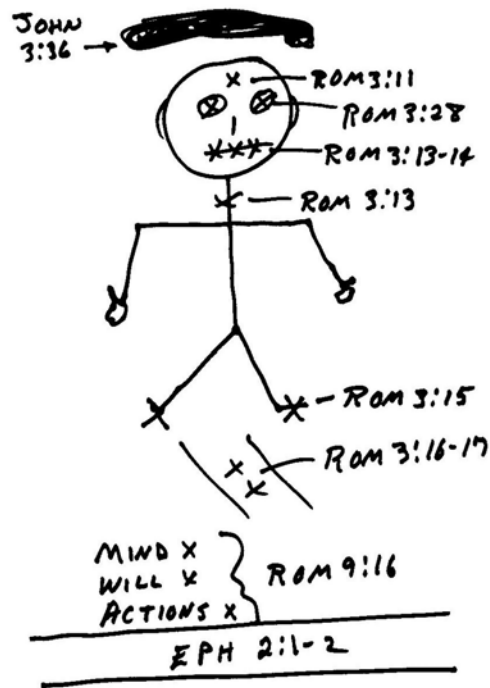


Ephesians 2
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“Salvation from His Peoples’ Perspective”

**EPH 2:1 “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
EPH 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world,
according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in
the sons of disobedience.”**

We have covered this material before, but Paul emphasizes it here again so that there should be no doubt in anyone’s mind what our state was before God did His regeneration work in us. Just in case someone may have forgotten, here is our image that we examined before to visualize our pre-regeneration state.



Except for our opposing thumbs, there is nothing in this representation that allows anyone to have any sense of pride; and we did not have anything to do with having thumbs! A dead person cannot do anything in the sphere of existence in which he/she is dead. We were **spiritually dead!** A spiritually dead person cannot understand anything that is of a spiritual nature. Now today we need to be careful about the use of the word “spiritual”. We have to ask, “How do you define spiritual?” A former Vice President of the United States and his wife as a book out title “The Spiritual Family”, but how do they define “spiritual”? Remember on page six of “Ephesians One”, we quoted from a Spiritual Wellness” advertisement:

“This course offers a number of exercises and activities that address the spiritual dimension of wellness. Based on the National Wellness Institute's spiritual dimension of wellness, the activities will focus on seeking meaning and purpose, and peace in human existence. The NWI model encourages seeking answers to philosophical questions such as: "Why am I here?" and "What is life all about?" Although for some, organized religion provides answers, the exercises provided will focus on spirituality as opposed to religion. The course will be interactive, and participants will engage in application of the exercises. (Course part of the Holistic Wellness Certificate)”

They say that they are focusing on “spirituality as opposed to religion”. What sort of religion does not focus on spirituality? So we go back to the dictionary and find that spirituality is defined as “The state, quality, or fact of being spiritual”. So we look up spiritual and find it is defined as “Of, relating to, consisting of, or having the nature of spirit; not tangible or material; Of, concerned with, or affecting the soul; Of, from, or pertaining to God; Of or belonging to a church or religion; pertaining to or having the nature of spirits or supernatural”. We then look up spiritual and find “That which is traditionally believed to be the vital principle or animating force within living beings; that which constitutes one’s unseen, intangible being; the essential and activating principle of a person or the will”.

So these people are separating spirituality from religion and therefore from God. They then believe that every human being has this “vital principle or animating force” and it is that force that they are attempting to manipulate toward some sort of “peace in human existence”. We often hear people talk about “spiritual wellness” and that state is characterized by some high spiritual significance, but remember that this is apart from anyone’s understanding of God or from any religion at all. So what is the standard that these people have for spiritual wellness? What are the guiding principles for obtaining this spiritual wellness? Whose meaning and purpose are they striving to obtain and whose definition of peace are they using? Without any external standard, the searching will be without any guidance except each individual’s “feelings”. And when will the searching be declared successful? Since these same people reject any absolute standards or any absolute truths, the searching is totally individual and thus it has an infinite number of possible answers, different for each person. This sounds like chaos to me, and certainly any peace that these people obtain will be short-lived as some other life event occurs to perturb them from their “peace” and the search starts over. From the above definitions, the searching can involve spirits so they can include astrology in their searching processes or perhaps some sort of “natural drugs” as some groups have used. They must go through life precariously perched upon a moving standard that is not based upon any absolute truth.

