρός, “alienated and hostile in mind.” The participle, though anarthrous, is nevertheless probably substantival, inasmuch as this continues the list of appositives begun in verse 11 (see comment on τὰ ἔθνη). Not only were they “Gentiles in the flesh,” and “those called ‘uncircumcision,’” they were also, “those who had been alienated.” The perfect tense signifies a settled condition (intensive perfect) that had existed unchanged for generations and eons.

τῆς πολιτείας] Gen. Fem. Sing. definite article + Gen. Fem. Sing. πολιτεία “*citizenship.*” The article singles out this citizenship as unique. Citizenship in Israel had unique rights and privileges not found in any other nation. Coming after a word like ἀπαλλοτριόω, the genitive case expresses separation (“*from*”). This noun occurs in Greek as early as Herodotus in the fifth century BC and was used first and foremost to refer to “the rights and privileges of citizenship.” Other acquired meanings include such notions as “the life and business of a statesman,” “government,” “administration,” “civil polity,” and “the constitution of a state”; then, by extension, “the life of a citizen,” “civic life.” In the LXX, since the code of citizenship was embodied in the

Mosaic Law, πολιτεία came to signify "a moral life," "a godly life."

The only other occurrence of this term in the NT is Acts 22:28. In the context of Eph 2, though πολιτεία might possibly refer to the "people" of Israel, it most likely refers to the "rights of citizenship" in Israel.

τοῦ Ἰσραήλ] Gen. Masc. Sing. definite article + Gen. Masc. Sing. Ἰσραήλ, "*Israel*." When Ἰσραήλ refers to the nation, it is almost always articular (Mt 2:6; 8:10; 10:23; Ro 11:2; Ac 5:31; etc.). Both in Greek and in Hebrew, the names of countries are normally feminine, but here the name Ἰσραήλ (Heb. יִשְׂרָאֵל) was first the name of the Patriarch; thus, it is masculine. The genitive is a genitive of description – "*Israelite citizenship*." Again, Paul's argument is that under the previous administration/dispensation, covenant blessings and privileges were directly connected to national Israel. Lacking this connection, the Gentiles were without any relationship to God.

#### D. Having no relationship to God's covenant promises, 12a

καί] See discussion under καί *infra*, just preceding the word ἄθεοι.

ξένοι] Nom. Masc. Pl. ξένος, a three-termination adjective meaning

"*strange*" or "*foreign*," but here used substantively as the next in this extraordinary sequence of appositives (see note on τὰ ἔθνη, *supra*). It is used substantively again in 2:19 where it is combined with πάροικοι.

τῶν διαθηκῶν] Gen. Fem. Pl. definite article + Gen. Fem. Pl. διαθήκη

"*covenant*." The genitive case, coming after a word like ξένος expresses separation – *strangers separated from the covenants*. The



article makes these specific covenants. The Gentiles would have been under the universal Noahic Covenant, but the reference here is to those specific covenants made between God and Israel. The plural number refers to the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12; 13; 15; 17; etc.) and its subsidiaries: the Land Covenant (Deut 29-30), Davidic Covenant (2Sa 7:12-16), and New Covenant (Jer 31:31-33). The Mosaic Covenant (Ex 19ff.), is probably not in view here, as it was conditional and temporary, and is presented in the NT in contrast with the Abrahamic Covenant (Ro 4:13-17; Gal 3:6 – 4:31).<sup>15</sup>

τῆς ἐπαγγελίας] Gen. Fem. Sing. definite article + Gen. Fem. Sing.

ἐπαγγελία “*promise*.” The genitive is descriptive; i.e., these covenants have to do with a promise. The article makes this promise specific. Taken together, the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Land and New Covenants hold forth the promise that God would dwell in the midst of His people in the land, His people dwelling in peace, fruitfulness, and righteousness. This promise is not quite the same thing as the New Testament concept of “salvation.” Though salvation is included in the OT covenant promise to Israel, the covenant promise involves much more (definite, recognizable borders to the land of Israel; a restoration of all twelve tribes to the land; God’s dwelling in His temple in the

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<sup>15</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002) 358-359. Abbott includes the Mosaic covenant, but obviously sees the tension in this view when he equivocates, saying, “The plural is used with reference to the covenants with the patriarchs, but the Mosaic covenant is not excluded, although it was primarily νομοθεσία.” (Abbott, T.K., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*. [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897] 58).

midst of His people; an eternal King from the Davidic line who also serves as a priest like Melchizedek).

E. Hopeless, 12b

ἐλπίδα] Acc. Fem. Sing. ἐλπίς “*hope*.” The noun is anarthrous because it expresses the general condition of hopelessness found among the Gentiles. The word ἐλπίς denotes a certainty about some future event. In the NT epistles it frequently refers to the blessed hope of the believer in Christ, the rapture of the Church (e.g., Tit 2:13; 1Jn 3:3). Here, however, it is much more general. The gods of the Gentiles were fickle and unreliable. The Gentiles would offer worship to these gods in anticipation of health, good crops, or a time of peace, but they had no assurance that their gods would really supply these things. And, of course, what lay beyond the grave was a subject of darkness and mystery. The hollow attempts at comfort recorded on many of the monuments found in ancient grave yards gives abundant testimony to this.

μή] The normal negative used outside of the indicative mood. Here it negates the following participle.

ἔχοντες] Pres. Act. Ptcpl. Nom. Masc. Pl. ἔχω “*to have*.” Here, as with ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι (see comments *supra*), the participle ought to be considered substantival, though it is anarthrous. It continues the string of appositives begun with τὰ ἔθνη (see comments *supra*). As a

substantival participle, it could be translated, “those who do not have hope.”

#### F. Godless, 12b

καί] With one other exception (καὶ ξένοι), these appositive nouns and noun phrases are strung together in asyndeton. The conjunction is used here to introduce the last item in this list. But, then, why is there another instance of καί just preceding ξένοι? Ξένοι brings to an end an initial four-fold list of appositives, all dealing with legal status relative to citizenship in national Israel. So, the conjunction καί brings an end to this initial list. The last two appositives are a bit different; they express the resultant state of natural man apart from grace.

ἄθεοι] Nom. Masc. Pl. of ἄθεος “*godless*,” “*without god*.” This is a fairly ancient word in the Greek language, occurring as early as Lysias and Sophocles in the fifth cent. BC. It meant “godless” or “ungodly” with reference to morality and lifestyle. It could also mean “abandoned of the gods.” Nowhere does it appear to be used of philosophical “atheism” in the modern sense of that word.<sup>16</sup> Ephesians 2:12 is its only occurrence in the NT. It is highly improbable that this could mean anything like theoretical atheism (i.e., denial of the existence of a divine being), since such a philosophical view was virtually unknown in the ancient world. In the context of Eph 2, it is probably not

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<sup>16</sup> Sometimes Plato’s *Apology* is cited as using ἄθεος to mean “atheist”; however, Plato uses it of the charge brought against Socrates that he taught belief in his own concept of δαιμόνια, rather than in the traditional Greek gods, i.e., substituting one set of gods for another set of gods. This is hardly what is meant by the modern use of the word “atheist.”

describing immoral conduct either (though it may in fact have been true about the Gentile Ephesians). Everything else in the context has to do with being cut off from the true God who was worshipped by Israel. Most likely, therefore, ἄθεος here means something like, “having no relationship with the one true God,” and possibly “abandoned by the one true God” (compare Rom 1:18-32).

ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ] Preposition ἐν “in” + Dat. Masc. Sing. definite article + Dat. Masc. Sing. κόσμος “world.” The prepositional phrase is adjectival, modifying ἄθεοι. Does κόσμος mean the world as a physical place, or does it refer to the world system, as it frequently does in Scripture? Either one of these might make decent sense in this verse. Paul uses κόσμος two other times in Ephesians – first, in 1:4 (ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*) where it clearly refers to the physical location; and second, in 2:2 (ποτε περιεπατήσατε κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου, *you once walked according to the course [or “aeon”] of the world*) where it appears to be referring to the world system that is opposed to God. The usage in 2:2 is both the nearer context and the context which bears a more similar topic. In this light, it seems much more likely that κόσμος 2:12 refers also to the evil world system that dominates this age, of which Satan is the ruler. This being the case, ἐν should be understood as expressing the sphere in which their “godlessness” (ἄθεος) is experienced and lived out.

