

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

**Ephesians Chapter 2**

**Introduction:** In chapter 2 it speaks of how the believer is made alive in Christ Jesus. In the first ten verses **Eph. 2:1 - 10 Paul clarifies what it means to receive salvation and to be a part of Christ’s Body, the church.** Here the apostle moves from eternity past into time. He describes the act and process of salvation, the miracle that draws men into the eternal plan portrayed in chapter 1. In context this section builds on the thought of **Eph. 1:19**, where Paul introduces the **surpassing greatness of His (being Christ’s) power toward us who believe** and then digresses to discuss that power in Christ’s life. He returns now to show how that power works in our salvation. In the first ten verses Paul presents **the past, present, and future of the Christian: what HE WAS in verses 1 - 3, what HE IS in verses 4–6, 8–9, and what HE WILL BE in verse 7 and 10.** Within that framework he then gives aspects of salvation. He teaches it is deliverance from sin, by God’s love, into life, with a salvation purpose, through faith, that sets the believer apart ultimately for good works. The first aspect is in **the past**, the next four aspects pertain to **the present**, and the last aspect is in **the future**.

**Eph. 2:1 – 3 “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 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. 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.”**

**Eph. 2:1 – 3 NLT “Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. 2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. 3 All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.”**

- Paul begin **verse 1- 3** dealing with the believer’s former condition. Make no mistake salvation is from sin, which characterizes life before Christ. In these three verses there is perhaps no clearer statement in Scripture on the sinfulness of man apart from Christ. **Rom. 6:23** explains the wages, or payment, for sin is death, and because man is born in

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

sin he is born to death. Man does not become spiritually dead because he sins; he is spiritually dead because by nature he is sinful. Except for Jesus Christ, that is the condition of every human being since the Fall, including every believer before he is saved. It is the past condition of believers and the present condition of everyone else. Man’s basic trouble is not being out of harmony with his heritage or his environment but being out of harmony with his Creator. His principal problem is not that he cannot make meaningful relationships with other human beings but that he has no right relationship to God, from whom he is alienated by sin. His condition has nothing to do with the way he lives; it has to do with the fact that he is dead even while he is alive. He is spiritually dead while being physically alive. Because he is dead to God, he is dead to spiritual life, truth, righteousness, inner peace and happiness, and ultimately to every other good thing.

- In **Eph. 2:1** Paul teaches before we were saved we were like every other person who is apart from God—**dead in ... trespasses and sins**. The Greek case is the locative of sphere, indicating the sphere, or realm, in which something or someone exists. We were not **dead** because we had committed sin but because we were **in sin**. In this context **trespasses and sins** do not refer simply to acts but first of all to the sphere of existence of the person apart from God. He does not become a liar when he tells a lie; he tells a lie because he already *is* a liar. He does not become a thief when he steals; he steals because he already *is* a thief. And so with murder, adultery, covetousness, and every other sin. Committing sinful acts does not make us sinners; we commit sinful acts because we *are* sinners. Jesus confirmed this when He said in **Matt. 12:35**, “**The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.**” Read **Matt. 15:18 - 19**
- What this verse teaches is that until man receives salvation, he is in a state of spiritual death—“**dead in trespasses and sins.**” / The word **trespasses** from **paraptōma** means **to slip, fall, stumble, deviate, or go the wrong direction**. The word **sins** from **hamartia** originally carried the idea of **missing the mark**, as when hunting with a bow and arrow. It then came to represent **missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose**. In the spiritual realm it refers to missing and falling short of God’s standard of holiness, and in the New Testament it is the most common and general term for sin being used some

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

173 times. Paul here does not use the two terms to point up different kinds of wrongdoing but simply to emphasize the breadth of the sinfulness that results from spiritual deadness.

**Read Rom. 3:23** Paul’s statement that **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** does not give two truths but two views of the same truth. Sin is falling short of God’s glory, and falling short of God’s glory is sin. Sin manifests itself in many different forms and degrees, but the state of sin itself has no degrees. Not all men are as evil as they could be, but all fail to measure up to God’s perfect standard.

- In **verse 2** it reveals in the state of spiritual death, the only **walking, or living**, a person can do is **“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.”** The word **world** from **kosmos** does not here represent simply the physical creation but the **world order**, the **world’s system of values** and **way of doing things**—the **world’s course**. To walk **according to the course of this world, according to the power of the prince of the power of the air**, is to think and live according to the presuppositions, ideologies, and standards over which sin and Satan have control and to be dominated by evil supernatural beings. Satan’s supreme purpose for men is not to get them only to do evil things but to think and believe evil things, especially about God. What this reveals is people followed cultural norms that reject God, lived lives shaped by worldly priorities rather than truth.
- Paul also makes it clear in this verse that the **course of this world** follows the leadership and design of Satan, identified as **“the prince of the power of the air.”** Sinful men have many different ideas and standards, but they are in total agreement that the network of things in **this world** is more important than the divine perspective of God. They are of one mind because they have a common leader and lord, **“the prince of the power of the air.”** According to **John 12:31**, Satan is **‘the ruler of this world,’** and he will continue to rule until the Lord casts him out. **The power** [or authority] **of the air** probably refers to Satan’s host of demons who exist in the heavenly sphere. Paul has this in mind in **Eph. 6:12**, where he warns of **“the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”** Let’s be clear here, during the present age he and his demon host dominate, pressure, and control every person who is unsaved. He is the personification of spiritual death because he is the personification of rebellion against God—and so is the world system he designed. Note that

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

even though Satan is **the prince** and ruler of this world system, not all unsaved people are demon-possessed or indwelt by him; however, they are still under his influence—whether they realize it or not.” Sharing a sinful nature and living in rebellion against God, they naturally respond to his leading and operate on the same spiritual wavelength.

