

The Divine Warrior

Part IV: Building His House

Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

(Eph 2:19-22)

David's "House"

AMONG THE GREAT COVENANTS of promise that Paul says Gentiles were separated from (**Eph 2:12**) is a mighty covenant God cut with his servant **David**. The story goes that David had just captured the ancient stronghold of Zion, renamed it the City of David (**2Sa 5:9**), and was anointed king of Israel in place of Saul there in Jerusalem. The sign of this to the people was that David had a wonderful "house"

(*bayith*) or palace built for him by Hiram, the king of Tyre (11).

David's first great act as king was to then turn his eye towards the Philistines (17-25) who had captured the ark of the covenant. He would retake God's magnificent golden throne (6:1ff) and return it to the Holy Land where it properly belonged. After completing his victory, the next scene is introduced this way. "Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies..." (2Sa 7:1). It is at this moment of triumph that David goes to the prophet Nathan to tell him what is in his heart to do. "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent" (2). David had it in mind to build for God a house that would surpass any in the world. This house would be a palace-temple for David's God—the LORD of Hosts who dwells between the cherubim—to dwell in.

Nathan's initial reaction was to tell David to do it and that the LORD was with him (3). But that very night, the Word of the LORD—that is LORD of Hosts himself—came to Nathan in a dream. He came to him to tell him that he could not be the one to build such a place, for he had too much blood on his hands. Instead, God would do something

for David. “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up you seed after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (7:12-13). This would be God’s covenant with David, not that David would build God a house, but that God would build David a house!

Few have noticed that this **promise** is identical to **one made earlier** in 1 Samuel, save with a different office. The negligent **priest Eli** was told that his two wicked priest-sons were going to die on the same day, but God would “**raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever**” (1Sa 2:34-35). This is also a **covenantal promise**, though it is made not to the kingly lineage that goes through Judah, but the **priestly lineage** that goes through his brother Levi. In this way, the two offices of priest and king were both promised an eternal house, one that would be built by God himself. What a covenant promise!

Let’s return to the **kingly covenant**. David has now died and his seed, the boy named **Solomon**, has become king of Israel. But Hiram is still alive, and it says that when Hiram

heard that Solomon was the new king, he sent his servants to see if there was anything he wanted, for he always loved David his father (1Kg 5:1). Solomon did want something. It says, “you know that David my father could not build a house for the Name of the LORD his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet” (3). The LORD had to vanquish all the enemies first. The Divine Warrior, Yahweh Sabaoth, had to fight and win the victories first.

“But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side. There is neither adversary nor misfortune” (4). It was finally peace-time, so Solomon gives his request. “And so I intend to build a house for the Name of the LORD my God, as the LORD said to David my father, ‘Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, shall build the house for my Name’” (5). The order of all this is very deliberate and repetitive. Threats of warfare. Victory. Peace and rest. Build the house. After many years of building the magnificent temple, the king sacrificed offerings and dedicated the house to Yahweh and held a great feast for the people that lasted eight days (8:62:66). The celebration was on.¹

¹ More of this aspect of the story is told in Arvid S. Kapelrud, “Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings,” *Orientalia* 32:1 (1963): 59-60.

In this way, Israel was reflecting what all ancient cultures explained that they did, for it was the most ancient of all things, going all the way back to Genesis 1 in the Bible.² “Temple building was the task and privilege of victorious gods and kings,”³ after they had won all the wars and vanquished their enemies. If you are going to tell a Divine Warrior epic, as Ephesians has been doing, you have to include house-building. When you do, all is right with the world, for the Warrior is then able to be seen for what he is—the King of kings and the place of his rest of then visible to all. This is what we turn to now as we conclude Ephesians 2.

No Longer Strangers and Aliens

Our passage is a relatively short four verses (**Eph 2:19-22**). It concludes the chapter and the main ideas that began

² See my sermon “Temple Building” (Genesis 1:3-2:4), <https://www.rbnc.com/Genesis%201.3-2.4%20Temple%20Building.pdf>, also to be released in the upcoming first volume of Genesis as a chapter in that book. Important works on this include Jeff Morrow, “Creation as Temple-Building and Work as Liturgy in Genesis 1-3,” *The Journal of the Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies*, Vol 2:1 (2009): 1-13; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology vol. 17, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL; England: InterVarsity Press; Apollos, 2004); Mark S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010).

