

Building a Good Foundation, #1 Jesus Christ: the Chief Cornerstone, Eph.2:11-22

Question for Later Consideration: What are the two greatest needs of mankind?

The church at Ephesus is unique on the New Testament landscape, primarily because we have more information provided regarding it than any other...

- On Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey (49-52 A.D.), he encounters and stays with *Aquila* and *Priscilla* in Corinth because they were of the same trade, Acts 18:1-3; after a *year and six months* v.11, the Jews caused problems, vv.12-17; and he left for Ephesus, taking them with him, v.18. But as he continued on his way to Caesarea and then to the regions of Galatia and Phrygia, Aquila and Priscilla were left there in Ephesus, vv.19-23. At some point, the *eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures* Apollos came also came to Ephesus. He "*had been instructed in the way of the Lord*" and *being fervent in Spirit*, was "*speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus*," but was "*acquainted only with the baptism of John*," vv.24-25. Aquila and Priscilla "*took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately*," v.26. These seem to be the *beginnings* of the church in Ephesus.
- In Acts 19, Paul returns to Ephesus, and found some *disciples*, v.1. However, apparently they were either some earlier disciples of Apollos- or least they too were only familiar with and had been *baptized into "John's baptism"*, vv.2-4. With additional instruction, they were baptized "*in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*" and, when Paul "*laid his hands upon them*," the Holy Spirit imparted the *gifts of tongue-speaking and prophecy*, which gave these *12 men* access to *inspired revelation* to continue the work in Ephesus, vv.6-7. The "church" in Ephesus is growing!
- Over the next *three years (three months, v.8; two years, v.10; and apparently at least another nine months, 20:31)* Paul- surely with these other *helpers* assisting also, continued to *preach and teach* so that in not only in Ephesus, but "*all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks*," v.10. During this time, there were *powerful demonstrations of miraculous power* so that "*the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified*," vv.11-17, and to great effect, vv.19-20. Of course, *jealousy and greed* eventually reared their ugly heads, vv.23-41; and Paul, "*sent for the disciples and when he had exhorted them*" he left for Macedonia, 20:1.
- But Paul (or the Lord, as we'll see in a moment) was not finished *instructing* the growing church at Ephesus. In Acts 20, as he is hurrying to Jerusalem, v.16, from *Miletus* he sends "*to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church*," v.17. When they came, he gave an impassioned address which called upon his time with them, and urged them to "*be on the alert*," v.31, and *commended them "to the God and to the word of His grace"* which was "*able to build you up*" and would provide them "*the inheritance among all those who are sanctified*," v.32.
- Paul also wrote an epistle to the church there a few years later in about 62 or 63 A.D., which we know as Ephesians. At that time, and as can be inferred from the letter, there were no *major issues* in the church at Ephesus. His treatise to them contained both *doctrinal (chps.1-3)* and *practical (chps.4-6)* instructions, but neither identified nor rebuked any major faults. However, this was not the last *inspired revelation* to this church. By the time the *Letters to the Seven Church of Asia* were penned as part of the Revelation of the Lord through John, it is apparently that Paul's warnings back in Acts 20 had not been fully *heeded or implemented*, Rev.2:4-7. For we see then a church that seems only a *hollow form* of what it had been previously, cp. vv.2-3 and vv.4-5. **The point to all of this is that we have a more**

complete view of the church at Ephesus than any other in the New Testament; which, to me at least, makes the book of Ephesians most interesting.

A few seemingly pertinent particulars of the church in Ephesus:

1. From its inception, the church at Ephesus was comprised of **both Jews and Greeks**, cf. Acts 18:1; 19:10,17. Also, it's earliest members- though *disciples* of the Lord, had **limited knowledge** of the "complete picture" of Him and His relationship to the church.
2. Thus we see in Paul's letter to them (Ephesians), a lot of emphasis being placed upon: a) **the place of both Jew and Gentile in church**, 2:1-2 (notice *you* vs. *we*); 2:11- 22; 3:6; and, b) **Jesus prominently displayed as the Savior**, 1:3-20; **Ruler/Head of the body**, 1:21-23; **Peace-Maker between God and man**, 2:1-10, and **Jew and Gentile**, 2:11-18.
3. All of which brings us to our text of 2:19-22, which will hopefully not only be easier to digest, but become much more flavorful with meaning!

Jesus Christ- the Chief Cornerstone, v.20b. Three important questions and their answers:

1. Why is *Jesus* the Chief Cornerstone?
 - a. Through Him God made us *alive*, having *raised us up with Him*, vv.1-10; especially vv.4-7
 - b. He Himself is our *peace*, v.14a. Remember our introductory question: What are the *two greatest needs* of mankind? The answers are **Peace with God** and **Peace with One Another**. And how do we achieve such *peace*? *Peace with God* is accomplished **through Jesus Christ**, vv.11-13; and *Peace with One Another* is likewise accomplished **through Jesus Christ**, vv.14b-18!
 - c. Thus the *whole building* He *fits* and *grows together* into a *holy dwelling of God* in the Spirit, vv.21-22.
2. Why are the *apostles* and *prophets* the *foundation of God's household*, vv.19b-20a?
 - a. What do you know about Jesus Christ? How do you know it? Surely not by *first-hand experience*! The *apostles* (ones sent by God to speak for Him) and *prophets* of the Old Testament *revealed* a coming Messiah who would *reconcile fallen man to God* (Gen.3:15) and *bless all nations of the earth* (rather than just Jews, Gen.12:3) thus making *peace* between *God and man*, and *man and man*! However, these OT prophecies were a *mystery* to be later *revealed*, 1Pet.1:10-12. And this *mystery* was *revealed* to and through the New Testament *apostles and prophets*, Eph.3:3-7! Such makes *them* the **foundation** of God's *building*, His *holy temple* and *dwelling place*, the *church*, whom **Jesus fits together** and **grows**, vv.21-22... because He's the **Chief Cornerstone**!
3. One final question though it takes several forms: Have you been *made alive* from *spiritual death* with/through the resurrected Jesus Christ? Are you at *peace* with God and your *fellow man* through Jesus Christ? Are you part of the *building of God* built upon the proper *foundation* of the *apostles and prophets* revealed word? Are you *fit together* and *growing* into a *holy dwelling of God in the Spirit* through the Jesus Christ, the **Chief Cornerstone**?