To us Christians, we will choose the definition “Of, from, or pertaining to God”. We then have an external, fixed standard of spiritual wellness and that standard is a life totally at harmony with the revealed nature of the Creator of all that is, the God of the Bible. Our concept of life is that people were originally created in the image of God meaning being a trinity or having a body, soul, and spirit:

Gen 1:27 “And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Original sin resulted in spiritual death and all people born after this time were of the image of Adam meaning being a duality or having a body and a soul:

Gen 5:3 "When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth."

This state of being is why Jesus said that we must be born again:

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The second birth is the birth of our spirit so that then we can respond to things spiritual, meaning those things pertaining to God.

So when each of us was physically born, we possessed a body and a soul but we had no spiritual component so we could not understand anything spiritual. We behaved as people of this world under the leadership of Satan ("the prince of the power of the air"). Notice that Paul also said that Satan is "the spirit that is **now** working in the sons of disobedience". I bolded the word "now" for emphasis because some people think that Satan's defeat at the cross and resurrection was total for all time beginning then. There certainly is a sense in which it is true that Satan certainly was defeated then and forever, however this fact is still not yet worked out in the world as we can easily see by reading the daily newspaper or watching TV. Remember Jesus taught us to pray partly:

Matt 6:10 "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven."

Obviously the kingdom is not totally here yet. Certainly God's will is always done for He is sovereign, however the kingdom is only here spiritually. The total working out of the physical establishment of God's kingdom on earth is still a future event for which we are commanded to pray. Satan is still roaming about:

1Peter 5:8 "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

We are involved in a spiritual warfare, as we will discuss later when we study chapter six of Ephesians.

We began our life walking according to "the course of this world". Course means "Onward movement in a particular direction; the direction or path taken by something that moves, as a stream". The natural movement of the world is that taken according to the direction given by Satan as Paul told us. When we are regenerated, we are now moving "up stream" so to speak. Have you ever tried to swim against the current? It is very difficult to try to move in a direction counter to the natural movement of the world. The unregenerate think we look very foolish working so hard to move in this unnatural direction when we could just relax and let the current carry us toward destruction. Of course, they don't know that they are being led toward destruction. This worldly mindset

says, “If it feels good, do it” and “live life to its fullest, for you only have one trip here”. These people have no true spiritual life so they can’t answer the deep philosophical questions such as “Who am I”, “What am I doing here”, and “Where am I going”. To the regenerate person these questions have easy answers: “I am a child of God”, “I am here to glorify God”, and “I am going to live forever with God”. All of our philosophy is God-centered, and thus of eternal meaning. The world’s philosophy changes as mankind drifts further and further away from God, seeking spiritual wholeness but without knowing the meaning of what they are seeking. They are blind people with no reference point, no means of determining a preferred direction in life, they are without hope. And we were once just like them!

Eph 2:3 “Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

Everyone born begins life with a body and a soul. We all were just like the people that we see around us now who are immersed in the endless search for “spirituality” as discussed above, or who are otherwise following the natural course of the world.

Eph 2:4 “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

Eph 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Eph 2:6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,

Eph 2:7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

“But God” are two such wonderful words! We were without hope, wandering in the world only directed by the natural course of the world stream as directed by Satan. Then we read “But God!” He acted toward us because He is rich in mercy and He has such a great love for us, His chosen children. These are such rich verses that we could never complete commenting upon them. Before our regeneration, God’s attitude toward us was as is stated in John 3:36:

John 3:36 “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

It is this verse that led me to draw the black cloud above the dead man in the figure above. The wrath of God was abiding on me before my regeneration! I was without hope and doomed to have the wrath of Holy God poured out on me. That is not a good situation! **But** God had mercy on me and He “made me alive in Christ Jesus”. He brought me from being spiritually dead to being spiritually alive. I was “born again” as Jesus said in John 3:3 must happen to us for us to see the kingdom of heaven. After this rebirth, I now had a body, a soul, and a spirit. I was born in the image of God. But that is not all that He did! He raised me up with Him and sat me in the heavenly places in Christ

Jesus. Of course this event of placing me in heaven is a spiritual event, but that doesn't make it any less real. Spiritually I am sitting in heaven with God and one day He is going to reveal this fact to the entire world so that **“He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”**. One day the triune truth will be revealed so that everyone can see what God has done. Everyone will be able to see the mercy that God has showed to His children and His riches and grace in kindness toward those children will be clearly revealed. It will then be too late for the rest of the world to affirm their belief in the real God.