³ Ibid., 56. He also has a line here on mythology and history. “In a very remarkable way Obermann has here connected mythological temple building with temple building as it was actually recorded in history. That was in good accordance with his idea, that mythological events as they were narrated in the ancient myths, just reflected historical events.” The reference is to Julian Obermann, *Ugaritic Mythology* (New Haven, 1948).

way back at the beginning of the first chapter. The point is to explain “the privilege of that position”⁴ that Christians—both Jews and Gentiles have “in Christ.”

We left off with Paul presenting this great problem for the Gentiles. It was fivefold. They were (**Eph 2:12**):

1. Separated from Christ
2. Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
3. Strangers to the covenants of promise
4. Having no hope
5. Without God in the world

These five can be summed up in the first three, for these lead to hopelessness and result in their being without God in the world.

The Apostle now focuses in on the language of these first three: “strangers” and “aliens.” “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens...” (**Eph 2:19**). Strangers are people who are not known to the people they are among. Aliens are people who are from another place. These are wandering, homeless people he is talking to. He is continuing to speak

⁴ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God's Way of Reconciliation: An Exposition of Ephesians 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1972), 290.

to the Gentile Christians of Ephesus. He returns to this due to a chiasm that he started with our five-fold problem:

- A Once strangers and aliens without God (2:11-12)
- B Christ has brought near the far (2:13)
- C Christ is our Peace (2:14-16)
- B' Christ proclaimed peace to the far and the near
- A' No longer strangers, but part of God's home (2:19-22)⁵

Vs. 19 begins with a “**So then...**” The meaning of this is that “**Gentiles are no longer that which they were without Christ. Then they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the promises; but now, in Christ...**”⁶ they are given great and unfathomable blessings.

To this point, he has explained **the means** by which Gentiles have been brought near. This is the work and blood of Jesus Christ alone. Now, to teach of the privilege of the position, he will use three metaphors: **city/country** (“**citi-**

⁵ **Thomas R. Yoder-Neufeld**, *Ephesians*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Waterloo, Ont: Herald Press, 2002), 108. It is possible that this chiasm was a liturgical hymn or song that runs from vs. 12-19. See **Ralph P. Martin**, “Reconciliation and Unity in Ephesians,” *Review and Expositor* 93:2 (1996): 211-17.

⁶ **Arno C. Gaebelin**, *God's Masterpiece: An Analytical Exposition of Ephesians 1-3* (New York: “Our Hope” Publication Office, 1913), 104.

zens”), family (“household”), and building project (“temple”). Together, they show the “one new man” (Eph 2:15) that Paul has just spoken about.

Citizenship

The first is citizenship. “... but you are fellow citizens with the saints” (Eph 2:19). They are “fellows” together. The word “citizens” (*sumpolitai*) is related to the word for “city” (*polis*). The city in mind is Jerusalem and therefore he is drawing upon the idea of Israel that he began at the beginning of the chiasm. But Paul is not talking about the physical city. Throughout this letter he has been speaking of the “heavenly places.” He tells the Philippians “our citizenship is in heaven” (Php 3:20). Thus, the city he has in mind is “Jerusalem above” (Gal 4:26), the “heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22; Rev 3:12; 21:2). Therefore, “Christians are citizens of a spiritual city-state.”⁷

To the Galatians, Paul contrasts this heavenly city with its earthly counterpart, calling the latter the slave-city. This

⁷ Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, ed. Matthew Black (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 63.

city corresponds to the law in its ceremonial form, explaining that every Jew not in Christ is in slavery to this law. They must be set free. Christ does this not only for Jews, but also for Gentiles who were from **their own cities**, far away from the promises of God. Together, he makes them fellow citizens of the same heavenly city.

