

Eph 2:11-22 God's Inheritance in the Saints

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Overview

External context

2:11-3:14 is the second major section of the epistle. Paul prayed that they might know three things, 1:18-19

1. what is the hope of his calling,
2. and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
3. 19 And what [is] the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe.

We have completed the discussion of #3, and now continue with #2, which concerns the fact that God's inheritance is no longer restricted to Israel, but now comprises all of the saints, Jew and Gentile alike.

Internal Structure

This section has two main parts.

Inclusio.—3:1,14 bracket a discussion of Paul's ministry to the gentiles, and introduce another prayer for the Ephesians.

- The prayer itself echoes the three divisions of the original prayer in 1:16-19. Having completed the theoretical section of the book, Paul revisits his purpose before plunging into the practical section.
- The section before the prayer (3:2-13) is a parenthesis, describing Paul's personal relationship to the doctrine he has just expounded in 2:11-22.

Shifts in personal pronouns.—In the section before the inclusio:

- 2:11-13, "you" (mostly description of our two-fold alienation, from Jews and from God, though a final verse looks ahead to the delivered state)
- 2:14-18, "we" (how Christ has repaired our two-fold alienation, first from the Jew, then from God, with a hinge in 15: AbaB) (However, structure is cleaner if explained syntactically rather than symmetrically, as below.)
- 2:19-22, "you" (mostly description of our delivered state, but beginning with a glimpse back to our former alienation)

The point of this section is "his inheritance in the saints," the union of Jew and Gentile in one body.

2:11-22, God's Inheritance in the Saints

The two “you” sections focus on the Gentiles: their former alienation (11-13, “wherefore remember”) and the union with Christ and with the people of God that they now enjoy (19-22, “now therefore”). The “we” section in the middle explains how the change came about.

This whole section is dominated by emphasis on the twofold nature of their alienation and its solution: social (in the eyes of men) and spiritual (before God).

Application: We should revel in the victory and deliverance that is ours in these two domains.

- People crave friendship and social identity. Only in Christ can the barriers between people truly be removed.
- We need no longer fear God's wrath, but can be assured of his love and care because the barrier between us has been removed.

11-13, “You”: Former Alienation

While both “you” sections describe both past alienation and present union, the first emphasizes the alienation, while the second emphasizes the union.

11, *Social Alienation (Horizontal)*

They were separated from Israel.

- Gentiles *in the flesh*, their physical condition, what men could see. Probably a reference to circumcision.
- This is made explicit in the next clause; note who it is that calls them “uncircumcised.” The point is that the Jews recognized them as different and rejected them.

This disdain survived even into the early church, and is reflected in

- the insistence of the party of the Pharisees that Gentiles had to become Jews before they could become Christians, Acts 15:1, reflected in Galatians;
- the disputes over meats and days, Rom 14:1-6, Col 2:16;
- Peter's behavior in Antioch, Gal 2:11-13.

Much of Paul's effort was devoted to fighting against this distinction. His arguments are sometimes misunderstood.

- He is not saying that in general one's conduct is irrelevant to one's faith, or that the believer is not constrained morally. 2:10 directly opposes that view, and his own example shows how disciplined a life he lived.
- Rather, he is opposing any compromise to the obliteration of the line between Jew and Gentile.

12, *Spiritual Alienation (Vertical)*

In addition to this (sinful, prideful) rejection by the Jews, three statements show that they were separated as well from God. The second and third are compound statements. In these cases we must pay special attention to the connection between the two halves.

“Without Christ”.—That is, with no access to the promised Messiah through whose work alone Adam’s sin can be reversed (Gen 3:15) and sinful people can be reconciled to God. Thus this statement says they had no access to the *foundation* of salvation.

“Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise”.—The first member is a political statement. Israel is viewed as a state, a political body, to which Gentiles were aliens. In itself, this defect would be only social, similar to those in v.11. But the second member reminds us that it was to the commonwealth of Israel that God gave the covenants: Rom. 9:4, “Israelites; to whom [pertaineth] the adoption, and the glory, *and the covenants*, and the giving of the law, and the service [of God], *and the promises*.” Israel was to be God’s light to the nations; the revelation of God’s gracious salvation was to flow through them to others, and apart from them there was no access to it.

- Isa 41:8-9 establishes Israel as God’s servant.
- Isa 42:1-8 makes it the duty of this servant to bring light to the gentiles.
- Ultimately fulfilled in the Lord Jesus, who is the perfect Israelite.

Thus this statement says they had no access to the *channel* of salvation.