A “belief” is only necessary when the **fact** is not clearly revealed for one to see and understand. One day some of the people that you know who are not God's children will look at you sitting in the heavenly places and gasp at the sudden realization that what you had been telling them about God was indeed true. The awful horror will come upon them that it is now too late for them to join you. These totally worldly people will now obtain perfect justice whereas we who were chosen by God obtained mercy as we had agreed with God that we were guilty, but He used the perfect payment of Jesus Christ to pay for all of our guilt. All other people will have to pay for all of eternity for their guilt. God's justice will be perfect so those people who are not God's children will have their good works and their evil works all revealed and judged by God. For all of eternity then the payment that these other people have to make for their guilt will be perfectly consistent with credit for all of their works.

These verses reveal the true essence of Christianity and of all Christians. The belief that we do now have is because of what God did first. People can start and stop believing certain things on their own initiative. But we who are born again have a belief and a hope that are both certainties in our minds because we have new hearts, minds, eyes, and ears. We now have a new way of understanding that we did not possess before God acted. True children of God will never stop believing in Him because this belief is now a part of our being. Note that the tenses of the verbs in these sentences is the past tense. We were made alive, raised up, and seated in the heavenly places. These are events that happened to us all when we became the children of God. Also note that we see the joining of us “in Christ” in all of these events. Just as God the Father did all of these events for Jesus, He has also done them for us. It is accomplished already and nothing that we do or don't do will affect what God has already done.

These verses describe the Christian, who is a new person. We still have the same tools that we had before (brain, physical heart, and other physical aspects), but now we have a new intent about life. The Christian now has the desire to please God, we have access to God through Jesus Christ, and we are being spiritually matured by the Holy Spirit in our walk in the world. We no longer look at anything the same as we did before our regeneration. All aspects of our lives are now being seen through a new viewpoint. We have our sight on Jesus and we judge all of our thoughts and actions based upon our new spiritual insight as to what is profitable in the “true long term”. We are citizens of heaven and judge everything by the acceptable and profitable rules of God's kingdom.

**Eph 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;
Eph 2:9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”**

The action of Holy God’s grace resulted in our salvation through the faith that God gave us. We cannot boast of anything that resulted in our salvation. As we see in the following Scriptures, nobody became righteous by their mind (none who understands) or by any works that they did (none who seeks).

Rom 3:10 “as it is written, There is none righteous, not even one;

Rom 3:11 There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;”

Nobody obtained justification by obeying the Law:

Rom 3:20 “because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

God is totally responsible for our salvation. He regenerated us and He gave us the faith to believe as we read below.

Rom 12:3 “ For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”

Heb 12:2 “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Each child of God is allotted a measure of faith, the author and perfecter of which is Jesus. I have been so concerned that people in the church do not really understand the concept of faith that I wrote an article on faith that is freely available from

<http://livingtheology.com/Faith.htm>

These two verses are the foundation of Christianity. If we build upon any other foundation we will have a house that will not stand. The truth is so simple: God is the one who initiates and completes the process of the regeneration of people from being dead to being alive. We have no part in this wonderful process. Some may say that we have to believe and indeed we do, but the belief that we have is a result of the regenerative work of God so that this belief is part of who we now are as stated above. Salvation is only through the actions of Jesus Christ. Our belief does not save us, we believe because we have been saved. Our faith does not save us in and of itself, but it is a conduit through which we are saved. We have faith in all pertaining to the true God because He gave us faith that was initiated and will be perfected by Jesus Christ. God saves us by His grace that works through His gift of faith that allows us to believe.

These verses are so clear that we wonder why people deviate from them. The reason is probably because of the pride of mankind that makes us want to have a part in everything that happens to us. We want to develop a philosophy that shows that our reasoning and actions have resulted on our salvation. However the verses above clearly show such a logic is false. What wonderful peace is brought to our hearts when we realize the truth of these verses and that since who we now are is because of what God has done, nobody (including myself) can undo what the omnipotent God has done.