- In the **c-portion** of **verse 2** it explains because fallen mankind and Satan’s hosts exist in the same spiritual realm, it is quite natural that his spirit is the same “**spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.**” The **prince of disobedience** works in willing followers, those who have no regard for the Word and will of God here are called **the sons of disobedience.**

**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.”**

**Eph. 2:3 NLT “All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.”**

- In **verse 3** Paul again speaks of the former life of the unsaved. Paul’s primary purpose here is not to show how unsaved people now live—though the teaching is valuable for that purpose—but to **remind believers** how they themselves **formerly walked and formerly lived.** All of us once “**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.**”
- The word **lusts** from **epithumia** refers to strong inclinations and desires of every sort, not simply to sexual lust. Then the word **desires** from **thelēma** emphasizes strong willfulness, wanting and seeking something with great diligence. As with **trespasses and sins, lusts and desires** are not given to show their distinctiveness but their commonness. They are used synonymously to represent fallen man’s complete orientation to his own selfish way. By nature he is driven to fulfill the **lusts** and **desires** of his sinful **flesh and ... mind.** The **flesh** from the word **sarx** refers to the **indulgence** of life that comes when one is abandoned to doing whatever feels good. Then the **mind** here speaks of the deliberate choices that defy the will of God. Let’s be clear here, every believer was once totally lost in the system of the **world, the flesh, and the devil, who is the prince** over the demons, who

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

are **the power of the air**. Those are fallen man’s three great arenas where he is in a losing battle with spiritual enemies—yet they are enemies with whom, by nature, he is now allied. Rather than all men being children of God, as most of the world likes to think, those who have not received salvation through Jesus Christ are **by nature children of wrath**. Apart from reconciliation through Christ, every person by nature through human birth is the object of God’s **wrath**, his eternal judgment and condemnation. They are characterized most accurately not only as **sons of disobedience** but consequently as **children of wrath**—objects of God’s condemning judgment.

- The final phrase in **verse 3**, “**even as the rest**,” reminds us that we were once just like everyone else. But through faith in the Savior, we are no longer the same. Because of Christ’s completed work of salvation in us, we are now—both presently and eternally—under His love, delivered from the natural human condition of death, sin, alienation, disobedience, demonic influence, lust, and divine judgment.”

**Questions: Before Christ, did you recognize your condition—or were you unaware of it? / Are you now shaping your life more by God’s Word or by the culture around you? / How does understanding your past condition produce humility and gratitude?**

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

**Eph. 2:4 NTL “But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much...”**

- Paul begins the verse with the two words “**But God**” which shows where the initiative was in providing the power of salvation. Salvation is from sin and by God’s **love**. God’s **mercy** is, **rich**, overabounding, without measure and limitation. The problem with reconciliation is not on the Lord’s side it is with the rebellion and rejection on man’s side. Because God is **rich in mercy** toward us and had **great love** for us, He provided a way for us to return to Him. God is intrinsically kind, merciful, and loving. And in His love He reaches out to vile, sinful, rebellious, depraved, destitute, and condemned human beings and offers them salvation and all the eternal blessings it brings. Man’s rebellion is therefore not only against God’s lordship and law but against His **love**. Because of God’s **rich ... mercy** and His **great love** He offered his life for forgiveness and reconciliation to

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

us as He does to every repentant sinner. **Read John 15:13** Compassionate love for those who do not deserve it makes salvation possible.

**Questions: If God’s love is the motivation for my salvation, how should that influence the way we love others—especially those who don’t deserve it?**

**Eph. 2:5 “... even when we were dead in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),”**

**Eph. 2:5 NLT “... that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!)**

- Here Paul teaches that God’s love **“made us alive together with Christ.”** That is what salvation does it gives us spiritual life. Paul says, **“...we were dead because of our sins.”** Here he speaks of the terrible condition we were in and God seeing us in that condition takes action and **makes us alive together with Christ.** What this reveals is God brings life where there was none, and He does it through union **with Christ.** When we became Christians we are no longer alienated from the life of God. We became spiritually **alive** through union with the death and resurrection of Christ and thereby for the first time became sensitive to God. To encourage believers who doubt the power of Christ in their lives, Paul reminds them that if God was powerful and loving enough to give them spiritual life **together with Christ,** He is certainly able to sustain that life. The power that raised us out of sin and death and **made us alive together with Christ** is the same power that continues to energize every part of our Christian living. **Read Rom. 6:11 - 13**
- He concludes the **b-portion** of the **verse 5** and give us the means by which we are saved to life. He says, **“... by grace you have been saved.”** **Grace** is the centerpiece of salvation and is completely undeserved. It is not earned, worked for, or maintained by human effort—it is the gift of God. The bottom line here is believers have been saved by grace.

**Eph. 2:6 – 7 “... and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, 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.”**