Finally, it says he does this “**with the saints.**” This presents two possible interpretations. The word “saints” translates the word *hagios* or “**holy.**” It is literally, “**together with the holy.**” The holy what? Almost all translations say “saints” (some say “holy ones,” leaving it uninterpreted). The point here would be that it is not biological Jews, the nation of Israel, and the earthly city that Christians somehow come to or “replace.” They come to the saints of old who are in this same place, like Abraham because of faith, are holy people, people changed by God from the inside out.

However, there is a curious **parallel in the Dead Sea Scrolls** to this. The passage is actually commenting on **2 Samuel 7:10** and the Davidic covenant we talked about earlier. It says, “**This refers to the house which he will establish for him in the last days, as it written in the book of Moses (Ex 15:17-18): The temple of Yahweh your hands will establish. Yahweh shall reign for ever and ever.** This refers to

the house into which shall not enter forever either an Ammonite, or a Moabite ... or a foreigner, or a proselyte, never, because his holy ones are there” (4QFlor 1.2-4). “The angels are here called *qdoshu*, ‘his holy ones,’ and they are able to have fellowship with the community ... The Qumran community, as a holy temple, is in fellowship with God and his angels.”⁸ These Jews by the Dead Sea believed “Those whom God has chosen he has made into an eternal possession, and he has given them a share in the lot of the holy ones (angels), and he has united their community with the sons of heaven into a council of the community, and their community is a house of holiness” (1QS xi. 7ff).

Given the heavenly theme of the passage, the belief of Jews regarding angels in the heavenly city, and the relatively strange idea that the Jewish-Gentile single unity called the church is somehow just coming to what saints of old already had, it seems best to me that Paul is in fact talking about being given the same status and share that the **holy angels** have and that in Christ all believers are given this great privilege.⁹

⁸ Gärtner, 63-64.

⁹ Gombis, while rejecting the angel interpretation nevertheless writes, “Some scholars view [‘the holy ones’] as referring to heavenly angels (Schlier 1971, 140-41; Gnllka 1971, 154; Lindemann 1975, 183; Mußner 1982, 89-91). There is good support for this reading, since the OT refers to angels as ‘holy ones’ (Job 15:15; Ps 89:5, 6), and this term is used elsewhere in the Pauline corpus to refer to angels (e.g. 1 Thess 3:13; 2 Thess 1:7, 10). Further, in a number of Qumran texts, the elect community shares fellowship with the angels—also known as ‘holy ones’ (1QS

This would include the likes of OT saints, for they had access to Christ (**Eph 2:12**) and trusted in him as well as in the promises of him to come in human flesh. In this way, the entire church is made partakers of the heavenly city with the holy angels themselves. Christ is reconciling all things both in heaven and earth to himself (**1:10**). This is not a future reality, but a present one.

In uncertain days, what a blessing it is to know that ours is a city and kingdom that cannot be shaken or toppled or ruined by the wicked schemes of men and principalities. **All kingdoms** shall fall, but this one, the one to which you now belong, is eternal. Its King has arisen, vanquished his enemies, and nothing can change your status. It ought to give you great hope in a hopeless world, for it means you have been brought near to God.

Household

11.7, 8; 1QH 3.21-23; 6:10-14)—an idea which would fit the present context quite well. The idea of believers sharing in a heavenly fellowship is also found in Paul (Phil 3:20; Gal 4:26) and other parts of the NT (Heb 12:22). In a context which reflects the ideology of divine warfare, Rev 7:9-14, the angels and slain followers of Jesus join in heavenly worship and celebration around the heavenly throne. Because of the cosmic or heavenly setting of Ephesians, it is difficult to reject this position” (**Gombis**, 82).

The citizenship metaphor quickly retreats and a **second** is introduced. This is the image of a **household**. “... and members of the household of God” (**Eph 2:19**). The household idea connects believers to God. Why would he add this?

First, on a most basic level, as someone has said, “**Gentile Christians, once refugees, are now neither homeless nor stateless** (Best, *Ephesians* 279).”¹⁰ Let it sink in what it means to be without a country and without a home. What a miserable condition. But no more!