John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

But also remember that Jesus said that He did not come to bring so sort of universal peace to all mankind:

Luke 12:51 "Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division;"

This peace that Jesus brings is for His children only. What a blessing we have from the generous mercy of God. Praise God that He has chosen us to be His children in Christ.

Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Who is the "we" here? The "we" are the people to whom Paul has been referring in verses 4 through 9. The "we" are the children of God who have been born again so that now we are God's workmanship. The "we" are not all the people in the world, but only those who have been created in Christ Jesus. We are the works of the hand of God and we have nothing to boast about being one of the "we". The following verses make it exceedingly clear that we are but the clay that God has chosen from which to make He children. We are indeed His workmanship. He is the artist and we are the clay.

Isa 29:16 "You turn things around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, That what is made should say to its maker, "He did not make me"; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?"

Isa 45:9 "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker-- An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making say, 'He has no hands'?"

Isa 64:8 "But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father, We are the clay, and Thou our potter; And all of us are the work of Thy hand."

Jer 18:6 "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel."

Also don't miss the words "created in Christ Jesus" for such information is critical to understanding who we are. This concept of me being just clay and God as the potter, which means that He is totally in control of what I became, was a difficult concept for

me. I thought that surely I had something to offer in this process! What an arrogant attitude I had, and I continued to have that attitude until God began His process in me. He wasn't waiting for me to agree to be the clay, for that would be works related to me. It was just in His good time that He chose to work in my life and make me one of His children.

But also note that God has created us for specific purposes. We have been created for good works. These good works were prepared "beforehand" and that time line stretches all the way back to before the creation of time. These works were created also for the specific purpose that we, the created children of God, should walk in them. We can also rest in the following verse:

Phil 1:6 "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

The "perfecting" is what we refer to as sanctification. Here we are guaranteed that God did not create us and then leave us alone. He is still working in us and will continue to do so until the day of Christ Jesus. We will study the following verses later, but they are of help here in understanding this workmanship of God that will continue.

Eph 4:11 "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

Eph 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Eph 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ."

Here we have briefly then seen the plan, the design, and the process by which God has been developing His children and maturing them throughout the ages.

Eph 2:11 "Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands--

Eph 2:12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

These two verses should make us Gentiles even more grateful to God for what He has done and is doing in us through Christ. The "therefore" actually refers back to the 2:1-10, which is all one sentence in the Greek text. In these previous verses he has pointed out how the unsaved were dead in their sins (Jew and Gentile alike) and how God by His power alone brought these spiritually dead people to life and raised them to heaven. He is now reminding the Gentiles "in the flesh", meaning those physically born outside of the Jewish race, that before the fullness of time when Christ came and fulfilled His work, they were totally separated from the work of God. Paul specifies the circumcision

performed by human hands, because true salvation comes by circumcision of the heart (Gal 5:6). Circumcision once set apart the people of God from the people who were not worshipers of God.

Gen 17:10 “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.

Gen 17:11 And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.”

Rom 3:1 “Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

Rom 3:2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.”

The non-Jew had no history of the establishment of God’s kingdom and the promise of a Messiah. They were cut off from any of the advantages of the Jew because of their physical birth being outside of the Jewish race. Before the work of Jesus Christ, a person had to first become a Jew before there was any hope of salvation. There are two excellent examples of this in the Old Testament. One is the story of Ruth where we read

Ruth 1:16 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.”

Notice that first she said that “your people shall be my people”, meaning that she would become a Jew. Then she stated that “your God, my God” for such was only possible if she were first a Jew.

The second example is Naaman who was a very powerful general until he contracted leprosy. We read the account of his cure of leprosy in 2 Kings 5:1-18. A captured Jewish girl told about Elisha that she thought could cure Naaman of his leprosy. Naaman found Elisha who told him to bathe in the Jordan seven times and he would be cured. Naaman first thought this a ridiculous request, but he did it and he was cured. Knowing that the Jordan was not as clean as the rivers in his land and that simply bathing in a river would not cure his leprosy (surely he had bathed before!), Naaman recognizes that the healing came from the God that Elisha served:

2 Kings 5:15 “When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, “Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now.”

