

**LESSON FOUR**

**BOTH RECONCILED TO GOD IN ONE BODY AND FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SAINTS  
AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD**

**&**

**GROWING INTO A HOLY TEMPLE AND BEING BUILT INTO A DWELLING PLACE OF  
GOD**

Scripture Reading:

**Eph. 2:14** For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity,

**Eph. 2:15** Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,

**Eph. 2:16** And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.

**Eph. 2:17** And coming, He announced peace as the gospel to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near,

**Eph. 2:18** For through Him we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father.

**Eph. 2:19** So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

**Eph. 2:20** Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone;

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

**Eph. 2:22** In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

## **Questions:**

### **Section 1**

1. What is the proper and genuine concept of reconciliation? What is the type of this?
2. How were we reconciled to God and what does it mean?
3. How do we have access unto the Father and what does it mean?

### **Section 2**

1. What is the reason that Paul mentioned the one new man before the Body?
2. What are the two aspects of church covered in verse 19?
3. Explain that there is the thought of intimacy seen in verse 19.

### **Section 3**

1. What is the universal church and the local church revealed in Eph. 2:21 and 22.
2. What foundation should the church be built upon? Consider examples of other things people may try to build the church upon which aren't the proper foundation.
3. What is God's intention in saving us? How do we see this in the aspect of Christ being the cornerstone?

### **Section 4**

1. What is the difference, if any, between the holy temple and the dwelling place of God?
2. Though there are many localities in the world with many local churches, is there a difference between the buildings?
3. According to Eph. 2:22, which part of us is the building of the church occurring in? Please share experiences of how you have been built up with others using the right part.

## **[Section 1]**

### **I. BOTH NEEDING TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD**

Ephesians 2:16 says, “And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, slaying the enmity by it.” The word “both” refers to the Jews and the Gentiles. Not only the uncircumcised Gentiles but also the circumcised Jews needed reconciliation to God through the redemption of Christ accomplished on His cross.

### **II. IN ONE BODY**

Verse 16 says that the Jews and the Gentiles have been reconciled in one Body. This one Body, the church (1:22-23), is the one new man in the previous verse. It was in this Body that both the Jews and the Gentiles were reconciled to God through the cross. We, the believers, both Jews and Gentiles, were reconciled not only *for* the Body of Christ, but also *in* the Body of Christ. What a revelation here! We were reconciled to God; we were saved in the Body of Christ.

We usually regard reconciliation as an individual matter; we do not often think of corporate reconciliation. However, the proper and genuine reconciliation is in the one Body. The Body is the instrument, the means, by which we were reconciled to God. According to Colossians 3:15, we have even been called in the one Body.

This corporate concept pervades the New Testament. Our concept, however, is that we were reconciled to God as individuals. But in the eyes of God we have been called in one Body and reconciled to Him in the Body. The exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt is a clear picture of this. In Egypt the children of Israel were, in a sense, far off from God. After they were brought out of Egypt and passed through the Red Sea together, at Mount Sinai they were reconciled to God as one congregation, not as individuals. That was a type of our being reconciled to God in the one Body. We today need to have this corporate concept. Do not think that you have been saved individually. On the contrary, we were saved all together and reconciled to God in one Body.

### **III. TO GOD**

Originally, we were without God, far away from God. But, through the cross with the blood of Christ, we have been brought back to God in the one Body. As long as we are in the Body, we are

one with God. But if we are outside the Body, we are separated from Him.

### **IV. THROUGH THE CROSS**

Our reconciliation to God in the one Body was accomplished through the cross. The cross of Christ, on the one hand, has slain the enmity caused by the ordinances which were given because of the flesh, and, on the other hand, has redeemed us with the blood of Christ shed upon it. It was through this cross that both Jews and Gentiles were reconciled in one Body to God.

### **V. THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE**

Verse 17 says, “And coming, He preached the gospel of peace to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near.” This refers to the coming of Christ as the Spirit to preach the gospel of peace, which He has accomplished through His cross. Those who were far off are the uncircumcised Gentiles who were separated by the flesh. Those who were near are the circumcised Jews who were brought near by God’s choosing.

The very Christ who died on the cross to slay the ordinances in order to create the new man, and shed His blood in order to reconcile us to God, came to us as the Spirit to preach the gospel of peace. This means that Christ has come as the life-giving Spirit, even as the preaching Spirit. Both those who were far off and those who were near needed to hear these good tidings of peace.

