

## GOD BRINGS TWO PEOPLES TOGETHER | EPHESIANS 2:11-22

- Verses 11-18 covered in session 9
- Verse 19 –
  - A few important insights:
    - The Gentiles (**ye**) are no longer without hope and without God.
    - They are now **fellow citizens with the saints**. This does not say, *ye are now saints* (as standard evangelicalism teaches).
    - Does this mean that Gentiles are now citizens of Israel? They are *fellow citizens of the saints [who are] also of the household of God* (my translation).
  - And some thoughts:
    - Would this verse make any sense without dissecting the *we* from the *ye* in chapters 1 & 2?
    - Would it make sense for us to object that Jews had differing privileges from Gentiles in chapter 1, but then argue they have now been made equal in chapter 2?
    - If, as so many teach, there is and has only been "one people of God," then what are these verses about? (A recent social media post: "The Church is Israel. God has one people, not two, always has and always will.")
- Verse 20 –
  - We (the gentile believers) are **built upon** a foundation that is wholly Jewish, since the **apostles and prophets** were Jewish.
    - It is essential to realize that this is our **foundation** and not the *structure* of the building.
    - Good Christian doctrine would be irrational and unsubstantiated without the revelation and teaching of the Hebrew scriptures and the Gospels. But if you use these to order your daily Christian life, you are living in a different dispensation that does not mix with the current.
  - Modern cornerstones are ceremonial, but the ancient cornerstone was the stone that set the direction of all other stones. The all prophecy and apostolic work is set in the direction of Jesus Christ and points to Him and is guided by Him.
- Verses 21-22 –
  - God is building a building which is be a **holy temple** and a **habitation of God**.
  - This aligns with Paul's teaching in **1 Corinthians 3:16** which says, **ye are a temple of God**.
    - Note the plural **ye**. Grammar strongly suggests that this is to be understood as *you are collectively the temple of God* rather than *each one from among you are individually the temple of God*.
    - Ephesians 2:21-22 speaks of the various components of the building being **fitly framed together** until it **groweth into an holy temple in the Lord...for an habitation of God through the Spirit**.
  - This is a *question the assumptions* matter. Paul certainly had a way of saying *each of you individually are the temple* but he did not use that grammar. See, for example, 1 Corinthians 14:26, comparing the singular with the plural.
  - For the greatest proof that it is the *collective local church* that is the temple, consider 1 Corinthians 12:27. I am not the body of Christ, but "we" are the body, and I a member of the body. If I am not the body, am I (individually) the temple?

- Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 6:19 says **your body is the temple** while 1 Corinthians 6:15 (only four verses prior) says **your bodies are the members of Christ**. It would be utterly foolish to argue that when Paul said **your body** in v. 19 that he meant **your bodies**, words which he had just previously used in v. 15.

## PAUL GIVEN A NEW DISPENSATION | EPHESIANS 3:1-2

### • Verse 1 –

- Paul was **the prisoner of Jesus Christ** for "you the nations."
- He was not a *prisoner for* nor a *prisoner because of*, but a **prisoner of**.
- Paul used this same terminology in Ephesians 4:1 and Philemon 1:1, 9, with similar wording in 2 Timothy 1:8.
- While Paul wrote these letters from prison (or house arrest), Paul chooses to emphasize that he is a **prisoner of** rather than a *prisoner for* Jesus Christ. In 1 Corinthians 9:16 he says, **woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel**.

### • Verse 2 –

- Paul clearly claims to have been given a **dispensation of the grace of God**.
- A **dispensation** is a period under a certain *economy* (thus the Greek οἰκονομία [oikonomia]). Every dispensation begins with a revelation that provides fundamentally new information.
- The questions we must answer are:
  - Was this dispensation given to others also?
  - It is grammatically possible, though, if it was given to many, the grammar would have made more sense (and have been more transparent) to speak of the dispensation "which is given to you."
  - No one else in the New Testament claims to have been given a dispensational mystery.
  - Paul repeats this claim often: v. 8, Romans 11:13, 12:3, 15:15-16, 1 Corinthians 9:17, Galatians 1:15-16, 2:8-9, Colossians 1:25, 1 Timothy 1:11, 2:7.
  - The testimony of the Lord speaks to this claim: Acts 9:15, 22:21.
  - In the end, it would be very hard to claim that this dispensation was given (i.e.: revealed) to others beside Paul, except through Paul.
- **When did this dispensation begin?**
  - If it indeed came to Paul only, then it could not have begun before Paul.
  - There is no evidence in the Gospels nor the book of Acts that the **dispensation of the grace of God** began before Paul.
  - While *the church* may have begun before Paul, the *church as we know it* began with Paul.
  - Recommended reading: *The Church of the New Testament: Examining the differences between the Apostolic and the Pauline Assemblies*.
- **What are the unique characteristics of this dispensation?**
  - It is a dispensation that offers *individual* rather than *national* salvation.
  - It is unrelated to the Kingdom.
  - It has a *Savior* rather than a *Messiah* or *King*.
  - Its salvation does not require works and does not allow works. It is fully a gift of God.
  - It is available to anyone, anytime, anywhere.