## II. Present: Both Jew and Gentile Participate Equally in the Body of Christ, 13-18

### A. Bringing the Gentiles Near, 13

ὡνὶ δέ] “*But now*,” a common transitional formula in Paul’s epistles, occurring some 16 times (Ro 3:21; 6:22; 7:6, 17; 15:23, 25; 1Co 12:18; 13:13; 15:20; 2Co 8:11, 22; Eph 2:13; Col 1:22; 3:8; Philem 9, 11). Outside of Paul, this phrase is only found once in the NT (Heb 9:26). Here it marks the transition from a consideration of the Gentiles’ past experience to a consideration of their current experience.

ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ] Preposition ἐν “*in*” + Dat. Masc. Sing., Χριστός “*Christ*,” “*Messiah*” object of the preposition + Dat. Masc. Sing.<sup>17</sup> Ἰησοῦς “*Jesus*.” This prepositional phrase is adverbial, modifying the main verb of the sentence, ἐγενήθητε. The prepositional phrase ἐν Χριστῷ is almost uniquely Pauline, occurring some 73 times in Paul’s epistles (9x in Eph, and another 7x for ἐν αὐτῷ). Of these, 46 add Ἰησοῦ, as here. Outside of Paul, only Peter uses this phrase, and he only 3 times (ἐν Χριστῷ 1Pe 3:16; 5:14. ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ 1Pe 5:10, although there is textual uncertainty about the added Ἰησοῦ).

The phrase ἐν Χριστῷ expresses the sphere in which the believer’s relationship with God is sustained in the present dispensation. In previous dispensations this relationship had been defined in terms of

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<sup>17</sup> Ἰησοῦς is only partially declined, like many non-Greek proper names. Ἰησοῦς is a transliteration of יֵשׁוּעַ *Yeshu’u*, a shortened form of יְהוֹשֻׁעַ *Yehoshu’u* (Joshua). Its declension is as follows: Ἰησοῦς – nom.; Ἰησοῦ – gen., dat., and voc.; Ἰησοῦν – acc.

the covenants. But in the dispensation of the church age, one's relationship to God is not expressed in terms of covenant,<sup>18</sup> but rather by means of one's being "in Christ." Commenting on Ephesians 1:1, Hoehner has said:

These saints were in Christ Jesus, not in Adam or the goddess Artemis of Ephesus. While believers have geographical locations (e.g., "Ephesus"), spiritually they are positioned "in Christ" (cf. "in Christ at Colosse" in Col. 1:2). Paul used "in Christ Jesus," "in Christ," or "in Him" quite frequently. In Ephesians 1:1-14 the phrase occurs nine times! Christians have their very life in Christ.<sup>19</sup>

ὕμεῖς] Nom. Masc. Pl. of the second personal pronoun. The antecedent refers to the Gentiles who are "in Christ." The expressed pronominal subject of ἐγενήθητε is emphatic – *you*, as opposed to those Gentiles who are not "in Christ."

οἱ] Nom. Masc. Pl. definite article. The article goes with ὄντες, substantivizing the participle so it can be placed in apposition with ὕμεῖς.

ποτε] Adverb, "once," "formerly" modifying the phrase ὄντες μακράν.

ὄντες] Pres. Ptcpl. Nom. Masc. Pl. of εἶμι "to be." The participle is substantival, in apposition to ὕμεῖς. As earlier in this passage (see comments *supra* on τὰ ἔθνη), Paul uses the device of apposition to

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<sup>18</sup> Many NT scholars are of the opinion that the church's relationship with God is to be understood within the terms of the New Covenant. However, Jer 31:31 explicitly states that the parties to the New Covenant are God and Israel/Judah, not the church. For an excellent discussion of the NT passages that relate to the New Covenant, see John Master in chapter 5 ("The New Covenant") of *Issues in Dispensationalism*, edited by Wesley R. Willis and John R. Master (Moody Press, 1994), 93-110; also, see George Gunn, "2 Corinthians 3:6 - The Church's Relationship to the New Covenant," accessible at <http://www.shasta.edu/subpage.php?spid=48>.

<sup>19</sup> Harold H. Hoehner, "Ephesians" in John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 615.

define and clarify his terms. Those who are now ἐγγύς (“near”) are the same as those who were previously μακράν (“far” or “distant”). Though the participle is substantival, the verbal force of the participle gives it a concessive idea here, as well – “*though* you were far.”

μακράν] Adverb, “*far*.” Here it functions as predicate adjective to ὄντες.<sup>20</sup>

In this context, the frame of reference is Jew and Gentile. The Gentiles had previously been far from the Jews. While it is also true (and may be implied) that the Gentiles were far from God, that is not the meaning in this verse. This verse is making the point that they were far from the covenant people of God – the Jews.

ἐγενήθητε] Aor. Dep. Ind. 2 Pers. Pl. γίνομαι, “*to become*.” Main verb of the sentence. The aorist tense is ingressive – “in Christ, you *began* your existence of being near.”

ἐγγύς] Adverb, “*near*.” Similar to μακράν *supra*, ἐγγύς serves as the predicate adjective to ἐγενήθητε. And, as with μακράν, the frame of reference here is Jew and Gentile. The point being made in this verse is that the Gentiles had been brought near to the Jews. As verse 16 will show, the way Jew and Gentile were brought close to each other was by reconciling both to God; so the “far” and “near” (μακράν and ἐγγύς) of this verse have to do with the relationship of Jew and Gentile. Replacement theology takes another view: “Accordingly in the following verses we have two points of view combined, viz. the

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<sup>20</sup> For adverbs functioning as predicate adjectives to forms of εἰμί, cf. BDF §434.

reconciliation of the Gentiles to God, and their admission to the πολιτεία of Israel, namely, the true Israel – the Christian Church.”<sup>21</sup>

However; Paul has carefully laid out a different explanation. The Church has not become a “new Israel,” but a “new man” that is neither Jew nor Gentile.

ἐν τῷ αἵματι] Prep. ἐν “in,” “by” + Dat. Neut. Sing. definite article + Dat. Neut. Sing. of αἷμα, “blood.” The prepositional phrase is adverbial to ἐγενήθητε and expresses the means/instrument by which the believing Gentiles became near. From the very first mention of blood in the Bible (Gen 4:10), there has been a sacredness attached to it. The Noahic Covenant forbade its being consumed by man, because it was the life of man and was related somehow to the image of God in man (Gen 9:4-6; forbidden also in the Mosaic Covenant, Lev 3:17; 7:26-27; 17:10-12). Blood was to be applied to the doorposts and lintel of the homes of the Israelites to protect them from the destroying angel (Ex 12:7, 13, 22, 23). Under the Mosaic Covenant, a blood sacrifice was never to be mixed with leavened bread (Ex 23:18; 34:25). The basis for understanding the sanctity of blood for sacrifice is expressed perhaps most clearly in Leviticus 17:11, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.”

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<sup>21</sup> Abbott, 59-60.



τοῦ Χριστοῦ] Gen. Masc. Sing. definite article, + Gen. Masc. Sing. of Χριστός “*Messiah*,” “*Christ*.” Genitive of possession to αἵματι. Animal sacrifices had been a part of sinful man’s approach to God ever since the beginning (Gen 4:4<sup>22</sup>). The Mosaic Covenant had so many blood sacrifices for so many different occasions that one can only guess at how many millions of gallons of animal blood must have been shed over the millennium and a half of that covenant’s administration. Yet, the author of Hebrews reminds us that none of that blood could ever truly take away sins (Heb 10:4). Animals, which lack the image of God, do not possess a life that is of sufficient value to substitute for the life of a man (cf. Gen 9:6). It took the hypostatic union, the uniting of Perfect Deity with complete humanity, to provide a blood sacrifice that could truly take away man’s sin.

Not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:12-14 NASB95)

You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. (1Pet 1:18-19 NASB95)

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<sup>22</sup> That blood was shed in the preparing of animal skins to cover Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21) is implicit; however, there is no explicit mention of “blood” in the text.