### **VI. ACCESS IN ONE SPIRIT**

#### **A. Christ’s Cross and His Blood Being the Access**

The preaching of the gospel is merely the objective fact; it is not the experience. Hence, after receiving this preaching, we need the experience, which is the access to the Father in the one Spirit. This access is constituted of Christ’s cross and His blood (Heb. 10:19).

#### **B. Through Christ**

Both Jewish and Gentile believers have access to the Father through Christ—the very Christ who abolished the law of the commandments in ordinances, broke down the middle wall of partition, slew the enmity to reconcile the Gentiles to the Jews, and shed His blood for redeeming both to God.

### C. In One Spirit

As verse 18 points out, our access unto the Father is in the one Spirit. If we have the cross without the Spirit, we have the fact without the experience. Hence, the Spirit is crucial. Firstly, both the Jewish and Gentile believers were reconciled in one Body to God (v. 16). That was a positional matter. Then we both have access in one Spirit unto the Father. This is experiential.

### D. Unto the Father

This access in one Spirit is unto the Father. Positionally we were reconciled to *God*; experientially we have access unto the *Father*. To be reconciled to God is to be saved; to have access unto the Father is to enjoy God, who, as the source of life, has regenerated us to be His sons.

In the one Body we have been reconciled to God through the cross. This is a fact. Now we may have access unto the Father and contact Him directly. This is an experience. We have been reconciled to God positionally for salvation, and we have access unto the Father experientially for enjoyment. It is significant that these verses do not say that we are reconciled to the Father and have access to God. No, having been reconciled to God once for all, we now have access to the Father for a continual enjoyment.

In verse 18 the Trinity of the Godhead is implied. Through God the Son who is the Accomplisher, the means, and in God the Spirit who is the Executor, the application, we have access to God the Father who is the Originator, the source of our enjoyment.

### [Section 2]

In verses 15 and 16 the Apostle Paul mentions the one new man before the Body. What is the reason for this? In order to answer this question we need to consider 2:14-16 again. As we come to these verses, we should not come with our natural concepts, religious understanding, or doctrinal preoccupations, all of which make us dull and insensitive in understanding the Word. Because the aspect of the church as the Body is not as high as that of the new man, we may think that the Body should be mentioned first. But how could there be the Body if there were not first a man? Firstly we speak about a man and then about the body of the man. The creation of the new man was primary, and the producing of the Body was secondary. Therefore, Paul firstly said that

Christ's death on the cross abolished in His flesh the ordinances in order to create in Himself the one new man. By doing this, the Body was produced. As soon as the man was created, the Body came into being. In this regard the word "and" at the beginning of verse 16 is significant; it connects the thought of reconciliation in the one Body with that of the creation of the one new man. When Christ created the two, the Jews and the Gentiles, into one new man, He reconciled them in one Body to God. For this reason, Paul mentioned the new man before the Body.

Remember, Christ did not reconcile individuals. He reconciled two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles, in one Body. If He had merely reconciled individual sinners, He would not have needed to reconcile them in the Body. But in order to reconcile two collective peoples, He had to do so in the Body.

The Jews and the Gentiles once were separated, but on the cross Christ broke down the wall of separation and created them into one entity, the one new man. But what about their relationship to God? In order for them to be reconciled to God, there was the need of a body as the instrument. When Christ created the two into one new man, He simultaneously reconciled them to God in one Body. When they were created into the new man, it was possible for them to be reconciled to God in one Body. Hence, the one Body was the means through which they were reconciled to God. Therefore, in verses 15 and 16 the one new man is mentioned before the Body.

After being reconciled to God, there was still the need for the Jews and the Gentiles to have access unto the Father for enjoyment. This access is not merely in the Body, but also in the Spirit. To be in the Body is a fact, but to be in the Spirit is an experience. Although we are in the Body, we may not be in the Spirit. Instead, we may be in our wandering thoughts. As you sit in a meeting, for example, you may travel around the world in your mind. This illustrates the fact that we need to be experientially in the Spirit.

When we are in the Spirit, we enjoy the Father. We may have God in fact by being in the Body, but if we would enjoy the Father in experience, we must be in the Spirit. Once we were far off from God, but we have been reconciled to Him positionally. Now there is no separation, no partition, between us and God. However, if we are not in the Spirit, we do not have the enjoyment of this fact. Hence, in order to enjoy

experientially what we possess positionally, we need to be in the Spirit.

## **VII. NO LONGER STRANGERS AND SOJOURNERS**

Now we come to verse 19: “So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow-citizens of the saints and members of the household of God.” This verse covers two aspects of the church: the kingdom, indicated by the term “fellow-citizens,” and the family of God, indicated by the phrase “the household of God.”