Next, if the reason for the citizenship metaphor was to tie together loose ends of his discussion on Jews, the **purpose** of this one appears to be to tie together loose ends of his discussion of **adoption** way back in the opening sentence where we learned “**he predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself**” (**Eph 1:5**). And besides here, he will later speak of Christians as “**fellow heirs**” (**4:6**), “**beloved children**” (**5:1**), and “**children of light**” (**5:9**). In other words, he is not finished with this great theme, but only getting started. It is important therefore to understand it.

¹⁰ **Stephen E. Fowl**, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, ed. C. Clifton Black, M. Eugene Boring, and John T. Carroll, First Edition., The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 97.

The loose end seems to be that if God predestined us for adoption as sons in eternity past, and it is through Christ that this adoption comes to us, then **what bearing** does this have upon the church today? The answer is that Jews and Gentiles are together members of the household of God because of his work for us. God is our Father. Christ is our brother (**Heb 2:12**). Together, we are the holy family. To be members of a household in those days meant that you were not considered a guest or a slave, but all had equal status with one another and were considered members of a family, regardless of blood relations.¹¹ So the household metaphor actually works perfectly for Jews and Gentiles together. This will have implications later on in the letter as it regards our behavior in Christian unity (**Eph 4:3**), speaking the truth in love (**4:15**), transformed walking (**5:2**), relationships between husbands and wives (**5:22-33**), parents and children (**6:1-4**), masters and bondservants (**6:5-10**), and so on.¹² For, these are all things that are done as family.

¹¹ Daniel M. Gurtner, "Ephesians," in *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Acts–Philemon*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2004), 553.

¹² Heng Li Chiong (Henry), "The Rationale and the Relationship between *buiiothesia* and the Temple's Language of *naon hagion* and *katoiketerion tou theou* in Épheaisns 1-2: An Ecclesiological Reading of the Holy Temple and the Dwelling Place of God in the light of the Adopted Son," *Acedemia.edu*, https://www.academia.edu/37588110/The_Rationale_and_the_Relationship_between_%CF%85%E1%BC%B1%CE%BF%CE%B8%CE%B5%CF%83%CE%AF%CE%

But for now, it seems wise to think about how **family contrasts with the city-state**. As Lloyd-Jones notices, the first picture just isn't full enough to tell you all you need to know about life together as Christians. Yes, you are all citizens in the same heavenly country, but it is more than that. You are members of the same household within that country!

He gives several contrasts. The state is a **general** relationship where as a family is a more **particular** relationship. We are all in the same state of Colorado, but we do not go home to the same houses. The unity of the state is an **external** unity, while that of the family is an **internal** one. The state binds us to **laws**, but the family binds us because we have intimate personal relationship to **one another**. Our relationship to the state is a legal relationship, but to a family it is **“vital, living, blood relationship.”**¹³

[B1 and the Temples Language of %CE%BD%CE%B1%E1%BD%B8%CE%BD %E1%BC%85%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%BF%CE%BD and %CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B7%CF%84%CE%AE%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BF%CE%BD %CF%84%CE%BF%E1%BF%A6 %CE%B8%CE%B5%CE%BF%E1%BF%A6 in Ephesians 1-2 An Ecclesiological Reading of the Holy Temple and the Dwelling Place of God in the light of the Adopted Son.](#)

¹³ Lloyd-Jones, 325-34.

Seeing these differences should help you grasp the grace of God and the salvation you have been given in a profoundly different way than if it were just the city alone. You should not diminish the city, for you are related to one another as citizens of the commonwealth of heaven, bound to its laws and culture and Ruler together. But the household adds that **personal touch** that is so needed when speaking of yourselves as Christians. You belong together and nothing can tear this asunder. You should therefore strive to become close to one another as families naturally do, for that is the reality and your experiences should conform to that truth. Since we will see much more of this family working itself out in the letter, let us move on to the third and final picture that he gives. It takes up most of the space of our passage today.

Temple

The third metaphor adds yet another element to our unity in Christ. It is the religious element, and together we get the three great institutions God has given humanity: **state, family, and church**. The metaphor is the **temple**. “... a

holy temple in the Lord” (Eph 2:21). Why would he move to the temple idea? There are plenty of reasons.