All of this lays the groundwork for the next subsection (see the γάρ in the next verse). The blood of Christ brings Jew and Gentile near to one another, because it accomplished the reconciliation (ἀποκαταλλαγή!) referred to in verse 16.

## B. Joint Participation of Both Jews and Gentiles, 14-18

### Verse 14

αὐτός] Nom. Masc. Sing. 3<sup>rd</sup> Pers. Pronoun. The antecedent is Χριστοῦ in the preceding verse. The expressed pronominal subject is emphatic. It is Christ *himself* Who is our peace; none other could be.

γάρ] The conjunction is causal. The thing that caused the Gentiles to become near to the Jews was the peacemaking work of Christ. His peacemaking work had a two-fold result: (1) The creation of the new man – the church, the body of Christ, verse 15; and (2) The reconciling of both Jew and Gentile to God, verse 16.

ἐστίν] Pres. Ind. 3<sup>rd</sup> Pers. Sing. of εἶμι “to be.” Main verb of the γάρ clause.

ἡ εἰρήνη] Nom. Fem. Sing. definite article + Nom. Fem. Sing. εἰρήνη “peace.” The noun is predicate nominative to ἐστίν.<sup>23</sup> Here is an instance of metonymy in which the effect is put for the cause. In this case, the noun “peace” is the result of His action of bringing about peace. Expressed literally, we would understand “He *effected* our

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<sup>23</sup> An articular nominative with a copula would normally be considered the subject; however, when there is a personal pronoun in the nominative, the pronoun becomes the subject.

peace.”<sup>24</sup> Εἰρήνη is a very old word, being found as early as Homer in the eighth century BC. This noun may have been originally derived from the verb εἶρω “to fasten together in rows,” “to string together.” As used by the ancient Greeks, the term simply meant “peace” or “a time of peace.” Its use by the LXX translators, however, seems to have broadened the conceptual possibilities for this term. The LXX generally uses εἰρήνη to translate שָׁלוֹם, and this adds to the semantic range of εἰρήνη such ideas as “prosperity,” “welfare” (Jdg 6:23; Lv 26:6); “eternal rest” (Wis 3:3); and “health” (Jdg 18:15). Εἰρήνη occurs 92x in the NT; 43x in the Pauline Epistles (at least once in each of the Pauline Epistles; 7x in Ephesians). The context of Ephesians argues strongly for the εἰρήνη in chapter 2 as being a reference, not to peace between God and man,<sup>25</sup> but to peace between Jew and Gentile in Christ. Though the LXX introduced to the idea of εἰρήνη concepts such as “health,” “wholeness,” and “well-being” (via שָׁלוֹם), here, the original sense of the word as “cessation of hostility” is retained. Being “in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:13) brings both Jew and Gentile into a new relationship, not only with God, but with each other. The old enmity is gone. They are fellow-partakers of God’s blessings, equally guilty

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<sup>24</sup> Some commentators attempt to explain this on the basis of “peace” being “recognized by the Talmud as a name for God” (A. Skevington Wood, “Ephesians” in Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Ed., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 11 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978] 39). This is as opposed to its being metonymy. But it is one thing for Jesus to say “I am the life” but another when Paul says, “He is our peace.” The addition of the modifier “our” makes this a different kind of saying. Thus it is better to see this as metonymy

<sup>25</sup> As, e.g., Calvin, 235.

before God, and equally justified in Christ; neither Jew nor Gentile is either nearer or farther from God than the other.

ἡμῶν] Gen. Masc. Pl. 1<sup>st</sup> Pers. Pronoun. Genitive of Possession to εἰρήνη.

The antecedent of this pronoun would be both Jews and Gentiles of the Ephesian congregation who are in Christ. The thrust of the passage is to show that the Gentiles who were once far off have now been brought near. Calvin reverses this focus by stating, “He now includes Jews in the privilege of reconciliation, and shews that, through one Messiah, all are united to God.”<sup>26</sup> This is just backwards. Paul is not arguing here that Jews have been included, but rather that the Gentiles have been included in something the Jews already had (viz. a relationship with God)!

ὁ ποιήσας] Nom. Masc. Sing. definite article + Aor. Act. Ptcpl. Nom.

Masc. Sing. ποιέω “to do,” “to make.” The article has the effect of substantivizing the participle and placing it in apposition to αὐτός. The aorist tense is constative.

τὰ ἀμφοτέρα] Acc. Neut. Pl. definite article + Acc. Neut. Pl. of the

adjective ἀμφοτέροι “both.” The article substantivizes the adjective and makes it the direct object of ποιήσας. The neuter gender is perhaps a bit surprising (the same word appears in the masc. in vv.16 and 18); however, BDF makes the point that “the neuter is sometimes used with reference to persons if it is not the individuals but a general quality

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<sup>26</sup> Calvin, 235.

that is to be emphasized.”<sup>27</sup> Here the Jews and Gentiles are two groups each with their own general qualities that have been discussed in the preceding verses. It is with a view to the general qualities of “Jewishness” and “Gentileness” that Christ’s work of uniting what no one else could unite is seen to be so remarkable.

ἓν] Acc. Neut. Sing. from εἷς “one.” There is an omitted infinitive εἶναι after ἀμφοτέρα. ἓν is predicate accusative to this infinitive (“He made them both *so as to be* [εἶναι] *one* [ἓν]).<sup>28</sup> The adjective is neuter to agree with ἀμφοτέρα.

καί] The conjunction joins ποιήσας and λύσας in a Granville Sharpe construction. There is intended irony here: the same One both “joined” and “destroyed.”

τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ] Acc. Neut. Sing. definite article + Acc. Neut. Sing. μεσότοιχος “dividing wall” + Gen. Masc. Sing. definite article + Gen. Masc. Sing. φραγμός “fence,” “partition.” This exact phrase is unattested apart from Eph 2:14. Even the word μεσότοιχον is quite rare in the literature, though its meaning is clear, its being a compound of

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<sup>27</sup> BDF §138. On the other hand, Westcott took the neuter to be a reference to “two organisations, systems (τὰ ἀμφοτέρα), under which Jews and Gentiles were gathered as hostile bodies, separated by a dividing fence...” (p. 36). However, the neuter does not express “two systems,” because the two systems were not made one! Rather, the neuter refers to Jews and Gentiles as persons, but has reference to their general qualities of “Jewishness” and “Gentileness” as described in the preceding verses. It is Jews and Gentiles that have been made one, not the Jewish system and the Gentile system.

<sup>28</sup> Alternately, it could be considered the double accusative after ποιέω, Hoehner, *Ephesians, Exegetical Commentary*, 368. Lincoln offers another explanation: “the neuter ... is best explained as a remnant of the traditional [hymnic] material which originally referred to heaven and earth.” (Andrew T. Lincoln, “Ephesians” in Bruce Metzger *et al* edd., *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 42 [Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990.] 140). The idea that this verse was based on an original early Christian hymn is highly speculative, and, in part, based on Lincoln’s view that the book is post-Pauline.

μέσος, “middle” and τοῖχος “a wall.” φράγμος is more common, being found as early as Sophocles and Herodotus in the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC, meaning “a fence,” “wall” or “partition.”

Josephus uses an expression almost identical to the term μεσότοιχον in his description of the building of Solomon’s temple. In *Antiquities* 8.71 he says,

“Now when the king had divided the temple into two parts, he made the inner house of twenty cubits [every way] to be the most secret chamber, but he appointed that of forty cubits to be the sanctuary; and when he had cut a door-place *in the midst of the wall* [τὸν μέσον τοῖχον], he put therein doors of cedar, and overlaid them with a great deal of gold, that had sculpture upon it.”

The second temple, as expanded by Herod the Great, had a Court of the Gentiles at the outside perimeter of the temple compound. A wall separated the Court of the Gentiles from the interior courts which were only for Jews. There were passageways that permitted Jews to pass beyond the Court of the Gentiles into these inner courts, but Gentiles were forbidden to pass on pain of death. It should be remembered that Paul wrote this epistle from his Roman imprisonment which was due to his being charged with bringing Gentiles into the inner temple courts (Acts 21:28). It is highly likely that Paul had in mind this barrier separating the Court of the Gentiles from the inner temple courts when he used the phrase μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Hoehner objects to this reference, insisting that the wall “was not a literal wall but a metaphorical wall that divided Jews and Gentiles” (*Exegetical Commentary*, 371). I agree that the usage here is metaphorical, but Paul probably had the temple wall in mind to serve as a conceptual image for the metaphor.