**Eph. 2:6 – 7 NLT “For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. 7 So God can point to us**

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

**in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus.”**

- In **verses 6 – 7** Paul reveals salvation has a purpose, with regard to us and with regard to God. In verse 6 Paul first reveals the most immediate and direct result of salvation is to be **raised up with Him (Jesus), and [to be] seated with Him in the heavenly places**. Not only are we dead to sin and alive to righteousness through His resurrection in which we are raised, but we now also enjoy His exaltation and share in His preeminent glory. Because our new citizenship through Christ, God seats us **with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus**. We are no longer of this present world or in its sphere of sinfulness and rebellion. We have been rescued from spiritual death and given spiritual life in order to be **in Christ Jesus** and to be **with Him in the heavenly places**. Here, as in **Eph. 1:3**, **heavenly places** refers to the supernatural sphere where God rules and reigns. The Greek verb behind **seated** emphasizes the absoluteness of this promise by speaking of it as if it had already fully taken place. Even though we are not yet inheritors of all that God has for us in Christ, to be **in the heavenly places** is to be in God’s domain instead of Satan’s, to be in the sphere of spiritual life instead of the sphere of spiritual death. That is where our blessings are and where we have fellowship with the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and with all the saints who have gone before us and will go after us. That is where all our commands come from and where all our praise and petitions go.
- In **verse 7**, the phrase **“in order that”** reveals God’s purpose for raising us into the supernatural realm of His power and presence: that we might be eternally blessed. Yet, this blessing is not centered on us alone. God’s greater purpose in salvation is ultimately **for His own glory**. As the text declares, **“in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”** While this certainly benefits us, its primary aim is to display—forever— **the surpassing riches of God’s grace**. Through His unending **kindness toward us in Christ Jesus**, the Father glorifies Himself even as He blesses us. From the moment of salvation and throughout **all eternity**, we will continually experience His **grace and kindness** without end. The phrase **“the ages to come”** points not to a single future era, but to the endless expanse of eternity. God glorifies Himself by eternally pouring out His blessings on us,

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

just as **Ephesians 1:3** declares—blessing us with “**every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.**” His **grace** is limitless, His **kindness** unending. And in response, all of heaven will glorify Him—because of what He has done for us.

**Questions: Are you living with an eternal perspective, or are you too focused on temporary circumstances? If our salvation ultimately brings glory to God, how intentional are we about living in a way that points back to Him?**

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

**Eph. 2:8 – 9 NLT “God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.”**

- Here Paul reveals that salvation comes **through faith**. Our response to God’s offer of salvation must be **faith**—but even that faith is “**not from ourselves; it is the gift of God.**” **Faith** is not something we produce by our own strength or resources, because we simply do not possess the ability to generate it. And even if we did, God would not allow salvation to rest on human effort—otherwise, it would become partially based on works, giving us reason to boast. Paul emphasizes that even **faith** itself is not independent of God’s **grace**. When we trust in the finished work of Christ, we are responding with the **faith** that God Himself supplies. Though the act of believing is ours, it is ultimately rooted in God’s gracious gift. A helpful picture is this: when a person stops breathing, he cannot revive himself. If he breathes again, it is because someone else restores his breath. In the same way, a spiritually dead person cannot produce faith unless God first gives life. **Faith**, then, is simply **breathing in what God’s grace provides**. Yet here is the tension: we must still **exercise that faith**. And if we refuse, we bear the responsibility.
- **Verse 9** makes it clear that if salvation is entirely by God’s grace, then it is “**not as a result of works.**” Human effort plays no role in securing it. As a result, “**no one should boast,**” as though they contributed in any way—because all boasting is eliminated in salvation. At the same time, Paul is careful to affirm that **good works still have an important place** in the life of the believer.

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

- The story is told of a man who came eagerly but very late to a revival meeting and found the workmen tearing down the tent in which the meetings had been held. Frantic at missing the evangelist, he decided to ask one of the workers what he could do to be saved. The workman, who was a Christian, replied, “You can’t do anything. It’s too late.” Horrified, the man said, “What do you mean? How can it be too late?” “The work has already been accomplished,” he was told. “There is nothing you need to do but believe it.” Every person lives by faith. When we open a can of food or drink a glass of water we trust that it is not contaminated. When we go across a bridge we trust it to support us. When we put our money in the bank we trust it will be safe. Life is a constant series of acts of faith. No human being, no matter how skeptical and self-reliant, could live a day without exercising faith. Church membership, baptism, confirmation, giving to charity, and being a good neighbor have no power to bring salvation. Nor does taking Communion, keeping the Ten Commandments, or living by the Sermon on the Mount. The only thing a person can do that will have any part in salvation is to exercise **faith in what Jesus Christ has done for him.**

**Questions: Why is it so difficult for us to accept that salvation is not based on works? If salvation cannot be earned, what does that reveal about the depth of God’s mercy and love?**

**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.”**

**Eph. 2:10 NLT “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”**

- The text begins with the words, “...**we are His workmanship or His masterpiece.**” What Paul reveals here based on the previous verses is, before we can do any **good works** for the Lord, He has to do His **good work** in us. By **God’s grace**, made effective through **our faith**, we become “**His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.**” God has ordained that we live lives of **good works**, works done in His power and for His glory. Although **good works** have no part in gaining salvation, **good works** have a great deal to do with living out salvation. No **good works** can produce salvation, but many **good works** are produced by salvation. **John 15:8 says, “By this is My**

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

**Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.” Good works** do not bring discipleship, but they prove it is genuine. When God’s people do **good works** they bear fruit for His kingdom and bring glory to His name. The Bible has much to say about works. Again be clear here, before we can do any **good works** for the Lord, He has to do His **good work** in us. **Read John 15:1 - 8**

- In the **b-portion** of **verse 10** it reveals the same power that **created us in Christ Jesus** empowers us to do the **good works** for which He has redeemed us. These are the verifiers of true salvation. **Righteous attitudes** and **righteous acts** proceed from the transformed life that now lives in us. The Bible supports this throughout: Paul told the Corinthians in **2 Cor. 9:8** that there was in them **“an abundance for every good deed.”** Timothy in **2 Tim. 3:17** instructed his readers that they were **“equipped for every good work.”** Titus in **Titus 2:14** writes that Christ died to bring to Himself a redeemed people **“zealous for good deeds.”** Then Paul says in **Phil. 2:12 - 13** **“work out your salvation ... it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”**
- Note that Paul’s primary message to these believers—many of whom had been saved for years—is not about **how to be saved**, but about **how to live as those who are saved**. His aim is to assure them that the same power that saved them is the very power that sustains them. Just as they had already been given everything necessary for salvation, they have also been given everything needed to live faithfully in that salvation. The clearest evidence of a believer’s divine empowerment is not only in their salvation, but also in the **good works that God’s salvation produces in and through their lives**.
- In the final portion of **verse 10**, Paul teaches that these **good works are expected**, because **“God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”** This reinforces the truth that genuine faith is evidenced by action—which is why **James 2:17** declares that **“faith without works is dead.”** I especially appreciate how the New Living Translation expresses **Eph. 2:10** when it says: **“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”** This wording highlights the depth of **our relationship with God**—one that naturally produces meaningful and impactful results.