Verse 19 says that we, the Gentiles, are no longer strangers and sojourners. The word “you” in this verse refers to the Gentile believers. Strangers are aliens, and sojourners are foreigners sojourning among the Israelites without the right of citizenship. Both refer to the Gentiles.

## **VIII. FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SAINTS**

Now that we are no longer strangers and sojourners, we are fellow-citizens of the saints. The term “fellow-citizens” indicates the kingdom of God. All the believers, both Jewish and Gentile, are citizens of God’s kingdom, which is a sphere wherein God exercises His authority. As long as anyone is a believer, he is a citizen of the kingdom of God. This citizenship involves rights and responsibilities. We enjoy the rights of the kingdom, and we bear the responsibilities of the kingdom. These two things always go together. For example, as citizens of the United States, we enjoy certain rights, but we must also fulfill our responsibility to pay taxes.

## **IX. MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD**

Verse 19 reveals that we are also “members of the household of God.” This phrase indicates the house of God. Both the Jewish and Gentile believers are members of God’s house. God’s house is a matter of life and enjoyment; all believers were born of God into His house to enjoy His riches. God’s kingdom is a matter of rights and responsibility; all believers who were born into the house of God have the civil rights of and bear responsibility in the kingdom of God. In such a short verse two profound matters are covered: the kingdom of God with its rights and responsibilities and the house of God with its enjoyment of the Father’s life and riches.

## **GROWING INTO A HOLY TEMPLE AND BEING BUILT INTO A DWELLING PLACE OF GOD**

We come to the last portion of chapter two, verses 20 through 22. Here we have the revelation of the building in two aspects, the universal aspect and the local aspect. Universally the church is uniquely one, and the church in a particular locality is locally one. In verse 21 we see the universal aspect of the church: “All the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord.” Then in verse 22 we have the local aspect: “You also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.” Therefore, the holy temple refers to the universal aspect, and the dwelling place of God, to the local aspect.

## **I. BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS**

As the Body of Christ, the church has been regenerated, and as the house of God, the church is being built. Apparently, growth and building are separate things. Actually, the building of the house is the growth of the Body. If the Body does not grow, the house cannot be built.

In considering the church as God’s building, we need to pay special attention to the foundation. Verse 20 says, “Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone.” Many Christians have difficulty understanding what the foundation is in this verse. First Corinthians 3:11 says, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Christ is the only foundation. Nevertheless, Ephesians 2:20 speaks of the foundation of the apostles and prophets. This does not mean, however, that the apostles and prophets themselves are the foundation. In contrast to Revelation 21 where the foundations are the very persons of the apostles, the foundation here is not the apostles and prophets themselves. Since the mystery of Christ has been revealed to the apostles (Eph. 3:4-5), the revelation they received is considered the foundation upon which the church is built. This corresponds to the rock in Matthew 16:18, which is not only Christ Himself but also the revelation concerning Christ, upon which Christ will build His church. Therefore, the foundation of the apostles and prophets is the revelation they received regarding Christ and the church for the building of the church. The church is built upon this revelation. This is the meaning of the foundation in Ephesians 2:20.

## **II. CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CORNERSTONE**

Verse 20 reveals that in God's building Christ is the cornerstone. Here Christ is referred to, not as the foundation (Isa. 28:16), but as the cornerstone, because the main concern here is not the foundation but the cornerstone that joins together the two main walls: the wall of the Jewish believers and the wall of the Gentile believers.

When the Jewish builders rejected Christ, they rejected Him as the cornerstone (Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7), which joins the Gentiles to them for the building of God's house.

In Matthew 21 the Lord Jesus indicated, in a figurative way, that the Pharisees would reject Him. Verse 42 says, "Have you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the cornerstone; this was from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes?" By this word the Lord revealed that after His resurrection He would become the cornerstone to join the Jews and the Gentiles. Referring to Christ, Peter said to the religionists in Acts 4:11 and 12, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Peter's word shows that salvation implies building. God's intention in saving us is not to bring us into the heavens; rather, it is to join us to the Jews so that He may have His building. Many unbelieving Jews despise the Lord Jesus because they do not want to be joined to the Gentiles. As long as a Jew does not believe in Christ, he may be separated from the Gentiles. But as soon as such a Jew believes in Him, he is joined by Christ, the cornerstone, to the Gentile believers. Whether we are Jews or Gentiles, we have been saved in order to be joined together in Christ for God's building.