λύσας] Aor. Act. Ptcpl. Nom. Masc. Sing. λύω “to destroy.” This is the second noun in a Granville Sharpe construction (ὁ ποιήσας ... καὶ ... λύσας). Thus, like ποιήσας, this participle is substantival in apposition with αὐτός. See other comments on καί *supra*.

τὴν ἔχθραν] Acc. Fem. Sing. definite article, + Acc. Fem. Sing. ἔχθρα “enmity.” This is the first of two nouns in apposition to the “middle wall.” To say, “The middle wall is enmity” is a metonymy whereby the effect is put for the cause. The middle wall actually caused enmity.<sup>30</sup> In the second appositional phrase, Paul will spell out what the wall literally referred to, namely the “law of commandments in ordinances.” The Law (of Moses) produced enmity because of the abuse of the Law by the Jews. It ought to have produced love for the alien (Lev 19:34; Deut 10:18-19), but instead it produced arrogance, bigotry and prejudice. This is no fault of the Law itself, for “the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (Rom 7:12), but it was an abuse of a good thing. Not only did the law promote hostile feelings on the part of the Jews toward the Gentiles, but the opposite was true as well. An example of hostile feelings of Gentiles toward Jews in light of the law comes from Tacitus, *History* 5.5,

This worship, however introduced, is upheld by its antiquity; all their other customs, which are at once perverse and disgusting, owe their strength to their very badness. The most degraded out of

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<sup>30</sup> Hoehner, Bible Knowledge Commentary, II.626.

other races, scorning their national beliefs, brought to them their contributions and presents. This augmented the wealth of the Jews, as also did the fact, that among themselves they are inflexibly honest and ever ready to shew compassion, though they regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies. They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart, and though, as a nation, they are singularly prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; among themselves nothing is unlawful. Circumcision was adopted by them as a mark of difference from other men. Those who come over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise all gods, to disown their country, and set at nought parents, children, and brethren.<sup>31</sup>

ἐν τῇ σαρκί] Preposition ἐν “by” + Dat. Fem. Sing. definite article + Dat.

Fem. Sing. σάρξ “*flesh*.” The prepositional phrase is adverbial, modifying λύσαν and expressing the means by which the destroying of the Law took place. Σαρκί has reference to the physical, human body of Christ and the redemptive work that was carried out through its crucifixion (cf. Col 1:22).

αὐτοῦ] Gen. Masc. Sing. of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Personal Pronoun. Genitive of possession to σαρκί. The antecedent is αὐτός at the beginning of the verse. The One who made peace is the same one who destroyed the Law by means of His flesh (death).

Verse 15

τὸν νόμον] Acc. Masc. Sing. definite article + Acc. Masc. Sing. νόμος “*law*.” This is the second substantive in apposition to the dividing wall. The first was τὸν ἔχθραν which by metonymy expressed the result of the dividing wall. This appositive (νόμον) expresses the literal

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0080:book%3D5:chapter%3D5>. Accessed June 29, 2010.



referent of the figure. The actual thing that separated Jew from Gentile was the Law (of Moses). See comments above on ἔχθραν.

τῶν ἐντολῶν] Gen. Fem. Pl. definite article + Gen. Fem. Pl. ἐντολή

“*commandment*.” Genitive of apposition to νόμον (the Law which consists of commandments). The great Jewish Rabbi, Maimonides, codified the Law of Moses into 613 specific commandments. τῶν ἐντολῶν is not intended to limit the Law, either to the ten commandments, or to the ceremonial law<sup>32</sup>; rather, it characterizes the entire Law as something that consists of commandments.

ἐν δόγμασιν] Preposition ἐν “*in*” + Dat. Neut. Pl. δόγμα “*ordinance*,”

“*command*,” “*decree*.” The prepositional phrase is adjectival, modifying νόμον, yielding a meaning something like “the law that consists of commandments existing in ordinances.” The addition of the prepositional phrase does appear to be almost redundant after the genitive of apposition (τῶν ἐντολῶν). In fact, the phrase was omitted in both p<sup>46</sup> and vg<sup>ms</sup>, likely scribal attempts to remove the apparent redundancy. But by reinforcing the idea that the law consisted of both “commands” and “decrees,” Paul may be intentionally contrasting the harshness and severity of the law with the grace of the gospel, as he does, for example, in Romans 3.

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<sup>32</sup> Calvin limits this to the ceremonial law, an artificial division of the law that the text of Scripture does not make. Calvin, 237.

καταργήσας] Aor. Act. Ptcpl. Nom. Masc. Sing. καταργέω “*invalidate*,” “*make powerless*.” The participle is circumstantial to λύσας. Since both participles are aorist, their relative time is probably coincidental; i.e., they both took place at the same time. The syntactical force of this participle is to express the means by which the dividing wall was destroyed. The dividing wall was destroyed by means of making the law powerless. Unlike the eternal and unconditional covenants of God (Abrahamic, Land, Davidic and New), the Mosaic was both conditional and temporary. It was never designed to be in force throughout perpetuity. The very fact that Jeremiah speaks of a “New Covenant” that would supersede the Mosaic Covenant requires that the Mosaic be understood as temporary (Jer 31:31-32; Heb 7-10; cf. also Jn 1:17). Paul explained in Colossians 2:14 that Christ has “canceled out (ἐξαλείψας) the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way (ἐκ τοῦ μέσου), having nailed it to the cross.” The Law of Moses, having administered God’s affairs for a millennium and a half, came to an end at the cross. Subsequently, God has initiated a change of administration/dispensation in which He is building the Body of Christ, wherein there is now no distinction between Jew and Gentile.

ἵνα] This introduces the purpose clause to the main sentence begun in verse 14. The main clause is Ἀυτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν “For He is our peace.” The purpose of the peacemaking is two-fold, and two

subjunctive verbs connected by καὶ follow this ἵνα – κτίση and ἀποκαταλλάξει.

τοὺς δύο] Acc. Masc. Pl. definite article + Acc.<sup>33</sup> of δύο “two.” Direct object of κτίση. Refers to both Jew and Gentile.

κτίση] Aor. Act. Subj. 3 Pers. Sing. κτίζω “to create,” used frequently of God’s creative power. This is the first of two subjunctive verbs following ἵνα. The first purpose of Christ’s making peace is to create both Jew and Gentile into one new man.

ἐν αὐτῷ] Preposition ἐν “in” + Dat. Mas. Sing. 3<sup>rd</sup> personal pronoun. The prepositional phrase is adverbial to κτίση. The antecedent of the pronoun is directly the αὐτός at the beginning of verse 14, but ultimately the reference goes back to Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ in verse 13. The prepositional phrase expresses the sphere in which this new creation takes place.

εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον] Preposition εἰς “into” + Acc. Masc. εἷς “one” + Acc. Masc. Sing. καινός “new” + Acc. Masc. Sing. ἄνθρωπος “man.” The prepositional phrase is adverbial to κτίση, and expresses the goal of this creation. The creation will result in one new man. Elsewhere, the uniting of various members in Christ is referred to by the metaphor of the “body” of Christ. Here the metaphor is slightly different; it is a “new man.” This might be synecdoche whereby the whole “man” stands for the part, namely the “body.” But one wonders why Paul

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<sup>33</sup> δύο is largely indeclinable, having a separate form only for the dative (δυσί), see BDF §63.

used the adjective “new.” In Eph. 4:22, 24 there is a contrast between the “old man” and the “new man,” but there, the reference is to individual believers; whereas, here in 2:15 the reference is corporately to the church. In keeping with Paul’s theology as expressed in Rom. 5:12ff., it is possible that the “old man” (unexpressed, but nevertheless implied here) refers to “Adam,” and the “new man” to Christ, as spheres in which men live, either in condemnation or righteousness. But in view of the immediate context, it seems more likely that the implied “old man” here would be the people of God under the Mosaic Covenant and the “new man,” the Body of Christ, the church.