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

- There was a story of a famous actor who was the guest of honor at a social gathering where he received many requests to recite favorite excerpts from various literary works. An old preacher who happened to be there asked the actor to recite the Twenty-Third Psalm. The actor agreed on the condition that the preacher would also recite it. The actor’s recitation was beautifully intoned with great dramatic emphasis, for which he received lengthy applause. The preacher’s voice was rough and broken from many years of preaching, and his diction was anything but polished. But when he finished there was not a dry eye in the room. When someone asked the actor what made the difference, he replied, **“I know the psalm, but he knows the Shepherd.”** Salvation does not come from **knowing about the truth of Jesus Christ** but **from intimately knowing Christ Himself**. This **coming alive** can only be accomplished by the power of God because of **His love and mercy shown throughout Ephesians 2:1 – 10**.

**Question: How does knowing you are God’s workmanship influence the way you approach daily living?**

**Transition: Read Eph. 2:11 - 22**

- Here Paul begins to deal with the unity of the body which is the Church. It is a part of sinful human nature to build barriers that shut out other people. In New Testament times one of the greatest barriers was between slaves and freemen, especially between slaves and their owners. Those who were free looked down on slaves as being inferior, slightly above animals. Many slaves looked on their masters with contempt and resentment. Consequently, one of the greatest problems of the early church was in getting Christian slave owners and Christian slaves to treat each other as spiritual equals.
- Also for the most part, women were also looked down on as inferior beings. Husbands often treated their wives little better than they did their slaves. When a wife became a Christian, her entire life, outlook, and value system changed. An unbelieving husband would likely divorce her simply because she had made such a radical decision without his consent.
- The Greeks were so proud of their culture and supposed racial superiority that they considered everyone else to be barbarians. The Greek language was considered to be the language of the gods. Because of such feelings, the early church faced continuing barriers not only between believing Gentiles and Jews but between believing Greeks and other Gentile believers.

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

- The problem of fences has grown to be one of the most acute that the world must face. Today modern progress has made the world a neighborhood but God has given believers the task of making it a brotherhood. In these days of dividing walls of race and class we must shake the earth anew with the message of Christ, in whom there is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Greek, Scythian nor Barbarian, but all are one. Disunity among His own people has always been a special heartache to God. In His intercessory prayer for His disciples in **John 17**, Jesus prayed three times that they would be one in **Jn. 17:11, 21, 22** and again **“that they may be perfected in unity”** in **Jn. 17:23**. **Positionally we are one in Jesus Christ. Read 1 Cor. 6:17; 1 Cor. 12:12 - 13** Just as a physical body has a common principle of life flowing through it, so does the Body of Christ, His church. The Spirit of God puts the life of God in the soul of every person who trusts in Jesus Christ and unites that person with every other believer in the same eternal realm. In the kingdom of Jesus Christ all barriers come down. **In Him there are no walls, no classes, no standings, no races, no gender, no distinctions of any sort.**
- **Practically**, however, the truth is often tragically different. In the same letter to Corinth in where Paul had so strongly declared the **positional unity** of believers, he also strongly rebuked the Corinthians for their **practical disunity**. **1 Cor. 3:1, 3 says, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. 3... for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”** This is the kind of disunity Christ despises that is taking place in the Christian family. He desires not only positional unity, but also practical practicing unity. That is the kind of unity Jesus Christ gives to us His people and that He commands us to maintain. **Eph. 4:3 – 6 says, “... being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”** The church is to manifest that oneness **Eph. 4:13 says, “...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”**

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

**Eph. 2:11 - 12 “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— 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.”**

**Eph. 2:11 – 12 NLT “Don’t forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called “uncircumcised heathens” by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. 12 In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.”**

- The disunity within the Ephesian church was primarily between Jewish and Gentile believers. The church’s unity is not organizational but spiritual. This passage begins the focus on the idea of spiritual oneness. It is often helpful, and sometimes necessary, to focus on particular national, racial, religious, or ethnic groups for evangelistic work and to devise approaches for a given group that are somewhat unique. But it is unfortunate that believers who come from such groups are often never assimilated into existing churches. Unfortunately, Israel never fulfilled that calling. She preferred to condemn the Gentiles rather than witness to them. God commanded the church to in **Mk. 16:15** to “...**go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.**” Then in **Matt. 28:19** he instructs believers to “...**make disciples of all the nations.**” Finally in **Acts 1:8** he says believers are to be His “... **witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**” / Let’s be clear here, it has always been God’s plan to extend His love, grace, forgiveness, and mercy to every person on earth. But instead of reflecting the gracious love and forgiveness of the God who called and blessed them, the Jews most often vented their own resentment and hatred back against their persecutors. When a Jew entered Palestine he would often shake the dust off his sandals and clothing in order not to contaminate the Holy Land with Gentile dust. For many hundreds of years the animosity between Jew and Gentile had festered and grown. Although they were not always in open conflict, their mutual contempt continued to widen

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

the gulf between them. Here we see traces of that animosity were found in the early church. The practical outworking of positional unity was not easy. Many Jewish believers thought it inconceivable that a Gentile could be saved unless he first became a proselyte Jew—by keeping the laws of Moses and by becoming circumcised if he were a man.

