

EPHESIANS

Chapter 2

Made Alive in Christ

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature ^a and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

2:1–10 In ch. 1 Paul wrote of the great purposes and plan of God, culminating in the universal headship of Christ (1:10), all of which is to be for “the praise of his glory” (1:14). He now proceeds to explain the steps by which God will accomplish his purposes, beginning with the salvation of individuals.

2:1 A description of their past moral and spiritual condition, separated from the life of God. – Paul describes life before Christ as no life at all. Sin kills. It paralyzes us with a killing force. Sin kills the spirit and the will. What’s more, sin separates from the life God has to give. In this sense, more than in any other, life before Christ is a walking death. (LL) – The word dead is used as a metaphor to mean spiritual and moral corruption. Looking back, Gentile Christians recognize they were in the condition of spiritual and moral demise. All the deterioration which accompanies careless, willful sinning was present in their lives. Transgressions in the Greek mean the deliberate breaking of a known law. Sins in Greek means “missing the mark.” Both sins of commission and sins of omission involve one in spiritual death. (A) – Corpses can’t move. Dead people can’t do anything; they are totally unable to help themselves. Such was the spiritual plight in which the Gentile Ephesians had found themselves. If any were inclined to question Paul’s diagnosis regarding their spiritual bankruptcy, he urged them to take a look at their lives and actions. (PBC)

2:2 USED TO LIVE – Imagine a person whose entire perspective on life had been shaped only by television programming. What would such a person’s morality be like? His sexual ethics? His attitude toward violence? The value he placed on life? How

strongly would he desire to serve others? The world sets standards different from those of Christ. Life before Christ is lived by a set of standards that usually settle for the lowest common denominator – standards like, “What’s in it for me?” or “How much can I get away with?” or “It worked for them; why shouldn’t it work for me?” So a newspaper reporter observes Mother Teresa washing the sores of a leper and says to her, “I wouldn’t do that for the all the money in the world.” And Mother Teresa responds, “Neither would I.” Two separate worlds with two distinct sets of standards collide in those statements. Before Christ, we blended into the world’s mediocre, self-focused values. After Christ, we adopted a new set of challenging standards, those given us by God. (LL) – The Ephesians not only lived among people who behave this way, but actually engaged in such a life. (A)

WAYS OF THIS WORLD – Two pressures produce the “dead” life. One is the outward pressures of society which invite the Christian to live sub-standard lives. The other is our own inward predisposition to evil which the Tempter exploits. (A) – This is the atmosphere of the spirit that now, and in this era, operates in the children of disobedience. (S)

ruler. Satan (cf. Jn 14:30, “prince”). – This refers to the supernatural forces of evil actively hostile to man’s true welfare and to God’s purpose for him. Such forces are mentioned in 1:21 and again in 6:11-12. (A)

air. Satan is no mere earthbound enemy (cf. 6:12). – He ranges not only in the material world but in the spiritual world as well. (LL)

spirit. Satan is a created, but not a human, being (cf. Job 1:6; Eze 28:15; see note on Isa 14:12–15). – He was created as an angel and has powers far transcending human might. He seeks especially to turn believers into “those who are disobedient,” persons whom he controls and through whom he works his evil will. (LL)

2:3 *All of us.* Jews and Gentiles.

GRATIFYING THE CRAVINGS – A few examples: Abortion, business corruption, cohabitation, homosexuality, political correctness (there is more than one truth), spiritual laxity among Christians. – The word Paul uses for cravings carries the idea of wanting that which is forbidden, seeking that which is clearly wrong. Before Christ, our glands speak louder than our brains or our conscience. We follow our appetites. Like Big Bellied Ben in the old nursery rhyme, we eat the church, we eat the steeple, we eat the town, we eat the people. Our insatiable desires take us to extremes – as when in ancient Rome they built vomitoria in homes so that the gorged could regurgitate and return and eat more. (LL) – The grosser and more animal propensities. A life of indulgence in whatever natural feelings may arise in us – be they right or wrong. (PC)

OF OUR SINFUL NATURE – Paul here writes of a fallen nature without God. It is our natural tendency as sinners to do as sinners to do the wrong, to lay ourselves wide open to temptation and sin. Jesus described sins coming “from within, out of men’s hearts.” He said, “All these (sins) come from the inside...(Mark 7:20-23). That warped inside of us is our sinful nature. (LL)