ποιῶν] Pres. Act. Ptcpl. Nom. Masc. Sing. ποιέω “to make.” The participle is circumstantial to κρίση expressing result. The result of the creation of the new man (the church) is peace between Jew and Gentile. The present tense has reference to this peace as an ongoing process (durative present). While the provision was accomplished at the cross (Note the aorist participles v.14 ποιήσας, λύσας; v.15 καταργήσας, and the verb κρίση. These are all constative aorists expressing the fact that the law has been done away and the church has been brought into existence.), this is a positional truth, accomplished completely. On the other hand, the establishing of peace between Jew and Gentile is an experiential reality that must be brought about. At

various stages in the history of the Church there have been varying degrees of peace between Jew and Gentile within the body of Christ. εἰρηνην] Acc. Fem. Sing. εἰρήνη “*peace*.” See comments on verse 14 *supra*.

Verse 16

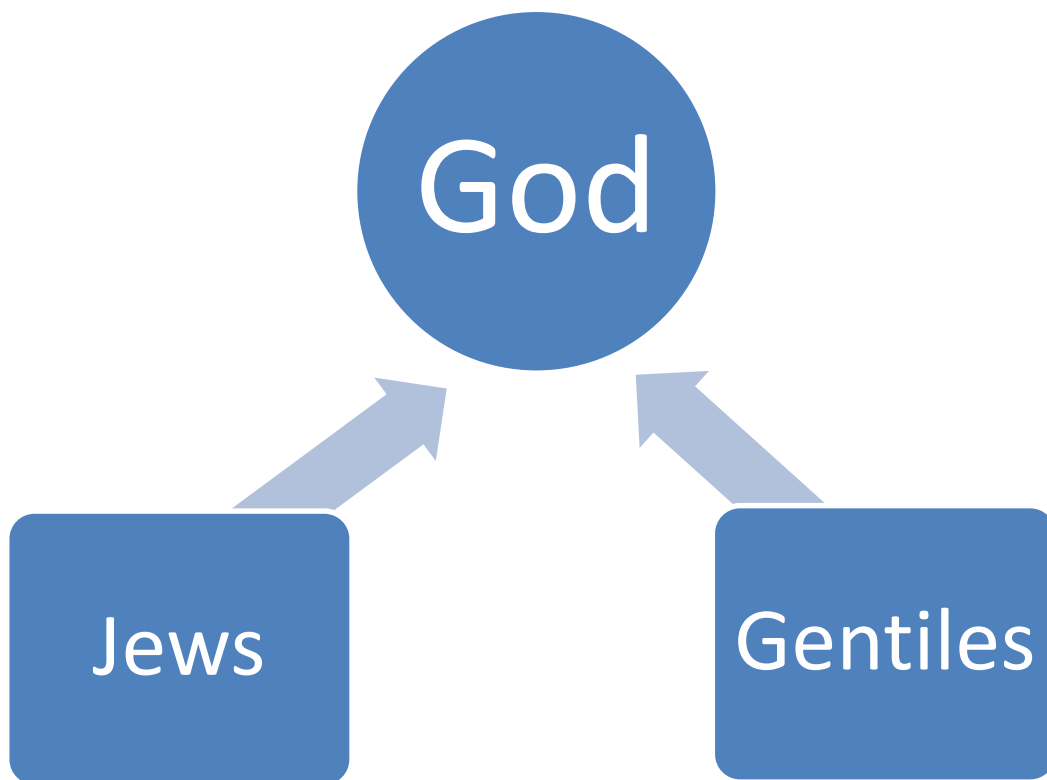
καί] The conjunction joins the two subjunctive verbs that are associated with ἵνα in verse 15. The next clause will express the second part of the two-fold purpose in Christ’s making peace.

ἀποκαταλλάξῃ] Aor. Act. Subj. 3pers. Sing. ἀποκαταλλάσσω (ἀπό + κατά + ἀλλάσσω) “*to reconcile*.” This word is not attested in earlier Greek, though the simpler form, καταλλάσσω is found as early as the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> cent. BC Plato; the entirely simplex form ἀλλάσσω is found as early as Euripides in the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC. Our doubly compounded form (ἀποκαταλλάσσω) occurs only 3 times in the New Testament (here, and Col 1:20, 22); whereas καταλλάσσω occurs 6 times (Ro 5:10 [2x]; 1Co 7:11; 2Co 5:18, 19, 20), and ἀλλάσσω also occurs 6 times (Ac 6:14; Ro 1:23; 1Co 15:51, 52; Gal 4:20; Heb 1:12). The simplex form ἀλλάσσω does not mean “reconcile,” but rather has the idea of “*to change*,” “*to alter*,” “*to give in exchange for*,” “*to barter*,” “*to interchange*,” “*to alternate*.” Both καταλλάσσω and ἀποκαταλλάσσω have the idea of *to reconcile*,” where it is assumed that parties previously at some sort of personal impasse in their relationship have

made some sort of meaningful exchange that gets them beyond that impasse.

In our text Christ is the one who acts to make reconciliation between sinful men and God. But the reconciling action here is complex, because the “sinful men” is really composed of two groups: sinful Jews and sinful Gentiles. Each group of sinful men is reconciled to God, and this draws the two sinful groups closer to each other.

Consider the following diagram:



τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους] Acc. Masc. Pl. definite article + Acc. Masc. Pl.

ἀμφότεροι “both.” This is the direct object of ἀποκαταλλάξῃ. This

word has already appeared in our text (see comments on v.14 *supra*). However, in verse 14, the adjective was put in the neuter gender to express “general characteristics”; whereas, here it is masculine to highlight the distinct persons. These are persons that are being reconciled, not concepts or ideas! The adjective will occur once again in verse 18, where it is also in the masculine.

ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι] Preposition ἐν “in” + Dat. Neut. Sing. εἷς “one” + Dat.

Neut. Sing. σῶμα “body.” The prepositional phrase is the first in a series of three adverbial phrases, all modifying ἀποκαταλλάξει. This phrase, using ἐν, signifies the sphere in which the reconciliation takes place. It is possible to see this as a reference to Christ’s physical body which was crucified. If so, then the phrase expresses means, not sphere. However, Paul previously used the word σὰρξ (“flesh”) to refer to Christ’s crucified body. Most likely the term σῶμα (“body”) is used of the church as it clearly is in six of the eight occurrences of this term in Ephesians (1:23; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30). The only exception to this usage in Ephesians is 5:28 where it refers to a husband’s “body,” but even there, the husband’s body is used as an analogy to the body of Christ which is the church.

τῷ θεῷ] Dat. Masc. Sing. definite article + Dat. Masc. Sing. θεός “God.”

Indirect Object of ἀποκαταλλάξει. This is the second of the three adverbial phrases modifying ἀποκαταλλάξει (see comment *supra* on ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι). This phrase expresses the goal of the reconciliation.

διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ] Preposition διὰ “*through*” (with a genitive object) +  
Gen. Masc. Sing. definite article + Gen. Masc. Sing. σταυρός “*cross*.”

This prepositional phrase is the second in a series of three adverbial phrases modifying ἀποκατάλλαξις (see comment *supra* on ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι). Here the force of διὰ is to express the means by which the reconciliation was effected.

ἀποκτείνας] Aor. Act. Ptcpl. Nom. Masc. Sing. ἀποκτείνω “*to kill*,” “*to put to death*.” The participle is circumstantial to the main clause of verse 14, Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν (“For He is our peace”), and expresses the cause. He is our peace because He has put to death the enmity. The aorist tense is constative, as with previous aorists in this passage.

τὴν ἔχθραν] Acc. Fem. Sing. definite article + Acc. Fem. Sing. ἔχθρα  
“*enmity*.” See comments on this word in verse 14.

ἐν αὐτῷ] Preposition ἐν “*in*” or “*by*” + Dat. Masc. Sing. 3<sup>rd</sup> Personal Pronoun. The prepositional phrase is adverbial, modifying ἀποκτείνας. But what is the antecedent of αὐτῷ? It might refer back to Jesus Christ, as with other 3<sup>rd</sup> Personal Pronouns in this context;<sup>34</sup> however, the nearer antecedent is σταυροῦ. Thus, the phrase expresses the means by which the enmity was slain. The parallel with Colossians 2:14 is striking.