- Converted Jews had difficulty breaking from the ceremonial laws such as Sabbath observance and the eating of unclean animals. Converted Gentiles had difficulty with such things as eating meat that had been offered as a sacrifice to a pagan deity. In many such ways, Jewish and Gentile believers stumbled over their former traditions and beliefs, and in doing so they also stumbled over each other. What was of extreme importance to one group was inconsequential to the other. In **Eph. 2:11 - 22** Paul confronts that problem from two sides. First, he describes the former social and spiritual alienation of Jews and Gentiles, and then he describes their new spiritual unity in Jesus Christ.
- This important section begins with the word “**Therefore**”, indicating that the next line of thought regarding the new identity of these Gentile Christians is built on what Christ has done to give them life and eternal blessing, as described in **Eph. 2:1 - 10**.
- In **Eph. 2:11** the text first reveals who the Gentiles were before Christ. It says, “... **remember 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.**” Paul calls his readers “**the Gentiles in the flesh**” in order to emphasize the physical, external nature of the distinction, and he calls on them to “**remember**” who they had been before coming to Christ. As far as Jews were concerned they were outcasts, referred to as the **Uncircumcision**, a term of mockery, defamation, and criticism. Because Gentiles did not have the physical mark of circumcision to set them apart as the people of God, many Jews had come to consider them to be inferior and, in fact, of no concern to God. Paul carries a tone of disdain for such Jewish hatred, as evidenced in his choice of words to describe Jews—the so-called “**Circumcision.**” He thereby takes exception to Jewish boasting by emphasizing that circumcision is also only external. Note here that **circumcision** had never been a mark of personal relationship to God, for Jews or anyone else. Paul makes much of that truth in the book of Romans. **Read Rom. 2:28 - 29** Later in the Romans Paul also points out that Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, was **saved**

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

before he was **circumcised**. Read **Rom. 4:9 - 12** The separation of the two groups from each other was symbolized by the mark of **circumcision**, a purely physical distinction.

- In **Eph. 2:12** it reveals a much more important Gentile separation was spiritual: **Eph. 2:12** says, “...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.” Although there was no moral difference between Jew and Gentile as **Eph. 2:1 - 10** reveals, there was a difference in God’s dealing with them as men. Before Christ came, the Jews were the people of promise from God, but the Gentiles as a people were cut off from God in five different ways.
- **First**, they were Christless, **separate from Christ**, the Messiah. They therefore had no messianic hope of a Savior and Deliverer. Their history had no purpose, no plan, and no destiny—except the ultimate judgment of God, of which they were unaware. Although God had them in His eternal, sovereign plan to be united with Christ through faith, they had no such relationship as yet.
- **Second**, the Gentiles were spiritually separated because they were **excluded from the commonwealth of Israel**. God had made His chosen people into a theocracy, a nation of whom He Himself was King and Lord. He gave that nation His special blessing, protection, and love. He gave them His covenants, His law, His priesthood, His sacrifices, His promises, and His guidance. Had the Gentiles accepted the true God they, too, could have been a part of that blessed nation. But because they rejected God, they forfeited His national blessing. They had no God-blessed community or kingdom and no divine benefactor. They received no special blessing or protection, because they were outside the dominion of God.
- **Third**, the Gentiles were spiritually separated because they were without a covenant with God, **strangers to the covenants of promise**. The supreme covenant of promise was the one given to Abraham in **Gen. 12:2 – 3** which says, “**I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**” Inherent within the covenant with Abraham surrounded and determined all of God’s dealing with Israel. It should be clarified that a

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

divine covenant is an agreement in which God binds Himself to carry out His personal promise to His people, to redeem them from sin and bless them forever. Faith and obedience are the marks of the person who experiences the fulfillment of the covenant. Within the covenants God gave and renewed His promises to bless, prosper, multiply, save, and redeem Israel. Within them He promised to give His people a land, a kingdom, and a King; and to those who believed in Him He promised eternal life and heaven.

- **Fourth**, the Gentiles were spiritually separated because they were hopeless, **having no hope**. Those who have no **Christ**, no **commonwealth**, and no **covenants of promise** also have **no hope**. True hope can be based only on a true promise, on confidence in someone who can perform what he promises. Hope is a profound blessing that gives meaning and security to life. Living without hope of future joy and enrichment reduces man to a piece of meaninglessness. Hope is the consummation of life, the confident assurance that we have a blessed future in the plan of God. The Gentiles had no hope such as that expressed by the psalmist in **Ps. 71:5** when it says, **“For Thou art my hope; O Lord God, Thou art my confidence from my youth.”** Israel was able to have complete **hope** in God’s promises because He had every resource at His disposal and because He cannot lie. They had God’s promises, and they knew He was able and trustworthy to fulfill them. The fact that they often failed to **hope** in those promises was due to their own unfaithfulness, not God’s. The Gentiles, however, had no such promises and therefore had no ground for hope. Most Gentiles of Paul’s day either thought that death ended all existence or that it released the spirit to wander aimlessly in some unknown world throughout the rest of eternity. Death brought only nothingness or everlasting despair.
- **Fifth**, and most importantly, the Gentiles were spiritually separated because they were **without God in the world**. It was not that they were intellectual atheists, because most of them believed in many gods. Some were pantheists, believing that divinity was in everything, animate and inanimate. The problem was not that the Gentiles had no god but that they did not have the true God. Though believers have many hardships and trials in the present sinful world and are continually surrounded by Satan’s system, they have the sure hope of a future world that is sinless and perfect. But to be caught in that evil system without God is to be hopeless. Paul reminded the Gentile converts in Galatia that, before

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

they came to know the Lord, **Gal. 4:8** says, they “**were slaves to those which by nature are no gods**”, which is why every person without Christ is without hope. The Gentiles were **without God in the world** because they did not want Him. The Gentiles rejected God by suppressing the truth about Himself that He had made abundantly evident.