As I just said, it rounds off the three institutions God gave mankind. There also seems to be a natural relationship between the household and the temple ideas. We’ve already seen how the temple in the OT is often simply called God’s “house.” But there is more. In fact, all three ideas are bound together through word-parallels. One scholar explains, “It is interesting to note how the *oikos*, or ‘house,’ as an element in the word, *par-oikoi*, “sojourners,” suggests the next figure of speech, in which St. Paul speaks of the converted Gentiles as God’s *oikeíoi*, members or friends of the family. And having carried the Apostle from the metaphor of the city-state to that of the family, it carries him from the metaphor of the family to that of a building.”¹⁴

Also, it must not be forgotten that this is Ephesus, and perhaps the greatest temple in all the world resided here. The temple of Artemis was so incredible that it was one of the seven wonders of the world. Thus, any discussion of another temple in Ephesus would have spoken volumes to the

¹⁴ George S. Hitchcock, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: An Encyclical of St. Paul* (London: Burns and Oates, 1913), 206.

people there. Rival temples with rival deities. Whose temple is better? As we will see, there is no comparison.

A final important reason is because this is the necessary way you conclude a **Divine Warrior epic**. What we are going to see now is how this is a temple unlike any other in the history of the world. It is so grand beyond belief that no other story, not even those in the OT, can compare to it. This is because its temple is wholly unlike any ever made before to go with a covenant that is unheard of in history.

Like all temples, this one is “**built on the foundation.**” You have to go deep down to the bedrock in order to make your building sturdy. But this **foundation** is not discovered by digging through dirt. Rather, it is “**the foundation of the apostles and prophets**” (**Eph 2:20**). Who are these apostles and prophets?

Both words are descriptor words. “**Apostle**” simply means a person sent with a message. It is a lot like the word “angel” which is a “messenger.” The word can be used generally for anyone or technically for the 12 Apostles (which includes Paul). Paul told the Corinthians, “**Like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation**” (**1Co 3:10**). It is pretty clear that the Apostles in mind here are in fact the 12 sent

out by Jesus in the Great Commission to reach the ends of the earth.

The “prophets” are a little more difficult. The word also depicts someone sent from God. His job was to give God’s words to the people. From Origen and Chrysostom, Calvin and Beza many have believed these to be the OT prophets. If that was the case, it probably would have said “the prophets and apostles.” In just a few verses, Paul will explain that the mystery of Christ “was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph 3:4-5). This is the same phrase, and it clearly does not refer to OT prophets.¹⁵ While it is true that the OT prophets were building something that is organically related to the church, it is also true that what they built was not the church in the same sense Paul is talking about. So it probably makes the most sense to see these prophets as those that lived (and died out) during the days of the Apostles which we find throughout the book of Acts and other places.

¹⁵ Marius Victorinus gets it right in the 4th century, “Note the order of this distinction, first apostles and then prophets. The apostles beheld [God incarnate]; the prophets received the Spirit. These are the saints mentioned above: those who saw and those who were inhabited by the Spirit. Hence the teachings of the apostles and prophets are indeed the teachings of Christ, which proclaim the foundation of all eternal hope.”

Calvin may not be correct about the prophets, but he is surely correct about the foundation. “*Foundation* unquestionably here refers to doctrine; for he does not mention patriarchs or godly kings, but only those who held a teaching office, and whom God had appointed to build His Church.” The center of this doctrine is Christ come in human flesh.¹⁶

Thus, Paul adds that “Christ Jesus himself [is] the cornerstone” (Eph 2:20). This is a fulfillment of prophecy from OT prophets. Isaiah said, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’” (Isa 28:16; cf. Ps 118:22), and Jesus taught his Apostles this very truth (Matt 21:42).

As the song puts it then, *the Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord*. This is the apostle’s foundation teaching. This is who Christ is. “No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1Co 3:11). It is not your feelings or your heart. It is not the pope. It is not the latest Evangelical trend. It is Christ. “The rock that remains fixed forever and is never moved, the foundation that

¹⁶ David McKay, *The Bond of Love: Covenant Theology and the Contemporary World* (Fearn, Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2001), 219.

cannot be replaced” (Heinrich Bullinger, *Commentary on Ephesians*).