“Having no hope, and without God in the world”.—Finally, they have no access to the *fruits* of salvation. Three phrases bear mention:

- No hope (see notes at end): nothing to which to look forward. The unbeliever has no basis for certainty about anything in the future. We, by contrast, have absolute certainty that what God has promised, he will perform. There are many aspects to our hope, including Christ’s return, our resurrection, and our heavenly inheritance, and all are sure because they are founded on God’s promises.
- Without God: αθεοι, literally “atheists.” We might not call them this, since the Ephesians were proud of their temple of Diana, Acts 19:23-28. But they themselves recognized that Paul taught “they be no gods, which are made with hands” (Acts 19:26; compare 1 Cor 8:4). We should be similarly bold in condemning the false gods that people erect to themselves today. Anything that falls short of the infinite personal God of the Bible is no god, and those who follow such concepts are “without God,” atheists, in Paul’s sense. (While he would not recognize idols as legitimate surrogates for the true God, he does credit the Athenians, in their acknowledgment of an “unknown god,” with a glimmer of light, Acts 17:23.)

Relation to “having no hope”: We can have hope in the future because we have a sovereign God in the present who has made sure promises in the past. Cf. Jer 14:8; 17:3, which call the Lord, “the hope of Israel,” cf. Joel 3:16. For a more precise construction, consider Heb 11:1, “faith is the substance of things hoped for.” Faith looks back to God and his promises, and thus provides the “substance” (often translated “confidence”) upon which our hope of future events rests. See Figure 1. Without a living God who can both promise and perform, there can be no faith, and thus no ground for hope.

- In the world: After emphasizing where they were not, he reminds them where they were. The “world” is as in 2:2 and 6:12, the sinful system headed by Satan in its opposition to God.

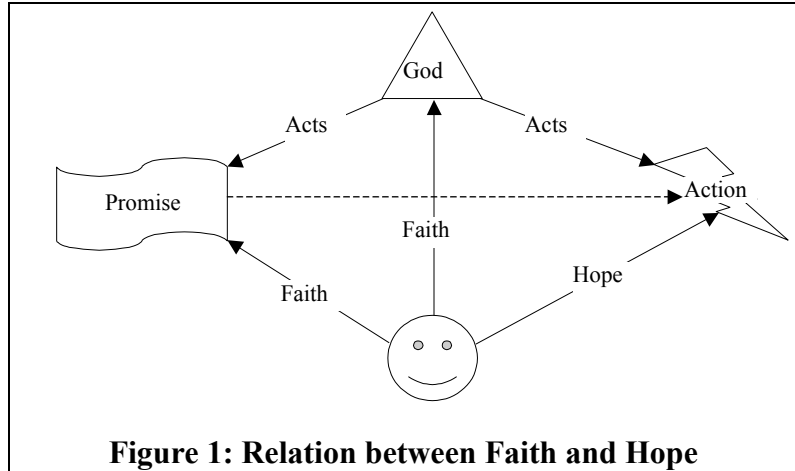


Figure 1: Relation between Faith and Hope

13, *Looking Ahead*

While still in the “you” section, this verse anticipates the change described in the next paragraph.

This verse introduces allusions to Isa 57:19, made explicit in 17. “19 I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to [him that is] far off, and to [him that is] near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him. 20 But the wicked [are] like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. 21 [There is] no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

- This verse echoes “far off” and “near.” The natural Jewish inclination is to see the Jew as “near” and the Gentile as “far off,” in a horizontal sense. However, note from Dan 9:7 that both can apply to Israel as well, vertically.
- The beginning of the next verse picks up “peace.”

14-18, *“We”*: Process of Change

This paragraph is dominated by two finite verbs and their dependencies.

- “He is our peace,” 14-16, describing his work. Christ’s work has addressed both of the problems identified in vv.11-12.
- “He preached ...,” 17-18, describing the OT prophecy of his work. This work was not an afterthought. The Gentiles were not forgotten in the initial plan, nor was the Jewish apostasy unanticipated. All was part of the plan, under God’s sovereign control.

14-16, *Christ’s Work*

We have the main statement, modified first by three participles and then by two purpose statements. Each of these sets emphasizes the two-fold nature of the alienation.

“He is our peace,
 having made both one
 having broken down the middle wall...
 having abolished the law...
 that he might make one new man...
 that he might reconcile both unto God...”

14a, “He is our peace”

In addition to Isa 57:19, this phrase echoes Micah 5:5, which describes the ruler from Bethlehem in the words, “This man shall be the peace.”

- Not only does he preach peace (Isa 57:19)
- and bring peace as the prince of peace (Isa 9:6,7),
- but he IS our peace. It is so intimately bound up with him that he is completely identified with it. Thus when we are in him, we are completely secure and at rest, and cannot be disturbed.