- There will never be an end to separation until Christ returns and by His own power breaks down the barriers of separation. Apart from Christ there not only can be no harmony with God but no harmony among men.

**Questions: Do you intentionally remember your life before Christ, or have you forgotten what God brought you out of? How can this passage help you share the gospel more compassionately and urgently? How does remembering your past condition affect your gratitude and worship?**

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

**Eph. 2:13 NLT “But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.”**

- The words “**who formerly were far off**” references the Gentiles who had come to Christ. **Far off** was a common Jewish term used in rabbinical writings to describe Gentiles, those who were far away from the true God. Jews, on the other hand, considered themselves and their converts to be **brought near** to God because of their covenant relation to Him and the presence of His Temple in Jerusalem. But **in Christ** every person, Jew and Gentile alike, is **brought near** to God **by the blood of Christ**. And that nearness is not an external, dispensational, national, geographic, or ceremonial nearness—but is a spiritual intimacy of union with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The root cause of strife, discord, antagonism, enmity, hate, bitterness, fighting, war, conflict, and every other form of disunity and division is sin. The reason there is always perfect harmony in the Godhead is that there is no sin in the Godhead. Perfect holiness produces perfect harmony. And the only solution for divisions among men is the removal of sin, which Jesus **Christ** accomplished by the shedding of His own **blood**. Those who trust in His atoning work are freed from sin now in their new nature and will be practically

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

and permanently freed from sin in their new bodies when they meet the Lord. The cleansing value of **the blood of Christ** immediately washes away the penalty of sin and ultimately washes away even its presence. Because **in Christ** the great foundational barrier of sin has been removed, every other barrier has been removed as well. Those who are one in Christ are one in each other—whether we realize it or act like it or not.

**Read 1 Cor. 6:17** The purpose of the Lord’s Table is to remind us of the sacrifice our Lord made not only to bring us to Himself but also to each other. By removing our sin, Christ gives us peace with each other and access to God. Make no mistake here the text teaches there is unity in Christ.

**Eph. 2:14 – 16 “For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 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, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.”**

**Eph. 2:14 – 16 NLT “For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. 16 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.”**

- The words **“For He Himself is our peace”** in the Greek text has only one pronoun, **He** from **autos**, but it is in the emphatic position, as reflected by the addition of **Himself** in many English translations. Paul here emphasizes that Jesus alone **“is our peace”**; there is no other source. What laws, ordinances, ceremonies, sacrifices, and good deeds could not do to make **peace** between men and God, Jesus did. Those things could neither bring men into harmony with God or with each other. In the sacrifice of **Himself** on the cross, Jesus accomplished both. Just as sin is the cause of all conflict and division, it is also the enemy of all **peace** and harmony. Built into wickedness is the impossibility of **peace**. Sin

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

is basically selfishness, and selfishness is basically divisive and disruptive. We cannot always have what we want without infringing on what someone else wants or needs. We cannot always have our own way without interfering with someone else’s way. **Read James 4:1 – 3** Note here that **peace** comes only when self-dies, and the only place self truly dies is at the foot of Calvary. **Read Gal. 2:20** Jesus Christ came as a babe to earth, and in His sacrifice on the cross **He Himself** became **peace** for those who trust in Him. His peace is not temporary but permanent.

- In the **b-portion** of **verse 14** it teaches **He... made both groups**, Jews those who were “**near**” and Gentiles those who were “**far off**”, “**into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.**” In Jesus Christ, a Jew is no longer distinct from a Gentile as far as religion is concerned. Likewise, a Gentile in Christ is no longer distinct as far as their spiritual condition is concerned. Their paganism is gone, unbelief is gone, hopelessness is gone, and their godlessness is gone. For those in Christ, the only identity that matters is their identity in Him. There is no Jewish or Gentile Christianity, black or white Christianity, male or female Christianity, or free or slave Christianity. There is only Christianity. Our one Lord has only one church.
- The reference in the text to “**the barrier of the dividing wall**” alludes to the separation of the Court of the Gentiles from the rest of the Temple. Between that court and the Court of the Israelites was a sign that read, “No Gentile may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death.” This physical barrier illustrated the barrier of hostility and hate that also separated the two groups. As we learn from the book of Acts, even a Jew who brought a Gentile into the restricted part of the Temple risked being put to death. Although Paul had not done so, certain Jews from Asia accused him of taking Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus, into the Temple. They would have stoned Paul to death had he not been rescued by Roman soldiers. **Read Acts 21:27 – 32** God had originally separated Jews from Gentiles for the purpose of redeeming both groups, not for saving the Jews alone. He placed the Court of the Gentiles in the Temple for the very purpose of winning Gentiles to Himself. It was meant to be a place for Jewish evangelism of Gentiles, a place for winning proselytes to Judaism and of thereby bringing them “**near.**” It was

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

that court, however, that the Jewish leaders of Jesus’ day used as “a robbers’ den” rather than as a place of witness. **Read Mark 11:17**