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<sup>34</sup> Lincoln, 146.



## Verse 17

καί] The conjunction joins this clause to the main clause of verse 14 as a coordinate, connective clause. “He is our peace ... *and* He proclaimed peace.”

ἐλθών] Aor. Act. Ptcpl. Nom. Masc. Sing. ἔρχομαι “*to go,*” “*to come.*”

The participle is circumstantial to εὐηγγελίσατο. Since both the participle and the main verb are in the aorist, the participle can express contemporaneous time. The “coming” here is probably a reference to the coming of Christ in the Holy Spirit on Pentecost to preach the gospel through the apostles.

εὐηγγελίσατο] Aor. Mid. Ind. 3pers. Sing. εὐαγγελίζω “*to bring good news,*” “*to announce good news*”; mid., “*to proclaim,*” “*to preach.*”

This verb is used in the NT a number of times in the middle voice: Luke 4:43 of Jesus’ preaching the gospel of the kingdom in His early Galilean ministry, Acts 8:35 of Philip’s preaching the gospel of the crucified risen Christ at his martyrdom, Acts 13:32 of Paul and Barnabas’ preaching the gospel in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch, 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2 of Paul’s preaching of the gospel generally, 2 Corinthians 11:7 of Paul’s preaching the gospel to the Corinthians in particular, Galatians 1:8 of Paul’s preaching the gospel to the Galatians, Galatians 1:16 of Paul’s preaching generally among the Gentiles, and Ephesians 3:8 of Paul’s preaching generally among the

Gentiles. The middle voice may be expressive of the personal interest on the part of the preacher in the message he brings.

εἰρήνην] Acc. Fem. Sing. εἰρήνη “*peace*.” Direct object of εὐηγγελίσατο.

Reconciliation between man and God results in peace between man and man. Here, as in the previous references to εἰρήνη in this passage (vv. 14, 15), the reference is to peace between Jew and Gentile. It is seen as the content of the gospel only secondarily. When Paul says that Christ “preached peace,” he employs a metonymy whereby he substitutes the result for the actual message. The message itself is a message of man being reconciled to God (v. 16; cf. 2Co 5:18ff.), but its result is that peace is established between such reconciled men.

ὑμῖν] Dat. Masc. Pl. 2 Pers. Pron. The antecedent is the Gentile believers in the Ephesian congregation. The Dative is Dative of Interest (Advantage). The message was proclaimed for the advantage of the Gentile believers.

τοῖς μακράν] Dat. Masc. Pl. definite article + μακράν an adverb meaning “*far*.” On the term μακράν, see comments *supra* at verse 13. The article substantivizes this adverb and places it in apposition to ὑμῖν.

καί] The conjunction joins an omitted second occurrence of εὐηγγελίσατο to the first occurrence at the beginning of the verse. “He proclaimed peace to you ... and [He proclaimed] peace to those who were near.”

εἰρήνην] Acc. Fem. Sing. εἰρήνη “*peace*.” Direct object of an implied second occurrence of εὐηγγελίσατο. See comments on εἰρήνην *supra* earlier in this verse.

τοῖς ἐγγύς] Dat. Masc. Pl. definite article + ἐγγύς an adverb meaning “*near*.” The article substantivizes ἐγγύς so that it means something like “those who are near.” The Dative is a Dative of Interest (Advantage) to the implied second occurrence of εὐηγγελίσατο in this verse. On the meaning of the term ἐγγύς, see comments *supra* on verse 13.

#### Verse 18

ὅτι] The conjunction introduces the cause of Christ’s proclaiming peace to the Jews (those near) and Gentiles (those far). The argument is similar to that in verse 16, where both, being *reconciled* to God are thereby brought near to each other. Here, as both *approach* God they are brought near each other. The same diagram used to illustrate ἀποκαταλλάξη in verse 16 can be used to illustrate the argument here in this verse.

δι’ αὐτοῦ] Preposition διά “*through*” (with a genitive object) + Gen. Masc. Sing. 3<sup>rd</sup> Personal Pronoun. The antecedent of the pronoun looks back to the subject of εὐηγγελίσατο of the previous verse, and ultimately back to Χριστοῦ of verse 13. The prepositional phrase is adverbial, modifying ἔχομεν, and expresses the agency by whom we have access to God. There is a dual agency expressed in this verse, the

other Agent is the “Spirit”; see additional comments *infra* on the prepositional phrase ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι.

ἔχομεν] Pres. Act. Ind. 3pers. Pl. ἔχω “to have.” The verb serves as the main verb of the ὅτι clause. The present tense is durative and expresses the believer’s continuous possession of access to God through Jesus Christ.

τὴν προσαγωγή] Acc. Fem. Sing. definite article + Acc. Fem. Sing. προσαγωγή “access.” Access to God was limited both for Jew and Gentile under the previous (Mosaic) administration/dispensation. Gentiles, of course, were excluded from approaching Yahveh’s temple (see discussion *supra* under μεσότοιχον, v. 14). But even Jews who were not priests, though there was access to the altar of burnt offerings, there was still no access to the inner temple courts and rooms. Only the Levites had access to the area beyond the altar, and only priests could enter the holy place. The holy of holies, the actual dwelling place of Yahweh, was totally inaccessible to any but the High Priest, and he only had access one day a year, on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. This high priestly access on *Yom Kippur* is described in Leviticus 16. One of the prominent features of the Mosaic dispensation was the holiness of God. His holiness spoke of His transcendence, His separateness from the people. By way of contrast, the present dispensation features God’s immanence, His nearness, and the access that God’s people have to Him; see also, Eph 3:12; Ro 5:2.

οἱ ἀμφοτέρου] Nom. Masc. Pl. definite article + Nom. Masc. Pl. ἀμφοτέρου

“*both*.” The article is used to substantivize the adjective, making it the subject of ἔχομεν. ἀμφοτέρου here, as in verses 14 and 16 (see comments there), refers to both Jews and Gentiles.

ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι] Preposition ἐν “*in*” + Dat. Neut. Sing. εἷς “*one*” + Dat.

Neut. Sing. πνεῦμα “*Spirit*.” The prepositional phrase is adverbial, modifying ἔχομεν, expressing agency. The preposition ἐν might express sphere in some contexts;<sup>35</sup> however, here in Eph 2, the sphere of Christian position and walk in the mind of the author is ἐν Χριστῷ (cf. v. 13). To be “in the Spirit” in the sense of sphere denotes a concept of mysticism that is absent in this passage. It is used, for example, of the prophetic state of John in Rev 1:10. ἐν in this passage probably denotes means or instrument. This is the second expression of agency for this verb, the first being expressed by δι’ αὐτοῦ. Though Greek may sometimes use διὰ with the genitive to express personal agency, while ἐν with the dative expresses impersonal means, certainly ἐν with the dative is found in the NT used of personal agency.<sup>36</sup> However, here the change of prepositions is probably due more either to grammatical gender (πνεῦμα being grammatically neuter, though conceptually masculine [i.e., personal]), not implying that the Holy

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<sup>35</sup> Lincoln (p. 18) sees it as expressing sphere here in Eph 2:18.

<sup>36</sup> BDF §219(1).

Spirit is somehow impersonal, or simply as a way of distinguishing between Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Compare verse 16 ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι (“in one body”); the combination of “one body” and “one Spirit” will occur again in Eph 4:4.

πρὸς τὸν πατέρα] Preposition πρὸς + Acc. Masc. Sing. definite article + Acc. Masc. Sing. πατήρ “*father*.” The prepositional phrase is adverbial, modifying ἔχομεν, and expresses the goal of the access. This is a contrast to the extremely limited access to God under the Mosaic dispensation.

The noun πατήρ, when used of God is definite in such contexts, even without the article; however, like many Greek substantives, it often occurs with the article anyway. It functions much like a proper noun. Apart from the vocative and in expressions where it is in apposition to θεός, it usually takes the article.

### *III. Conclusion: Gentiles are included with Jews as the people of God, 19-22*

Verse 19

#### A. Pictured as Citizenship in a Commonwealth, 19

ἄρα οὖν] The normal inferential force of ἄρα is strengthened by the addition of οὖν.<sup>37</sup> This strong inferential marker is used to transition into the conclusion of the passage.

