

A Holy Temple in the Lord
Hope Chapel Honolulu
Ephesians 2:11-22

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

Introduction

When Paul wrote this letter to the believers in Ephesus who grew up around temples and shrines-- including the Temple of Artemis which was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World--the word "temple" meant a somewhere sacrifices were made to that which were not gods. Even the Jews had a temple built with human hands for The One True God. But the temple of the Holy Spirit which began to be revealed through the apostle Paul was a very different thing. Not a physical building limited by space, time or resources, but a "household" (*oikodome*) and "dwelling place" (*naio*) where God loves and lives with those He has called out (*ekklesia*) to Himself.

1. Aliens and strangers to the commonwealth and covenants. (Ephesians 2:11-12)

- a) We were once separated from Christ and the promises of God.
- b) "...having no hope and without God in the world."

2. A new creation both as individuals and as the people of God. (Ephesians 2:13-18)

- a) Christ Himself is our peace, our reconciliation, our restoration.
- b) Through Christ we all "have access in one Spirit to the Father."

3. The household and dwelling of God. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

- a) We have become "fellow citizens with the saints and members" of God's household.
- b) In Christ we "are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

Conclusion

The church is much more than a building or even a community of believers, it is the household and dwelling place of God. When we consider the context of Christ's words-- "...wherever two or more are gathered in My name, there am I in their midst..." (Mt18:20) we can see that the gatherings of the church are meant to much more than times and places where information is exchanged, but to be times and places where transformation is experienced because we "are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (v.22).

For our prayerful study, discovery and application:

- 1) What is Paul saying through the ideas of "commonwealth" and "covenant" in verses 11-12?
- 2) How can God's work of reconciliation through Christ be seen in verses 13-18?
- 3) Read and compare 1Peter 2:5 with today's key passage. What is the Word and Spirit of God saying about you and I?

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