Romans 7:15-25 “¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸ I know that nothing

good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^b For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.¹⁹ For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.²¹ So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.²² For in my inner being I delight in God's law;²³ but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?²⁵ Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin”

objects of wrath. See Ro 1:18–20; 2:5; 9:22. – Life apart from Christ is life in the hands of an angry God. (LL) – God has built into the world a process of retribution against sin. People who live a life dominated by sin experience the inevitable retribution that goes with such a life – broken relationship, disease, personal dissolution. (A) – Paul paints a grim picture. All people are by nature spiritually dead, totally unable to change their condition. Not only are they unable to improve their lot, but they are the objects of an offended God's wrath. They can expect nothing but the harshest of punishment – and that for all eternity. (PBC)

2:4 GREAT LOVE FOR US – This is agape love. It speaks of a love and affection that is totally one-way. It all comes from God. (PBC)

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

1 John 3:1 “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

RICH IN MERCY – eleos – For not other reason, God has rescued men and women from death and given them life. God's mercy is his overflowing active compassion, freely exercised, excluding all idea of merit on the part of the object. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 2)

Psalm 103:17 “But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—

Titus 3:5 “he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

2:5-6 MADE US ALIVE (5) RAISED US UP (6) SEATED US – The Greek verbs for all three of these actions of God are compounded with a preposition at the beginning of each one – syn – the word for with. The thought is that these are shared experiences – shared both with Christ and with other Christians. The experiences of Christ are repeated in the

Christian – the reception of a new life, resurrection from the death caused by sin, and exaltation to the heavenly places! There is no such thing as an individual Christian! We believe for ourselves but we do not believe alone! (A) – Alive (vivification), raised (resurrection), and seated (enthronement). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 1, Part 2)

Romans 6:4 “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

2:5 *made us alive with Christ.* This truth is expanded in Ro 6:1–10. – When we could not lift a finger to help ourselves, God through Word and sacrament worked faith in our hearts, creating life where formerly there had been none. (PBC)

WHEN WE WERE DEAD - Though sin is the abominable thing which he hates, loathsome to him in the last degree, he did not turn from us when we were immersed in it; nor did he wait till we began to move towards him; he began to influence us even when we were dead. . – Dead is nekros is to be taken literally and be like a corpse. Transgression is paraptomah which means to live life filled with errors and constantly missing the mark set for us by God. Verses 1-3 describe this type of life. We are alive physically but spiritually are really walking corpses.

1 Timothy 5:6 “But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.”

Romans 5:6, “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

2:6 GOD HAS RAISED US WITH CHRIST - soonegiro - To revive spiritually.

heavenly realms. See note on 1:3. – Verses 6 and 7 emphasize how our union with Christ assures us of our place in heaven. Just as Christ has ascended to sit at the right hand of God the Father, so we can be confident that our place “in the heavenly realms” is secure. (LL) – The Christian finds himself already an honored guest, and adopted member of the family of God in God’s presence. (A) – We are now heavenly minded. (S) – Took us out of and away from the tomb of our spiritual death, henceforth to live spiritually in newness of life. (Lanski) – soongkathidzo – To not only give someone a seat but to winningly invite them to sit with you and the company that surrounds you. We are now heavenly minded.

in Christ Jesus. Through our union with Christ. – This union with Christ, already providing a foretaste of our reward, displays the riches of God’s love. Christ is often called the first fruits of the resurrection. Here appears as the first fruits of the ascension. The grace of God doesn’t just save us from hell – it delivers us to heaven. (LL)

2:7 *coming ages.* Cf. 1:21; probably refers to the future of eternal blessing with Christ.

show. Or “exhibit” or “prove.” – Imagine how at the turn of the century immigrant families sent one of their own on to America. Sometimes months later they would hear

that their loved one had arrived and was doing everything possible for the rest of the family to follow. That loved one's presence in the new country left those in the old country already sensing the blessings that were to be theirs. That is the dynamic at work here. Christ is in heaven, victorious after the living, dying, and rising. As sure as he is there and has done all that is necessary for us, we will follow. His grace, his love, in going before us, has made it possible. (LL) – God did not make us alive just to give us a small taste of heaven. He did so, “in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (PBC)

INCOMPARABLE – uperballon – Riches that are so great that they surpass any hyperbole. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 1, Part 2) – There is nothing in our present range of experience that can compare with heaven, so great is the love and mercy of ur God, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (PBC)

EXPRESSED IN HIS KINDNESS TO US - khraystotace – A useful goodness and gentleness that comes from an excellent moral character. In the manner of the blessing that comes to us as Jesus dealt with the woman that was caught in sin, with the thief on the cross, with Peter or with Saul.