- In the **a – portion** of **verse 15** it reveals Christ forever **broke down** every dividing wall **“by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances.”** Be clear here when Jesus died on the cross **He abolished** every barrier between man and God and between man and his fellow man. The greatest barrier between Jew and Gentile was the ceremonial law, **the Law of commandments contained in ordinances**. It was the feasts, sacrifices, offerings, laws of cleanliness and purification, and all other such distinctive outward **commandments** that were abolished that once separated Israel from other nations. All the ceremonial laws which distinguished and separated Jews from Gentiles were obliterated. However that did not include God’s moral laws. His moral law which reflects His own holy nature and therefore can never change. That is the law which for the Jews was summarized in the Ten Commandments and which for all men is written on their hearts and still commanded of them today. Jesus summarized God’s moral law still further by declaring in **John 13:34 “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you.”** The Ten Commandments, like all of God’s moral laws, are but the structured and particular love that God still requires.
- Before Christ those groups could not eat together because of restricted foods, required washings, and ceremonial contamination. Now they could eat anything with anyone. Before Christ they could not worship together. A Gentile could not fully worship in the Jewish Temple, and a Jew would not worship in a pagan temple. In Christ they now worshiped together and needed no temple or other sacred place to sanctify it. The **b-portion** of **verse 15** says, **“... that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace”** which reveals all ceremonial distinctions and requirements were removed. The emphasis is again on **in Himself**, affirming that this **new unity** can occur only when men are **united** in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Note here that the word **new** from **kainos** does not refer to something recently completed, such as a new car rolling off the assembly line which can be one of many other cars just like it. No this **new** refers to a difference in kind and quality, to a completely new model,

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

unlike anything that existed before. The **new** person in Christ is not simply a Jew or Gentile who now happens to be a Christian. He is no longer a Jew or Gentile but only a Christian. Every other characteristic is past. Paul sums it up in **Rom. 10:12 – 13. Read**

- When Jesus Christ **broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity**, He moved the fence, in order **that in Himself He might make the two into one new man**. No person who comes to Him will be excluded, and no person who is included will be spiritually distinct from any other. The words **“in His flesh”** points specifically to Jesus’ death on the cross, through which He nullified, annulled, made of no effect, invalidated and **abolished**, the feud, discord, alienation and **enmity, thus establishing peace**.
- In the **a-portion of verse 16** the words **“and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross”** demonstrate not only that Jew and Gentile **both** are brought together, but that together they are brought to God. Reconciliation to each other is inseparable from reconciliation to God. As **both** are brought to God, they are brought to each other. The death of Christ accomplished perfectly what God intended—bringing men to Himself. **Verse 13 points to the blood of Christ, verse 15 focuses on the flesh of the dying Savior**, and now in **verse 16 Paul specifically mentions the place “the cross”** where the blood was shed and the flesh was slain. The question is how did **the cross** accomplish such reconciliation? It **put to death the enmity** between men and God. **NLT says, “... our hostility toward each other was put to death.”** The hostility between men and God was ended in the sacrifice of Christ. He was the One who received the judicial sentence of God for sin. He paid the price of death which God required and thereby satisfied divine justice. He became “a curse” for sinners and provided **reconciliation** of the believing sinner to God and to all other repentant sinners, regardless of race. The word **reconcile** is a rich term and holds the idea of **turning from hostility to friendship**. Man cannot even **reconcile** himself to his fellow man, much less to God. **Read Rom. 5:8–10; Col. 1:19 - 20** Apart from Christ every person is helpless, sinful, and an enemy of God. The cross is God’s answer to Judaizing, racial discrimination, segregation, apartheid, anti-Semitism, bigotry, war, and every other cause and result of human strife.

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

**Question: Why do you think Paul emphasizes unity between groups so strongly in this passage? What are some modern-day examples of dividing walls, and how does the gospel address them? In what ways can you actively pursue being a peacemaker, reflecting Christ who *is* our peace?**

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

**Eph. 2:17 NLT “He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near.”**

- **In verse 14** where it says the One who **“Himself is our peace”** **verse 17** says **“He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near.”** The word **preached** here from **euangelizō** literally means **to bring** or **announce good news**, and is almost always used in the New Testament of **proclaiming the gospel, the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ**. From that and related Greek terms we get such English words as **evangelize, evangelist, and evangelical**. The phrase in our text might therefore be rendered, **He came and gospels, or evangelized, peace**. As stated in **verse 13** and explained above, those **who were far away** are **Gentiles** and those **who were near** are **Jews**. Every person, Jew and Gentile alike, has access to **God’s peace through Christ**. **Isa. 9:6** teaches Jesus is **the Prince of Peace**, who in **John 14:27** promises His disciples, **“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you.”** Like our Master, we who are His disciples are also to be peacemakers and proclaimers of peace. Peace surrounded the ministry of Jesus as an aura that continually blessed those who believed in Him. Among His last words to His disciples in **John 16:33** He says, **“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.”** The **God of peace** calls His people **to peace**.

**Questions: Does your life reflect the message of peace, or do your words and actions create division?**

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

**Eph. 2:18 NLT “Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.”**

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

- This verse reveal when we have **Him** being Jesus Christ we also have **access** by the **Spirit to the Father**. The resources of the entire Trinity are ours the moment we receive Christ. It is not just a judicial reconciliation but an actual intimate relationship with practical value as we bring our needs to the Father. The word **access** from **prosagōgē** is used only three times in the New Testament, in each case it refers to the believer’s **access to God**. **Read Eph. 3:11 - 12** The term itself carries the idea not of possessing **access** in our own right but of being granted the right to come to God with boldness, knowing we will be welcomed. It is only through our Savior’s shedding of His blood in sacrificial death on Calvary and by faith in Him that we have union **in** His Holy **Spirit** and have **access** to the **Father**. The only **access** into God’s presence, the only door into the sheepfold of His kingdom, is through His Son. But it is a wonderful and glorious **access** that can never be taken from us. **Heb. 4:16** teaches we can always “**draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.**”
- The words **both** and **one spirit** emphasize again now the commonality of Jew and Gentile. The work of Christ and the establishment of His church reaches to all men. Those who once were socially and spiritually alienated are in Christ united with God and with each other. Because we have Christ we have both peace and **access in one Spirit to the Father**. We have an Introducer who presents us at the heavenly throne of God, before whom we can come at any time. We can now come to God as our own **Father**, knowing that He no longer judges or condemns but only forgives and blesses. Even His discipline is an act of love, given to cleanse and restore His precious children to purity and spiritual richness.