Someone points out that Isaiah took this image from “the huge and costly foundation stones, upon which the Temple rested, 1 Kings 5:17.”¹⁷ Those are the stones that Solomon himself put in place when he built his temple in the days of peace and rest. Now, a new temple is being built. It, too, comes in a time of peace and rest, for we have just seen in Ephesians that God is creating “one new man in place of the two, so making peace ... thereby killing the hostility. He came and preached peace to you were far off and peace to those who were near” (Eph 2:15-17). So nothing could be more natural, given what Paul has been doing, than to end this whole two chapter epic with his great temple building project.

But what does this temple consist of? What is it made of? It is not brick and stone and wood and gold. It is much more glorious than even the temple of Artemis. According to the prophecies, God would build a house that was composed of the seed of the king and the priest. This is clearly temple language and the prophecies lend themselves to seeing that

¹⁷ George S. Hitchcock, *The Epistle to the Ephesians: An Encyclical of St. Paul* (London: Burns and Oates, 1913), 211.

temple as a living thing. Hence, “**Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone**” shows that this is **a living temple**. The cornerstone is essential because it sets the guide for all that follow. It gives the temple its proper location not only on the land, but in space as it is oriented in the proper direction. As the stone is set and rests in the ground, so also Christ is beginning his royal rest which he has won after vanquishing his enemies.

After the cornerstone, other stones are laid down. Thus, He is the first of many stones that will become part of this temple. All other stones are built off of the cornerstone, one after another. You do not build a temple in four different starting points and hope they all magically meet up in the middle. You start it from the cornerstone and go from there. Thus, this temple is made up of Christians, people who bear the Name of the Cornerstone in their persons.

Therefore he continues, “**... in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord**” (**Eph 2:21**). The picture here is one of **growth**. This is the temple being built. This is each new member of Christ’s church being placed carefully in line, built up in row after

row, until together they become a temple made up of “living stones.” This is the **extensive** building project part of what is going on.

It says more though. This building is said to be a “**holy**” temple. The way Paul will speak in the next couple of chapters about this shows us that the growth is also “**a growth in maturity ... the corporate people of God in holiness, and into the character of Jesus Christ Himself.**”¹⁸ Peter puts it this way. “**You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**” (**1Pe 2:5**). Thus, you have static growth depicting a group of individuals being placed into an edifice and dynamic group depicting them maturing in their faith.¹⁹ This is an extremely encouraging thing. As Spurgeon said, “**The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and yet He condescends to find a house within our hearts!**”²⁰

¹⁸ Gombis, Dissertation, 84 and **Timothy Gombis**, “Being the Fullness of God in Christ by the Spirit: Ephesians 5:18 in its Epistolary Setting,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 53 (2002): 261-62 [259-71].

¹⁹ **Ernest Best**, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 1998), 280.

²⁰ **Charles Spurgeon**, “November 8, Evening,” *Morning and Evening*, in Devotional Classics of Ch. H. Spurgeon: Volume I of The Fifty Greatest Christian Classics (Sovereign Grace Pub, 2000), 8.

The Church Father **Marius Victorinus** (fl. 4th cent.) summarizes this all nicely,

Jesus Christ and his teachings are the foundation for the apostles. The edifice built on this foundation consists in life and character and one's conduct and discipline. The primary foundation is for life; the rest of the edifice is for its adornment and edification. The primary foundation, I say, is to believe in Christ, hope in him and trust in God. This foundation is the teaching of the apostles, which is also heard in the word of the prophets.

(**Marius Victorinus**, *Epistle to the Ephesians* 1.2.20)

The last verse expands upon this. “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit” (**Eph 2:22**). The emphasis now is on the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in this new temple. And here the point is not as individuals as it is in other places (**Rom 8:9-11**). It is as the **temple-church**. Here you have to know something about the OT temple.