2:8 A major passage for understanding God's grace, i.e., his kindness, unmerited favor and forgiving love.

IT IS BY GRACE – It is utter generosity, unselfish, spontaneous, recklessly prodigal generosity, which acts wholly out of loving concern for the other's need, even if he is completely unworthy of the love and help thus offered him. (A)

you have been saved. † “Saved” has a wide range of meanings. It includes salvation from God's wrath, which we all had incurred by original sin and our own sins. The tense of the verb (also in v. 5) suggests a completed action with emphasis on its present effect.

through faith. † See Ro 3:21–31 (and notes on that passage), which establishes the necessity of faith in Christ as the only way of being made right with God. – Grace is the “give” word; faith is the “receive” word. Faith itself is regarded by St Paul as a gift (Phil 1:20). The point of the verse is that the whole process is not something we do for ourselves; God does it for us. (A)

not from yourselves. No human effort can contribute to our salvation; it is the gift of God. – Corpses don't resuscitate themselves! Our rescue, our life, comes as a gift from God. (LL) – The Greek literally says, “not from you.” – “You have not done this of your own strength.” (Brauer)

John 3:16 ““For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,^f that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Romans 3:24 “and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in^a Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 8:32 “He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

2:9 *not by works.* † One cannot earn salvation by “observing the law” (Ro 3:20, 28). Such a legalistic approach to salvation is consistently condemned in Scripture. – The only way good works could save us with a perfect and just God is if our whole life were perfect. God cannot accept a 99 percent morally perfect life. He requires 100 percent perfection. (LL) – The New English Bible translates it “not a reward for work done.” (A)
no one can boast. No one can take credit for his or her salvation. – The idea behind the Greek is an attitude of self-congratulation and pride. (A)

Matthew 5:48, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,^f that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Romans 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in^a Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2:10 *workmanship.* The Greek for this word sometimes has the connotation of a “work of art.” – The Greek word for “workman” is *poiema*, the same word from which we get our word “poem.” God continues to work in each of us in order to make us what he wants of us – and what God creates is always a thing of beauty! (LL) – *poyaymah* – To be the product of someone who has very lovingly crafted something. We say that a craftsman communicates with his work so God continues to do so with us.

CREATED IN CHRIST JESUS -*ktidzo* – To fabricate or form something. To create something out of nothing. A creating is meant, by virtue of which we are now in Christ Jesus.

Mark 16:15 “He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”

Romans 1:20 “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Galatians 6:15 “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.”

TO DO GOOD WORKS – God has much work for us to do. Good works are a crucial aspect of the Christian life. Our good works, however, become an expression of thankfulness for all Christ has done for us, not an attempt to win heaven. (LL) – All of man’s work is God’s work through man. It embraces the whole conduct of a man in so far as he falls under the antithesis of good and evil.. and including the hidden motions of the will, whether in relation to God, to the world or to other men. (Kittel) – With our new God-given spiritual life we are indeed able to respond to God’s will. We are able, albeit imperfectly, to do what God wants. It is not that we have to, but rather that we want to do God’s will. The good works that flow from faith are simply an opportunity to show our appreciation for all that God in Christ has done for us. It would be hard to improve on the apostle John’s terse analysis: “We love (God) because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). But even the good deeds we do are not basis for boasting. They are really not our own doing; we’re simply being given the opportunity to do the good things “which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (PBC) – – Good is agathos and means to do something that is of benefit to others. Works comes from ergon which means an act of labor. The sun has its purpose and so do we. What we are to do is connected to the gifts/talents and opportunities God gives us. Our walk in Christ is a walk in good works (little Christs).

Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.”