[Section 4]

### **III. GROWING INTO A HOLY TEMPLE**

#### **A. In Christ**

Verse 21 says, "In Whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord." Here we see that in Christ, who is the

cornerstone, all the building, including both Jewish and Gentile believers, is fitted together and is growing into a holy temple.

#### **B. Growing**

Since the building is a living one (1 Pet. 2:5), it is growing. It grows into a holy temple. The actual building of the church as the house of God is by the growth in life of the believers. Today the church is growing. However, it is not growing in our natural life, but in the divine life, the spiritual life.

Verse 21 also says that all the building is fitted together. The word "fitted" means being made suitable for the condition and situation of the building.

#### **C. Into a Holy Temple**

As verse 21 points out, all the building is growing into a holy temple. The Greek word rendered "temple" means the sanctuary, the inner part of the whole temple. It is in the Lord that the building is growing into a holy temple. This means that the entire building of God's house as His sanctuary is in Christ the Lord.

At this point I would like to ask you a question: Has the temple of God in the universe been completed? The fact that the temple is still growing indicates that, from our point of view at least, the temple of God is not complete. Verse 21 does not say that all the building has grown into a holy temple; it says that all the building is growing into a holy temple.

The phrase "all the building" refers to the universal church. If you consider the past nineteen centuries of church history, you may find it difficult to see the growth of the building. But do not be disappointed. The purpose of God cannot be thwarted. The universal building is still growing. In Matthew 16 the Lord Jesus prophesied that He would build His church. The building in Matthew 16:18 is the very building in Ephesians 2:21.

### **IV. BUILT INTO A DWELLING PLACE OF GOD**

Verse 22 says, "In Whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit." The word "you" here, which refers to the local saints, indicates that the building in verse 21 is universal and the building in verse 22 is local. In this verse Paul was saying that the local saints, the saints in Ephesus, were being built together in

Christ into a dwelling place of God. Therefore, in these verses Paul covered both the universal aspect and the local aspect of the church. All the building is growing—this refers to the universal aspect. The believers in a particular locality are being built together—this is the local aspect.

Why does Paul use the term “holy temple” in referring to the universal aspect and the term “dwelling place of God” when speaking of the local aspect? What is the difference, if any, between the holy temple and the dwelling place of God? Apart from the universal temple, there is not another temple called the local temple. The temple and the dwelling place refer to two aspects of the same thing. Do not consider the temple a dwelling place. The temple is the place in which God’s people contact God, worship Him, and hear His oracle. The dwelling place is a place of rest. God rests in His dwelling place. However, the temple and the dwelling place are not two distinct places. Rather, they are two aspects, two functions or usages, of the same building. The church is the place where God’s people contact God, worship Him, and receive His word, and it is also the place of God’s rest.

All the local churches are part of the universal church, not something in addition to it or apart from it. All the local churches added together equal the universal church. This means that apart from the local churches there is no universal church. Hence, the building of the local church is the building of the universal church. All the local churches have just one building. However, our natural concept of the building is that there is a different building in each locality. In this universe there is just one building with a universal aspect and a local aspect. No matter how many churches there may be on earth, there is still just one building with these two aspects.

Verse 22 says that we are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit. The spirit here refers to the believers’ human spirit indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit. God’s Spirit is the Dweller, not the dwelling place. The dwelling place is in the believers’ spirit. God’s Spirit dwells in our spirit. Therefore, the dwelling place of God is in our spirit.

Verse 21 says that the holy temple is in the Lord, and verse 22, that the dwelling place of God is in spirit. This indicates that the Lord is one with our spirit and that our spirit is one with the Lord. To be in our spirit actually is to be in the Lord. Also, to be in the Lord is to be in the spirit. He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit (1 Cor. 6:17). We

simply cannot separate our spirit from the Lord. Therefore, our spirit is the place where the building of the church is. The building is not in our mind, emotion, soul, or heart. It is absolutely a matter in our spirit.

If we wish to understand such matters as the foundation of the apostles and prophets and the difference between the holy temple and the dwelling place of God, we need to have a sober mind as we study the Bible. The Bible is the most logical of books. Our God is not foolish, and He never speaks nonsense. He is very logical, and everything in His Word is logical. Hence, we should not have an undisciplined mentality as we study the Bible. On the contrary, in reading the Bible we must exercise our sober mind to ask the proper questions. Then the light will shine. This is a basic principle in understanding the Word of God. May we all, especially the young brothers and sisters, learn to study the Bible in this way.

#### References:

Life-Study of Ephesians msg. 26 & 27