οὐκέτι] Adverb meaning “*no longer*” (a compound of οὐ (“*no, not*”) and ἔτι “*still, yet*”). All through this paragraph, the contrast has been

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<sup>37</sup> BDF §451(2)(b).

between the condition of Jews and Gentiles under the Mosaic dispensation vs. the condition of Jews and Gentiles under the present dispensation.

ἐστε] Pres. Ind. 2Pers. Pl. εἰμί “*to be*,” main verb of this sentence.

ξένοι] Nom. Masc. Pl. ξένος “*stranger*,” “*alien*.” Predicate nominative to ἐστε. See comments on this word in verse 12.

καί] The conjunction joins ξένοι and πάροικοι as the two parts of a compound predicate nominative to ἐστε.

πάροικοι] Nom. Masc. Pl. πάροικος “*stranger*,” “*alien*.” Predicate nominative to ἐστε.

ἀλλά] Strong adversative conjunction, “*but*,” making a contrast between οὐκέτι ἐστε (“you are no longer”) and ἐστε (“you are”).

συμπολιται] Nom. Masc. Pl. συμπολίτης “*fellow-citizen*.” This is the only NT occurrence of this word, though it occurs in classical as early as Euripides in the 5<sup>th</sup> cent. BC. Here, it is the predicate nominative to ἐστε. This is not to say that Gentiles are made citizens of Israel. In this context, Paul is using two figures to express the new relationship of Jews and Gentiles to each other. The first figure is that of fellow-citizens who belong to the same household; the second figure is that of stones built into a temple (vv. 20-22). These Gentile believers are no more citizens of Israel than they were stones in a temple. The language here is clearly that of metaphor.

τῶν ἁγίων] Gen. Masc. Pl. definite article + Gen. Masc. Pl. ἅγιος “*holy*;

or as a substantive, “*saint*.” The article substantivizes the adjective making it a noun in relation to συμπολιται. As a genitive, it is the genitive of association, “*with the saints*.” The term “saints,” here, refers to *all* believers in the church. Neither Jew nor Gentile has second-rate status. All believers are “fellow-citizens” together.

καί] The conjunction joins συμπολιται and οἰκεῖοι as two parts of a compound predicate nominative to ἐστε.

οἰκεῖοι] Nom. Masc. Pl. οἰκεῖος, (α), ον in the NT only as a substantive, “*member of a household*.” It is the second part of the compound predicate nominative of ἐστε.

τοῦ θεοῦ] Gen. Masc. Sing. definite article + Gen. Masc. Sing. θεός  
“*God*,” genitive of possession to οἰκεῖοι.

## B. Pictured as a Building and Temple, 20-22

### 1. The Foundation, 20a

ἐποικοδομηθέντες] Aor. Pass. Ptcpl. Nom. Masc. Pl. ἐποικοδομέω “*build on*,” “*build on to*,” “*build up*,” “*edify*.” The participle is circumstantial to ἐστὲ ... οἰκεῖοι, probably expressing the cause or means by which they were added to God’s household. The metaphor shifts slightly from the *members* of a household to the *building itself*.

ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ] Preposition ἐπί “*on*,” “*upon*” (with a dative object) +  
Dat. Masc. Sing. definite article + Dat. Masc. Sing. θεμέλιος  
“*foundation*.” The prepositional phrase is adverbial to



ἐποικοδομηθέντες, expressing the location where the building takes place.

τῶν ἀποστόλων] Gen. Masc. Pl. definite article + Gen. Masc. Pl.

ἀπόστολος “*apostle*.” Genitive of apposition, the apostles *are* the foundation.<sup>38</sup> The article joins ἀποστόλων and προφητῶν very closely together. If the two nouns had been singular, this would constitute a Granville Sharpe’s construction. Since they are plural, however, the construction does not meet the strict requirements of Granville Sharpe. Nevertheless, the two distinct groups (apostles and prophets) are linked together as forming the collective “foundation” of the church. The foundational work of the apostles was primarily to serve as eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Jesus (Ac 1:8, 21, 22), while the prophets’ foundational work was to provide the Word of God for the infant church while they were awaiting the completion of the NT canon (1Co 13:9-10; 2Pe 1:15-21; see also Eph 4:11).

καί] The conjunction joins ἀποστόλων and προφητῶν. See comments in preceding entry.

προφητῶν] Gen. Masc. Pl. προφήτης “*prophet*” joined with ἀποστόλων as the second member in a compound genitive of apposition. See comments *supra* on ἀποστόλων.

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<sup>38</sup> Some commentators prefer to see this as a possessive genitive, claiming that the apostles’ and prophets’ foundation is Christ, on the strength of 1Co 3:10. However 1Co 3 is not really parallel. There, the building is believers’ works that are to be judged. Here, the building is the church, the body of Christ.

## 2. The Cornerstone, 20b

ὄντος] Pres. Ptcpl. Gen. Masc. Sing. εἰμί “*to be*.” The participle forms the verbal element of a genitive absolute construction. The genitive absolute is circumstantial to ἐποικοδομηθέντες, and expresses attendant circumstance. The present tense is used to express contemporaneous time; i.e., at the same time as the prophets and apostles are serving as the foundation, Christ is serving as the cornerstone.

ἀκρογωνιαίου] Gen. Masc. Sing. ἀκρογωνιαῖος “*cornerstone*.” The genitive here forms the predicate genitive to ὄντος. Building practices in the first century Near Eastern culture used a large cornerstone, carefully cut to be perfectly square and plumb, to give the entire building a frame of reference for all three dimensions.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the metaphor fits Christ perfectly, since He is the One who gives direction, purpose, and definition to the church.

αὐτοῦ] Gen. Masc. Sing. 3<sup>rd</sup> Personal Pronoun. Here the pronoun intensifies Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, “Jesus Christ *himself*.” There is none other that could serve the function of the cornerstone.

Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ] Gen. Masc. Sing. Χριστός Ἰησοῦς “*Christ Jesus*.” The genitive case is used here for the subject of the genitive absolute construction.

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<sup>39</sup> The meaning “crowning stone,” or “top stone” of the edifice (TDNT 1, 791-93; TDNT 4, 268-80; Lincoln, 154-56) is to be rejected. The association of the ἀκρογωνιαῖος with the θεμέλιος runs contrary to such an idea. An excellent discussion of the various views is to be found in Hoehner, *Exegetical Commentary*, 404-06.

## 3. The Building Stones, 21-22

## Verse 21

ἐν ᾧ] Preposition ἐν “in” + Dat. Masc. Sing. Relative Pronoun. The antecedent of the pronoun is Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ. There is an interesting mixture of metaphorical and literal use of language here. For the most part, Paul continues the metaphor of a temple building; however, the prepositional phrase here appears to utilize Paul’s frequent use of the expressions “in Christ,” “in Him,” “in Whom” “in the Lord” (later in this verse) where the preposition expresses the sphere in which the Christian relationship exists. This is exactly the point of the metaphor here; however, in the language of the metaphor itself, we might have expected something like ἐφ’ ᾧ, or ἐκ οὗ, since a building is built *upon* the cornerstone, or derives its direction *from* the cornerstone.

πᾶσα] Nom. Fem. Sing. πᾶς “all,” “every,” “whole.” When used without the article in the singular, πᾶς emphasizes “the individual members of the class.”<sup>40</sup> It is nearly impossible to represent this nuance in English translation. Translations such as “the *whole* building,” “the *entire* building,” or “*all* the building” tend to focus on the whole structure, rather than the individual building stones.

οικοδομή] Nom. Fem. Sing. οικοδομή “*building*.” Subject of αὔξει.

συναρμολογουμένη] Pres. Pass. Ptcpl. Nom. Fem. Sing. συναρμολογέω

“*to fit/join together*.” The participle is circumstantial to the main verb

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<sup>40</sup> BDAG, s.v. πᾶς, 1.a.