Matthew 5:16 “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

2 Corinthians 5:15 “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

Galatians 5:16 “So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

Ephesians 5:2 “and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

prepared in advance. † Carries forward the theme of God’s purpose and planning, seen in ch. 1. – All the ways of holiness and righteousness are God’s design and preparation. We need not puzzle about and search for what may please God, he has long ago mapped out the entire course. They all spring from faith. (Lenski) – – proetoymadzo – To fit into place ahead of time. We find them present and need only conduct our walk in them. Honor is due God alone for what we are and do as Christians.

1 Corinthians 12:11 “All these (gifts) are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”

2 Timothy 1:9 “who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.”

One in Christ

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

2:11–22 From the salvation of individuals, Paul moves to another aspect of salvation in which God reconciles Jews and Gentiles, previously hostile peoples, not only to himself but also to each other through Christ (vv. 11–16). Even more than that, God unites these now reconciled people in one body, a truth introduced in vv. 19–22 and explained in ch. 3.

2:11 *Therefore.* Refers to the state of those without Christ, described in vv. 1–10.

you who are Gentiles. Most of the Ephesians (cf. 1:13, “And you also”). – A great ethnic, moral, and religious barrier had divided Jew and Gentile for centuries. Jews hated Gentiles. The physical covenant of circumcision marked a Jew as other than a Gentile and a Gentile as other than a Jew. Jews spoke a daily prayer of thanks that they had not been create Gentiles. Intermarriage was forbidden, with funerals being held for Jew who did marry Gentiles. A Jew rubbing elbows with Gentiles in public was considered unclean. (LL)

“*uncircumcised*”... “*the circumcision.*” The rite of circumcision was applied to all Jewish male babies; so this physical act (“done in the body by the hands of men”) was a

clear mark of distinction between Jew and Gentile, in which Jewish people naturally took pride. – There is a hint here already of the long-standing hatred between Jew and Gentile. (A)

BY THE HANDS OF MEN – Circumcision is an outward, visible sign and therefore significant only as a symbol of a spiritual reality beyond itself. The Jewish arrogance about their circumcision led them to stress the act itself rather than the inward condition of the heart. In Romans 2:28 Paul insists that real circumcision is a question of the heart, not the flesh. See also Philippians 3:3. (A)

2:12 *at that time*. Before salvation, in contrast to “But now” (v. 13).

separate from Christ ... without God. All these expressions emphasize the distance of unbelieving Gentiles from Israel, as well as from Christ. – Before Christ Gentiles had no promise of a Messiah, no legacy of prophets foretelling the Promised One. For Gentiles, schooled in Greek thought, history was a matter of cycles going nowhere. The Hebrew notion of a linear history with a plan and terminus was foreign to Greeks. For them history would cycle and recycle, destined to repetition and redundancy. (LL)

covenants. God had promised blessings to and through the Jewish people (see note on Ro 9:4).

WITHOUT GOD – The word translated by this phrase literally means “atheists.” The pagans were not literally atheists, since they worshiped many gods. There is a play on words here, however. Pagans who persecuted Christians often referred to Christians as “atheists” because they would not worship the national gods. Paul turns the phrase around. “Atheist” here means they had no fellowship with the true God. (A)

2:13 *But now*. Not only contrasts with “at that time” (v. 12) but also introduces the contrast between “from Christ” (v. 12) and “in Christ” (here). – noonee – Just now signifying a change in what was. In the case of the Ephesians it was a significant difference.

WERE FAR AWAY – The Gentiles are now part of the family of God as well as the Jews. The verb suggests a final, decisive act of admission. (A)

HAVE BEEN BROUGHT NEAR – the verb here is passive. The Gentiles did not do anything on their own to approach God. (PBC) – enggoos – To be very near by. They were no full beneficiaries of all God’s gifts.

blood of Christ. Expresses the violent death of Christ as he poured out his lifeblood as a sacrifice for us (cf. 1:7). – Notice how the reconciliation by the blood of Christ not only reconciles us to God, but also to our fellowman. (A) – haheemah – Blood, in this case the atoning blood of Christ. Bloodshed implied violence and a violent death. This also gives an objective means for what had taken place to make the difference in the Ephesians’ lives. It was not of their doing.

Matthew 26:28 “This is my blood of the^b covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Romans 5:9 “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!”

Hebrews 9:14 “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death,^b so that we may serve the living God!”