“Peace” here is the Hebrew word שלום, which includes a much broader scope than our English word. Like the English word, it includes

- political peace (between parties who might otherwise strive with one another), and
- inner subjective peace.

But it also includes the idea of welfare, health, and prosperity. The Hebrews asked one another, as we do, “How are you doing?” Their question is literally, “What is your peace?” Cf. Gen 29:6; 37:14.

More generally, it describes a state of completeness or soundness. Jer 13:19 uses the word to indicate that Judah is wholly carried away. They are certainly not in “peace” in the English sense of the word!

Paul expounds the sense of this beautiful expression in Col 2:10, “you are complete in him.” Christ is our peace: our reconciliation with God, our well-being, our completeness. Everything we need is in him, and because we are in him, we lack for nothing.

Three Participles

All three are past tense, stating past actions that led to Christ’s being our peace. He starts with the social problem and progresses to the spiritual one.

14b, “having made both one”

The emphasis here is on the *social* problem. “Both” = Jew and Gentile. 2:11-13 emphasized the separation between Jew and Gentile. Christ has joined them together into one new entity, the church, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gal 3:28). In fact, he summarizes all mankind under three heads: Jew, Gentile, Church (1 Cor 10:32). Unbelieving Jew and unbelieving Gentile may despise one another, but within the church there is no longer a distinction.

14c-15a, “having broken down the middle wall of partition”

Two questions arise here:

1. What is the literal meaning of the language?
2. Of what is it the symbol?

Analysis of these suggests that here we are looking at *both the social and the spiritual* alienations.

Literal Meaning.—The expression is usually taken to refer to the balustrade in the temple that separated the court of the Gentiles from the access to the Holy Place. It was marked with placards that proclaimed, “No man of another nation to enter within the fence and enclosure round the temple. And whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues.” Thus it would emphasize the horizontal separation between Jew and Gentile.

Table 1: Vocabulary for "Wall"

Hebrew	Greek	Meaning
גדר	φραγμος	fence
חומה	τειχος	city wall
קיר	τοιχος	house wall

Paul probably has this in mind. But I doubt it is the only thing in his mind. The inscription (which Paul had seen many times), used a distinctive word (τρυφακτου και περιβολου) for the fence, and whenever Josephus refers to it (War 5.193-194; 6.124; Ant 15.417), this is the term he uses (δρυφακτος), but Paul does not use this term, though “separation” φραγμος could be understood of a fence.¹

Paul’s main term, μεσοτοιχον, is a hapax, but Josephus (Ant. 8.71) uses μεσος τοιχος to refer to the wall between the holy place and the holy of holies in the temple.² If this is Paul’s reference, it would refer to the vertical separation between us and God.³

Perhaps we are to think of both, the φραγμος that separated Jew from Gentile, and the μεσοτοιχον that separated man from God.

Figurative Meaning.—Our Lord has broken down this barrier. But the temple was still standing when Paul wrote. The picture must be understood figuratively. What is the reality that Christ has destroyed?

A clue may be that in Greek, it is smoother to attach the words “in his flesh the enmity” to the end of v.14 (and thus the second participle) than to the beginning of v.15 (and thus the third). This reading would put “enmity” in apposition to “the middle wall of partition” rather than to “the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” Christ has broken down the middle wall of partition, that is, the enmity (Strong 2189), in his flesh. So we should consider this term more closely.

- The first reference is in Gen 3:15. God put this between the serpent’s seed and the woman’s seed, between unregenerate humans (cf. John 8:44) and the coming Messiah.
- Elsewhere he uses it to describe the carnal mind, Rom 8:7, part of the old man, which was certainly “slain” at the cross (Rom 6:6).
- Col 1:21 says it is wicked works that made us God’s enemy.
- James 4:4 says that friendship with the world is enmity with God.

Certainly the “enmity” is not the law, which Paul himself declares to be “holy, and just, and good,” Rom 7:12. This observation confirms our parsing of the text: the enmity is identified with

¹ The Hebrew word for the balustrade in the Mishna is *soreg*, acc. to note on Wars 5.193 (citing Middoth ii.3.a), but I can’t find this word in either BDB or Jastrow.

² War 5.194-196 uses τειχος rather than δρυφακτος to refer to the wall of the temple.

³ But we should remember that the biblical picture is not of a wall between the holy place and the holy of holies, just of a veil.

the wall, not the law. It is the old man, the fallen nature, which came upon our first parents at the time of the curse (Gen 3:15). It separated us both from God and (through our selfishness and bitterness) from one another. This is the “middle wall of separation” to which Paul refers.

He further teaches us that our Lord broke it down “in his flesh.” When he died, our old man died with him (Rom 6:6; cf. 7:6, correctly translated “being dead to that in which we were held”)

15a, “having abolished the law of commandments in ordinances”

Main focus now is on the *spiritual* problem, for it is by the law that we have the knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20), and it is our sin that separated us from God (Isa 59:2).