αὔξει and expresses the manner or means by which the building grows. This word is not attested in Classical Greek being found only in Christian writers, and occurs only here and in Ephesians 4:16 in the NT. It appears to be a compound of σύν “together,” “with” + ἄρμονία “a fastening,” “a clamp”; “a joining,” “a joint”<sup>41</sup> + λέγω “to say,” “to speak,” “to call,” “to name.” The fitting together of stones in a first century temple is magnificently illustrated by the still standing retaining wall around the Herodian temple complex in Jerusalem. This wall built of massive lime stone blocks, some weighing over 100 tons, is built entirely without mortar, and the stones are fitted so carefully and accurately that a knife blade cannot be inserted between them. This wall has survived intact for nearly two millennia in an earthquake prone region of the world! Paul was very familiar with this Herodian temple structure, and may well have had it in mind when he employed this term.

αὔξει] Pres. Act. Ind. 3pers. Sing. αὐξάνω/αὔξω “to grow,” “to cause to grow,” “to increase.” This is the main verb of the sentence. The present tense is durative and indicates that the building is in progress. In Jesus’ day, the Jerusalem temple had been in the process of construction for forty-six years (Jn 2:20), and continued under construction for forty more years until its destruction by the Romans.

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<sup>41</sup> It was also used musically to refer to *harmony*. In this respect, I find it interesting the Plato uses the word metaphorically to refer to *harmony*, or *concord* among men (Liddell and Scott, s.v. ἄρμονία). Could there be a hint of this notion in Paul’s use of the word in Ephesians? It certainly fits the context, but without more semantic data on the entire term συναρμολογέω, it would be tenuous at best to suggest this connection.

Again, it is possible that the Jerusalem temple provides the model on which Paul's metaphor is built.

εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον] Preposition εἰς “into” + Acc. Masc. Sing. ναός “temple” + Acc. Neut. Sing. ἅγιος “holy.” The prepositional phrase is adverbial to αὐξέει and expresses the goal of the process of increase. The adjective ἅγιος may seem somewhat redundant alongside a noun like ναόν; however, Ephesus was renowned for its great temple of Artemis (cf. Acts 19:24-27), and Paul may have used the adjective here for the sake of the Ephesians to contrast Christ's temple with their city's well known temple.

ἐν κυρίῳ] Preposition ἐν “in” + Dat. Masc. Sing. of κύριος “Lord.” The prepositional phrase is the second phrase adverbial to αὐξέει.<sup>42</sup> For this phrase, see comments *supra* on ἐν ᾧ at the beginning of this verse.

Verse 22

ἐν ᾧ] Preposition ἐν + Dat. Masc. Sing. Relative Pronoun. The antecedent of the pronoun is κυρίῳ. This prepositional phrase is adverbial to συνικοδομεῖσθε and expresses the sphere in which this building activity takes place. See comments *supra* on ἐν ᾧ in verse 21.

ὁμείζ] Nom. Masc. Pl. Second Personal Pronoun, subject of συνικοδομεῖσθε. The pronoun is intensive and has reference to the Gentile believers, in contrast to the Jewish believers. Verse 21 looked

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<sup>42</sup> Hoehner believes this would be redundant, and that therefore the phrase must modify ναὸν ἅγιον (*Exegetical Commentary*, 411). This is a plausible alternative interpretation, but I am not convinced that the phrase is overly redundant being adverbial to αὐξέει; it may simply be repetition for the sake of emphasis.

at the *whole building* (πᾶσα οἰκοδομή) – both Jewish believers and Gentile believers. Here the focus is on the Gentile believers who are built along with the Jewish believers (note the prefixed συν on the following συνοικοδομεῖσθε). The Gentiles are privileged to be built along with the Jews into this holy temple.

συνοικοδομεῖσθε] Pres. Pass. Ind. 2pers. Pl. συνοικοδομέω “*to build up (together)*” (of the various parts of a structure). The present tense is durative. See notes *supra* on αὔξει regarding this durative present. Note also the contrast between this συνοικοδομέω which points to the relationship between Jew and Gentile as different building blocks in this metaphorical temple, and ἐποικοδομέω in verse 20 which looks at the relationship of both Jew and Gentile to the foundation.

εἰς κατοικητήριον] Preposition εἰς “*into*” + Acc. Neut. Sing.

κατοικητήριον “*dwelling-place*.” The prepositional phrase is adverbial to συνοικοδομεῖσθε and expresses the goal of the building.

κατοικητήριον occurs only here and in Revelation 18:2 (eschatological fallen Babylon becomes a *dwelling-place* for demons) in the NT and is unattested in Classical. The cognate term κατοίκησις “*living quarters*,” “*dwelling*” occurs as early as Thucydides in the fifth cent. BC, and the termination –τήριον frequently indicates a “place where something happens.”<sup>43</sup> The Church is seen as the temple (ναός) of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16.

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<sup>43</sup> BDAG, s.v. κατοικητήριον, also BDF §109(9).

τοῦ θεοῦ] Gen. Masc. Sing. definite article + Gen. Masc. Sing. θεός

“*God.*” The genitive expresses possession; it is *God’s* dwelling place.

ἐν πνεύματι] Preposition ἐν “*in,*” “*by*” + Dat. Neut. Sing. πνεῦμα

“*Spirit.*” The prepositional phrase is adverbial to συνοικοδομεῖσθε and expresses the means<sup>44</sup> by which this building process takes place.<sup>45</sup>

This is conceptually very much like the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit, by which the Spirit places believers into the body of Christ (1Co 12:13).

b. Summarize principle, primary application, & secondary application

- i. Primary application: This section is addressed primarily to the majority believing Gentile constituent of the Ephesian congregation. Some of these Gentile believers may have brought into their new life some of their previous biases and prejudices, especially a disdain of the Jews. This appears to have been a problem in other Pauline churches, as well, as we see, for example, in Romans 11:18, 20, “Do not be arrogant toward the branches [i.e., Israel] ... Do not be conceited, but fear.” These believing Gentiles were to appreciate the covenant relationship that exists between God and the Jews, and rejoice that God had been gracious in extending His blessing to non-covenant people, the Gentiles. Since, in the present dispensation, believing Jews and believing

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<sup>44</sup> Abbott takes it as both means and sphere: “He is at once the means and the element” (p. 42). It can mean one or the other, but not both. The sphere is expressed by ἐν ᾧ, thus, “by the Spirit” probably expresses means, not sphere.

<sup>45</sup> Hoehner (*Exegetical Commentary*, 414) believes the phrase is too far removed from the verb to be adverbial, and therefore understands it as being adjectival to κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. While this is a possible alternative interpretation, it must be kept in mind that the vast majority of prepositional phrases are adverbial, and one would need a compelling reason not to understand this one as adverbial. Distance from the governing verb is not such a compelling reason in Pauline literature!

Gentiles have equality in Christ, there ought not to be any prejudicial feelings among them.

ii. Secondary applications:

- A. There is positive benefit to the believer in remembering the tremendous change that took place in his standing before God when he first trusted in Jesus, 2:11-13.
- B. There is no spiritual hierarchy within the body of Christ. One's background does not make him any better or worse off in his relative position within the body of Christ.
- C. We should not despise or prefer any brother or sister in Christ because of their cultural, ethnic, or religious past.
- D. Our relationship with God is based on the efficacy of Christ's blood, v.13.
- E. The Mosaic Law is no longer in force, having come to an end of its administration at the crucifixion of Christ, verses 14-16.
- F. Christ's redemptive work on the cross reconciles us to God, v. 16.
- G. Our believer-priesthood gives us direct access to God, without having to go through an intermediary priesthood, verse 18.
- H. Our Christian lives are only properly built when constructed on the foundation of Christ and the Apostles (NT teaching) and when receiving direction and purpose from the Lord Jesus Christ, verses 20-22.



I. Believers who are met together in a congregation are a dwelling-place for God, albeit an imperfect and incomplete dwelling place. The building program is still “under construction.”

c. Identify the impact of the passage on your own life.

To me, personally, this is a very humbling passage. I am reminded that I came from a position of total hopelessness and helplessness. I have absolutely no reason to boast of my position in Christ. God has blessed me as though I were a part of His covenant people, even though I have no direct claim to the covenants of God. My standing before God is based on my position “in Christ.” I am amazed and awe-struck by the fact that someone like me could become a part of an habitation for God. I have always had a great appreciation for the Jews, but this passage reinforces my desire to be a friend to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and motivates me to pray for their salvation.

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