Naaman then took some soil from Israel so that he could worship God on the soil of Israel. He wanted to pray to God as a Jew on Jewish soil.

Before the work of Christ, the Gentiles were totally separated from the ordinances of God and were without hope unless they first became a Jew. After the work of Christ, there is

a new dispensation. Now there is the same hope to all people as the gospel does not differentiate between Jew and Gentile.

Rom 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

This huge change in the economics of God was what caused so much confusion in the early church and why the word "all" was so awesome and unbelievable for a long time and resulted in the following verses:

1Tim 2:4 "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

1Tim 2:6 "who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time."

Titus 2:11 "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,"

Salvation became available to all people without them first having to become a Jew. This was a hard concept for the people to accept after living with the old economy for so long. And now today, many people have trouble with that word "all" but for different reasons. Some think that God desires everybody ever born to be saved (universalism) and that Christ died for every person who ever lived (unlimited atonement). "All" simply means that after the work of Christ salvation is available to all people of every race and creed, but not that Christ died for every single person who ever existed.

Praise God, salvation was offered to me, a Gentile.

Eph 2:13 "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Eph 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

Eph 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

Eph 2:16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity."

Now Paul talks about how we "all" were brought into the Family of God. This marvelous work is all done by Jesus Christ. At the time of Paul there was no wall of separation that was so definitive between two races of people. Surrounding the Temple were the Court of the Priests, the Court of Israel, and the Court of women. These were all on the same level, but descending down five steps was the Court of the Gentiles with a five-foot high barricade on which were written warnings of death for those Gentiles who proceeded past the barricade. It was Jesus Christ Himself who broke down this barrier and made the two groups of Jews and Gentiles into one.

Also in the center was the Temple with the Holy Place and the Holiest of Holy Place with a great veil about six inches thick separating these two Places. This is the veil that is

mentioned in Matt 27:51 as being torn from the top down representing that God Himself has destroyed this barrier so that any of the “all” can now approach Holy God.

This great work was done by Jesus fulfilling the Law, which no man could do, so that the Law was not now the sole possession of the Jew but that the Law was now completely fulfilled by Jesus so that any of the “all” now had a perfect standing before Holy God. Now all chosen people of any race are now one. The Gentile did not have to become a Jew before becoming a child of God. The Jews were given possession of the Law, but they could not fulfill it so it did not bring them peace with God. The Law was the enmity or antagonism between the Jews and the Gentiles because the Jews had it in their possession and they felt like that made them special before God. The law was the enmity between all people and God because the standard of behavior required by God of all people could not be upheld by any people. What happened is like Jesus took up the Law, fulfilled it, and offered forgiveness for all sins and a perfect righteousness before God for “all” people who were given the faith to believe. The enmity between God and man was abolished by Jesus perfectly obeying it and then dying on the cross for the sins of his people. Now peace is possible for “all” people chosen by God.

Eph 2:17 “And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near;

Eph 2:18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.”

Jesus then preached peace with God to both the Gentiles (those who were far away from the tribe of Israel and the Law) and to the Jews (those who were near to the Law). Now through Jesus we “all” (Jew and Gentile alike) have access to God the Father in the Holy Spirit.

Eph 2:19 “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

Eph 2:20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

Eph 2:21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

Eph 2:22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

After the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, “all” the chosen people of God are now citizens of Heaven. We are now children of God (John 1:12). Chapter one illustrated the plan of salvation from God’s perspective. Chapter two illustrates the plan of salvation from our perspective and we see the end of this here with the emphasis, as is the entire book of Ephesians, on the church. The word “church” is not used in these verses, but three aspects of it are present for us to see if we have eyes to see.

I. The Kingdom of God

This aspect of the church is the first that is conveyed in these verses: “**you are fellow citizens with the saints**”. We pray for this aspect of the church every time we pray the “Lord’s Prayer” (really the Disciples’ Prayer). I remember when I first became a Christian and I got into discussions with other Children about The Kingdom. Was it past (God’s rule over Israel), present (remember the preaching of John the Baptist such as

Mark 1:15” and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.””),

or future (we pray that “thy Kingdom come” in the prayer taught by Jesus)? I early dismissed the Kingdom as just being in the past, for why else would God have sent Jesus and why do we have so many Scripture verses teaching us about the Kingdom in the present tense such as the above by John and the following by Jesus:

Matt 12:28 “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Here certainly Jesus is saying that the Kingdom of God has entered the world, which excludes it as having come earlier.