On the day that Moses finished building the tabernacle and set it up for business as it were, **that very day**, “the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (**Ex 40:35**). This took the form of a **cloud** (**36-38**), and it was an image of the **Holy**

Spirit (**Neh 9:19-20**). It happened again on the day Solomon dedicated the temple. “The glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD” (**1Kg 8:11**). In this way, God’s Holy Spirit would be *with* the people by being *in* the temple.

Jesus said something about this to his disciples. “Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells *with* you and will be in you” (**John 14:17**). This, of course, was fulfilled at **Pentecost**. But the reason it could happen is now revealed in Ephesians. It is because the church—God’s people—are the holy temple. As Beale says, it is not “like” a temple, but “it is the actual beginning fulfillment of the latter-day temple prophecies from the Old Testament.”²¹ The Spirit now dwells in this place and does so in order to build the people up into a holy temple. If you want to look for fulfillments of OT temple prophecies in a coming millennium, look no further than the church of Jesus Christ.

Let me remind you again here that this is all about this **peace** being won, especially the peace that comes when the

²¹ **G. K. Beale**, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 17, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL; England: InterVarsity Press; Apollos, 2004), 259–260. One of the things he cites here is Isaiah 57:19 as being quoted by Eph 2:17. This passage is itself a temple prophecy that Paul is applying to the NT temple. His discussion is quite illuminating.

wall of hostility of broken down and Jews and Gentiles are able to dwell together as one new man. There is a fulfillment here from Isaiah. “Behold an inhabitant shall come who was not with me, he that was a stranger to you before, shall be joined to you” (Isa 54:15 DRA-VUL).²² But this is all in direct contradiction to the beliefs at the Dead Sea. Those at Qumran would not tolerate even in the future temple any Gentiles drawing near. But this is precisely what the prophets had said would happen. This is the new thing God would do and who understood beforehand?

But after? Yes, the church now comprehends. The Epistle of Barnabas tells us,

Discover, therefore, that there is in fact a temple. How, then, will it be built in the name of the Lord? Learn! Before we believed in God, our heart’s dwelling-place was corrupt and weak, truly a temple built by human hands, because it was full of idolatry and was the home of demons, for we did whatever was contrary to God. “But it will be built in the name of the Lord.” So pay attention, in order that the Lord’s temple may be built gloriously. How? Learn! By receiving the forgiveness of sins and setting our hope on the Name, we

²² See A. Bertrand Wilberforce, *A Devout Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1902), 111.

became new, created again from the beginning. Consequently God truly dwells in our dwelling-place—that is, in us. How? The word of his faith, the call of his promise, the wisdom of his righteous decrees, the commandments of his teaching, he himself prophesying in us, he himself dwelling in us; opening to us who had been in bondage to death the door of the temple, which is the mouth, and granting to us repentance, he leads us into the incorruptible temple. For the one who longs to be saved looks not to the man, but to the One who dwells and speaks in him, and is amazed by the fact that he had never before heard such words from the mouth of the speaker nor for his part ever desired to hear them. This is the spiritual temple that is being built for the Lord.

(Barnabas 16:7-10)

The Reformer Jean Diodati (1576-1649) said,

Your faith by which you subsist in the communion of saints has for its foundation an infallible and immoveable rule, the doctrine of the Old and New Testament[s], the principal subject whereof is Christ, who in his person is the only, real and essential foundation, and as it were the corner stone (in which consists the chief strength of a building) binding the two walls together, which are the two nations of the Jews

and the Gentiles, whereof the church is composed, and always bearing and withstanding all manner of harmful encounters, which are more dangerous at the corners of buildings than at any other part of them.

(Jean Diodati, *Annotations on the Bible*)

The way you overcome these “harmful encounters?” By recognizing that Christ is the Cornerstone who supports the whole building. Have your eyes fixed on Christ, the foundation of your faith, the start of the temple, the fulfillment of its prophecies, and the Divine Warrior who has won such great victories as we have seen these last few weeks. In Christ the hostility is gone. We are at peace with one another. So let us celebrate together the Conquering King who has won for himself a people chosen before the foundation of the world and brought them into such a union as this in such a temple that would make Artemis rage with envy. For there is no other God like this and no other building has ever been conceived or created that can match Christ’s Church.

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