**Questions: How should knowing you have direct access to the Father affect your prayer life? In what ways do believers sometimes forget the privilege of access to God?**

**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. 2:19 NLT “So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family.**

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

- Paul concludes his discussion of the marvelous unity within the Body of Christ by presenting three powerful metaphors. Through the image of **fellow citizens**, he reveals that Jew and Gentile now belong to the same kingdom. Through the picture of **God’s household**, he emphasizes that all believers are united as one spiritual family in Christ. And through the image of **a holy temple in the Lord**, he shows that all believers are together a habitation for God.
- In the **a-portion of verse 19** it reveals whether believers were previously apart from God and His people or whether they were previously nearby, they became one in Jesus Christ. Whether they were former **strangers** and outcasts or former **aliens** and guests, all believers in Christ become **fellow citizens** of God’s kingdom **with the saints**—the believers from every age who have trusted in God. God’s kingdom has no **strangers** or **aliens**, no second-class **citizens**. Paul declares in **Phil. 3:20** says, **“Our citizenship is in heaven”**, and the only **citizens** of heaven are God’s **saints**.
- In the **b-portion of verse 19** it says, **“...and are of God’s household...”** As if being members of His divine kingdom were not enough, God’s gracious work in Christ draws us even closer and makes us members of **God’s household**. Because we have identified ourselves with His Son by faith, God now sees us and treats us exactly as He sees and treats His Son—with infinite love. Because the Father cannot give anything but His best to the Son, He cannot give anything but His best to those who are in His Son. Note here that heavenly citizenship and family membership are not distinct roles or positions but simply different views of the same reality, because every kingdom citizen is a family member and every family member is a kingdom citizen. If believers have no distinctions before God, we should have no distinctions among ourselves. We are fellow citizens and fellow family members, equal in every spiritual way before God. If God accepts each one of us, how can we not accept each other?

**Questions: How should believers treat one another if they are members of the same household? How does this verse challenge prejudice, division, or favoritism within the church?**

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

**Eph. 2:20 - 22 “...having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”**

**Eph. 2:20 – 22 NLT “Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself. 21 We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. 22 Through Him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by His Spirit.”**

- In the **a-portion** of **verse 20** the words “...the foundation of the apostles and prophets” refers to the divine revelation that they taught, which in its written form is the New Testament. The meaning is not that the **apostles and prophets** were themselves the **foundation**—though in a certain sense they were—but that they laid the foundation. Paul spoke of himself **1 Cor. 3:10–11** as “**a wise master builder**” who “**laid a foundation**” and went on to say, “**For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**” These are New Testament **prophets**, as indicated by the facts that they are listed after **the apostles** and are part of the building of the church of Jesus Christ. Their unique function was to authoritatively speak the word of God to the church in the years before the New Testament canon was complete. The fact that they are identified with the foundation reveals that they were limited to that formative period. As **Eph. 4:11** shows, they completed their work and gave way to “**evangelists, and ... pastors and teachers.**”
- In the closing clause of **verse 20** it reveals that the **corner stone** of the foundation is **Christ Jesus Himself**. The **cornerstone** was the major structural part of ancient buildings. It had to be strong enough to support what was built on it, and it had to be precisely laid, because every other part of the structure was oriented to it. The **cornerstone** was the support, the orienteer, and the unifier of the entire building. That is what Jesus Christ is to God’s kingdom, God’s family, and God’s building. It is **Christ Jesus Himself as the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord**. The words in **verse 21** “...fitted together” refer to the careful joining of every component of a piece of furniture, wall, building, or

**A Study On Ephesians**  
**“A Letter of Unity”**  
**Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver**

other structure. Every part is precisely cut to fit snugly, strongly, and beautifully with every other part. Nothing is out of place, defective, misshapen, or inappropriate. Because it is Christ's **building**, the church is perfect, spotless, without defect or blemish. And that is how He will one day present the church, His own **holy temple**, to Himself. Every new believer is a new stone in Christ's **building**, His **holy temple**. Thus Paul says the temple **is growing** because believers are continually being added. Many churches throughout the world have been under construction for years. In a continuing process, new rooms, cubicles, chapels, and so forth are built. That is the way with the church of Jesus Christ. It is in a continual state of construction as each new saint becomes a new stone. **1 Pet. 2:5 says, “You also, as living stones** are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” As kingdom citizens, family members, and living stones, believers in Jesus Christ are a holy priesthood who offer up spiritual sacrifices in God's **holy temple**. As a living, functioning, and precious part of that **temple**, we **also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit**. The term **a dwelling** used here carries the idea of **a permanent home**. **God in the Spirit** makes His earthly sanctuary in the church, where He takes up permanent residence as Lord. What this reveals is **the church is no small physical chamber; it is the vast spiritual body of the redeemed, wherein resides His Spirit**. It should be noted that this is a different truth from that of each believer being the individual temple of the Holy Spirit, as taught in **1 Cor. 6:19 – 20 Read. Eph. 2:20 NLT says, “Together, we are His house...”** Through the blood, the suffering flesh, the cross, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, aliens become citizens, strangers become family, idolaters become the temple of the true God, the hopeless inherit the promises of God, those without Christ become one in Christ, those far off are brought near, and the godless are reconciled to God. Therein is the reconciliation of men to God and of men to men.

**Questions: Is your life aligned with Christ as the cornerstone, or are other things shaping your direction? How does the imagery of a growing temple emphasize spiritual maturity? What are some signs that a church is firmly built on Christ?**