Then we are left with considering whether the Kingdom came when Jesus came or will it come in the future. Certainly the answer is “yes” for it came with Jesus in a spiritual sense and it will come in the future in a physical sense also. Paul also taught us that the Kingdom of God is very different from what man normally thinks of when thinking of a kingdom:

Rom 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Thus I entered the Kingdom of God when the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit entered my life. This is also part of the explanation of a verse we have already studied:

Eph 2:6 “and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,”

At that point in my life – my rebirth – I entered the Kingdom of God.

II. The Family of God

This is the second aspect of the church introduced by Paul in these verses (“**and are of God’s household**”). There are only two ways to inter a family: one can be born into it or adopted into it. This concept seemed so important to me that I wrote two papers on it:

<http://livingtheology.com/Family.htm>

<http://livingtheology.com/Adoption.htm>

Our rebirth makes us children of God

John 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,"

And then, as we have already seen, we are adopted by God into His Family:
Eph 1:5 "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will."

Quoting from my paper on "Adoption":

"He took a totally unacceptable person, made him acceptable in His sight, and then adopted him into the family of God so that this person now is a joint heir with Christ in the whole universe! We also see from this verse that the adoption was predestined as occurring through Jesus. This means that the adoption was the end result, not the justification of man, and it was all planned from the beginning by God!"

This concept of being adopted into the Family of God is just overwhelming to me. We should all spend the rest of our lives praising God for what He has done for us. We also have obligations as being part of the Family and I discussed some of these in my paper on "The Family of God". The following is a quote from that paper:

"I have responded to my child's reason for wanting to do something I did not want him to do "All the other kids are doing it" with "Well, their last name is not Combs." This type of reply means that our family has some guidelines for behavior that don't depend upon the behavior of the rest of the world. The same is true of God. He expects a different behavior from His children. Note that behavior does not allow one to become a child of God. But being a child of God, we have certain guidelines of behavior that are expected of us by God. God will discipline His children when their behavior is not in accord with those guidelines (Heb 12:6-8). The discipline is not so pleasant (Heb 12:11), but afterwards the love in the family is even stronger than before as we better understand the love of God and our responsibility in His Family."

III. God's Temple

The third aspect of the church that Paul addresses in these verses is God's Temple, and Paul spends more time on this part of the church.

A. The Foundation

As with any building, the foundation is the most important part of the building. A building built on a bad foundation will not stand. Jesus made that point in the following:

Luke 6:48-49 “he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock; and when a flood rose, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who has heard, and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house upon the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”

So we see in our Ephesian verses that Paul is clear that the foundation is built upon the teaching of the apostles and prophets: Eph 2:20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. This teaching then goes back to the Old Testament time so we in the modern church must remember that total foundation.

B. The Cornerstone

Jesus Christ Himself is the corner stone (**Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone**). Jesus had also told Peter that the church would be built upon Him (not Peter):

Matt 16:18 “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.”

Jesus also applied this concept to Himself quoting from Psa 118:22:

Matt 21:42 “Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone; This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes?’”

The cornerstone determines the entire dimensions and orientation of the building. Thus God Himself has set up the church, determined its direction and orientation in all of time, and continues to add to it as a perfect Temple for Himself.

C. The Living Stones

We see this concept also taught in

1Peter 2:5 “you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

We see then that the church has been in the process of construction since the beginning of time with His prophets, Jesus Christ, and the apostles. We can begin to see what a monstrous thing it is to add to the church in an extra Biblical fashion. The entire church is built upon the truth of God and any attempt to modify it to the ideologies of man will certainly be rejected by God as the church would become apostate. We should pray for the purity of our local church so that it remains true to the foundation, the corner stone, and the living stones placed in the invisible church by God Himself. The visible church is the church that we can see physically and the visible church members are the people we see in the visible church. The invisible church is the true one that Paul is talking

about in this part of Ephesians. In chapters 4 and 5 Paul writes about the image of the church as Christ's body and in chapter 6 Paul writes about the image of the church as a well-equipped army of God.

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