1 Peter 1:18-19 “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

1 John 1:7 “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Revelation 7:14 “I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

2:14 HE HIMSELF IS OUR PEACE – Note that the bond of peace is not a concept but a person – Jesus Christ. (A) – irahnay – A quietness that comes from being restored to oneness with others, especially God.

Isaiah 53:5 “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

Romans 5:1-2 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

Colossians 1:20 “and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

the two. Believing Jews and believing Gentiles.

HAS DESTROYED – Loo-o – To loosen up or totally break loose from something that has a hold on you. Dissolve is another synonym. That wall of hostility was completely destroyed

barrier ... dividing wall. Vivid description of the total religious isolation Jews and Gentiles experienced from each other. – This is a reference to the wall in the temple in Jerusalem which separated Jew from Gentile even when the Gentiles were converts to Judaism. An inscription uncovered in the ruins of the temple in 1871 reads: “No man of another race is to proceed within the partition and enclosing wall about the sanctuary; and anyone arrested there will have himself to blame for the penalty of death which will be imposed as a consequence.” Thus the sanctuary was reserved for Jews by birth. This wall became symbolic of the hostility and feelings of contempt and superiority which Jews had toward Gentiles. Gentiles were allowed only into the outer court of the temple which

became known as the “court of the Gentiles.” (A) – fragmos – A fence, barrier, hedge or partition. It was a good description of how the Jews and Gentles experienced their lives with each other. Even the Temple had an outer court for the Gentiles. This was now a thing of the past as far as God was concerned.

hostility. Between Jews and Gentiles.

Matthew 15:26-27 “He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

Revelation 22:15 “Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”

2:15 *abolishing ... the law.* † Since Mt 5:17 and Ro 3:31 teach that God’s moral standard expressed in the OT law is not changed by the coming of Christ, what is abolished here is the effect of the specific “commandments and regulations” in separating Jews from Gentiles, whose nonobservance of the Jewish law renders them ritually unclean. – The OT ceremonial law called for God’s people to remain separate from uncircumcised Gentiles in many aspects of life. By NT times Jews would not eat with Gentiles because that would mean ceremonial defilement. Gentiles were considered to be reprobate sinners, with whom a God-fearing Jew was not to associate on any level. This practice caused a great deal of anger among the Gentiles. The moral law, too, by its very nature brought Gentiles (as well as disobedient Jews) under condemnation because of their lifestyles reflected their opposition to God. The OT civil law also reflected that God’s people served a different king – the Lord himself. – and even though the political independence of God’s people was gone by NT times, it still remained a fervent aspiration (Acts 1:6). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3) – The Jews utterly despised the Gentiles; they considered them dogs, vile, unclean (Mt. 15:27; Rev 22:15). One must know the status of dogs in the Orient. The Gentiles reciprocated in kind and hated the Jews because of their arrogance, their scornful separation, their peculiar religious laws and ways. (Lenski) – The term “dog” in the East was used for impure and profane persons. (Unger) – The purpose of these civil and ceremonial laws, unique to Israel, was to keep Israel a separate nation. The many carefully spelled out regulations were to hedge and protect Israel from heathen influence until the promised Messiah was born. (PBC)

Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

Romans 3:31, “Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”

Revelation 22:15, “Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”

in his flesh. Probably refers to the death of Christ. – Christ fused Jews and Gentiles together by abolishing the law and forming one new person in himself, granting all people peace with one another under his Lordship. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

one new man. The united body of believers, the church. – kaheenos – Something that has the sense of freshness.

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Ephesians 4:24 “and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

2:16 *this one body.* While this could possibly mean the body of Christ offered on the cross (cf. “in his flesh,” v. 15), it probably refers to the “one new man” just mentioned, the body of believers. – This was the church, the new Israel of God (Gal 6:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3)

TO RECONCILE - spokatalaso – To fully reconcile. To change thoroughly.

2 Corinthians 5:18 “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

Colossians 1:20 “and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

2:17 *far away ... near.* Gentiles and Jews respectively. – Paul uses a word for “reconcile” that is used of enemies making friends. We were God’s enemies. In Christ we have become God’s friends. The means of reconciliation is the cross. The hostility between Jew and Gentile disappear as both come under the influence of the immense sacrifice of Christ. (LL) – The Word that he has preached and himself preaches is gospel, glad tidings. The content of these tidings is peace, peace with God, the salvation which Christ has merited by his blood and cross. (S)

2:18 BOTH HAVE ACCESS – Christ brings us into the throne room of the king of kings and yet we know him tenderly as “Father.” (A) Access (prosagoga) literally means “a coming near.” Access to the Father is only through Jesus Christ (John 14:6), and in, or under the influence of, the Holy Spirit. Access means that Jew and Gentile now may approach the heavenly Father with the confidence that he accepts all who are in Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3) – prosagogueay – To have admission and be able to come near.

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

2:19 *Consequently*. Paul indicates that the unity described in vv. 19–22 is based on what Christ did through his death, described in vv. 14–18. – oon – Certainly, accordingly, therefore.

you. The Gentiles at Ephesus are particularly in mind here.

FOREIGNERS AND ALIENS – The Gentiles were formerly strangers among the Jews, resident aliens with no rights as citizens and with no right of appeal. (A) – The word for foreigners is *exnos* meaning to be a stranger or guest who has no permanent standing. The word for alien is *paroykos* meaning to be a stranger who is on the move.

citizens ... household. Familiar imagery. The household in ancient times was what we today might call an “extended family.” – When men are reconciled to God, they are reconciled to one another. Notice that Christ not only creates Christians, but immediately binds them into a new corporate personality – the Church. (A) – You are not guest or occasional visitors, but permanent dwellers in the house and members of the family. (PC) – *soompoleetace* – To be a native to city or country and full citizen with all of its privileges. At that time the Gentiles lived among the Jews but did not have equal rights. They were second class citizens. Worst of all they were strangers to the covenant of promise.

Galatians 4:5 “to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons”

MEMBERS OF GOD’S HOUSEHOLD - *oykios* - Which means a place to live safe from outside dangers. The main part of the church is called a “Nave” which means boat. To be in the boat is to be rescued from drowning in the sea. Through our Baptism we are members of God’s family. We are therefore also children of Abraham, Moses and the OT promises. It also means that we are permanent dwellers and not quests who have to leave at some point.

Romans 8:16 “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

2:20 *foundation*. Further metaphorical language to convey the idea of a solid, integrated structure. – *Thmelio* meaning to ground, establish or render firm and unswerving. – *themelees* – To put something down on which to build a long-lasting structure. The foundation of the Apostles was what Jesus had taught them. Acts 2:42 “They devoted themselves to the apostle’s teachings...”

apostles and prophets. Probably refers to the founding work of the early Christian apostles and prophets as they preached and taught God’s word (cf. 1Co 3:10–11).

cornerstone. Isa 28:16, which uses the same term in its pre-Christian Greek translation (the Septuagint), refers to a foundation with a “tested” stone at the corner. – The corner stone was the first stone put in place. Every line of the building was calculated from it and aligned with it. Jesus Christ certainly fits that description for his church. (A) – *akrogneahyos* – Something belonging to the extreme corner and used to line up the whole rest of the building.

Psalm 118:22 “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;”

Matthew 7:24- “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

1 Peter 2:6 “For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

2:21 *joined together*. Cf. 4:16 for the same word. Both passages speak of the close relationship between believers. – The Greek verb for “joined together” occurs only here and in 4:16, where it describes how the members of a body are joined. It reinforces the “cornerstone” idea – that all the parts must be in harmony with Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 3) – soonarmologeh – To organize in a compact manner with all the joints close together.

rises. The description of a building under construction conveys the sense of the dynamic growth of the church.

holy temple. Paul now uses the metaphor of a temple, thereby indicating the purpose (“to become”) for which God has established his church. – Here the point is that the church has replaced the temple as the meeting place between God and man – the church as community of believers joined together in the Body of Christ. (A) – Unredeemed man can build towers of Babel and skyscrapers, but only the Holy Spirit can build a Christian Church. (IB)

1 Peter 2:5, “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

2:22 *dwelling*. The church is to be a people or community in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. – As carpenters and craftsmen add more and more component parts to a building as it proceeds toward completion, so too Christ is building his church – one believer at a time. Each believer is carefully fitted into his or her niche. All are known by name. All are important to the Builder. All fulfill a purpose. (PBC) – nahos – A shrine or temple.

1 Corinthians 3:16 “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”

1 Corinthians 6:19 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own”

1 Peter 2:5 “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”