What happens to the law is καταργεω, Strong 2673, used also of the Old Covenant in 2 Cor 3:14.⁴ The word means “to render ineffective.” How has Christ rendered the OT law ineffective?

1. First, he fulfilled it (Matt 5:17), so that those in him have satisfied its *requirements*.
2. He bore its judgment (Col 2:14), so that those in him have met its *penalty*.
3. We have died in him (Rom 7:1-6), thus being removed from its *jurisdiction*.

With this claim, it is interesting to compare Rom 3:31, which states that we do not do this (same verb) to the law through faith. This question is the tag that leads to Rom 6-8 (cf. 6:1), the section of the book that emphasizes the production of practical righteousness in the life of the believer. The difference between the two emphases seems to be in the subjects of the verb.

- Christ has rendered the law ineffective, thus freeing us from it.
- Yet once our minds are aligned with the mind of Christ by the Spirit of God, we naturally want to obey God’s moral rules, and find the Law “holy, and just, and good,” Rom 7:12.

Two Purpose Clauses

The first of these re-emphasizes the horizontal or social dimension, the second the vertical or spiritual dimension.

15b, “that he might make in himself of twain one new man”

The “twain” here are the Jew and the Gentile. The “one new man” is the church, the body of Christ. “So making peace,” because it is impossible that there could be a lack of peace within a single entity.

Application.—If the horizontal tension between Jew and Gentile could be solved in this way, surely our many other but lesser differences are no match for the unity of the body of Christ.

16, “that he might reconcile both unto God by the cross...”

Here is the vertical, spiritual dimension. Things to note:

⁴ Other verbs that describe what happens to the law are:

- Col 2:14: 1813 εξαλειφω, 142 αιρω;
- Heb 10:9 337 αναρπρω (which is commonly used for “kill” in Acts); this word is used classically to speak of abrogating a law (see Westcott on Heb).

Eph 2b-3 God's Inheritance in the Saints

- We are the ones reconciled. “Reconcile” is to change someone to remove the cause of alienation from another. The old hymn is wrong when it says “my God is reconciled.” He didn’t change; we did.
- The Jew needed this as much as the Gentile!

And how did we change? The next clause, “having slain the enmity,” explains.

- Through the misparsing of vv.14-15, this is sometimes misunderstood to say that Christ slew the law on the cross. But this is contrary to his usage otherwise, which is that *we* have died *to the law*, Rom 7:4,6 (see Greek on 7:6), and also Gal 2:19.
- What has happened is that our old self has died with Christ. With it has disappeared all that was obnoxious to God, and all that should stand between us and fellowship with our fellow creatures.

17-18, *The OT Prophecy*

This twofold work of peacemaking was not an afterthought or a patch on a creation gone awry, but was central to God’s initial plan, revealed already in the OT. Paul quotes the prophecy (17), then expounds it (18).

17, The Quotation

17 is a quotation from Isa 57:19. Set this in its context:

1. Isa 40-66 is preoccupied with the question of peace. Note the repeated refrain in 48:22 and 57:21. 66:24 may be understood as a more vivid statement of the same principle.
2. The primary agent of this peace is the Servant of the Lord, that recurring figure identified initially as Israel (Isa 41:8-9), but later specialized to the promised Messiah (as in ch. 53).
 - Isa 9:6,7, the “prince of peace,” who brings “increase of ... peace”
 - Isa 53:5, he bears “the chastisement of our peace”
 - This is the one identified in 52:7 as the messenger of peace—not a general reference to those who announce peace, but the promised servant.
3. Take the participle as temporal: “when he came, he preached,” and add in quotations around the citation. Then this prophecy is a synopsis of the message he came to bring. We have another example in the citation of Ps 40:6-8 in Heb. 10:5.
4. Note that the speaker in Isaiah is “the LORD,” Jehovah, whom Paul identifies with the Lord Jesus.

What is this message? The Messiah comes to proclaim peace to two different groups: those that are far off (the Gentiles) and those who are near (the Jews). Both need this message of peace.

18, The Explanation

Two things to notice here.

First, in passing, the repeated emphasis on the twofold union: “we both” (Jew and Gentile, social union) “have access to the Father” (spiritual union).

Second, as often in Eph, the trinitarian emphasis:

- “through him” (the Lord Jesus)
- “by one Spirit
- “to the Father”

Through him, his activities described in 14-15. He is able to proclaim this peace because he is the one bringing it. It is one thing for me to tell you what I hope someone else will do; quite another for me to announce my own agenda. If I am credible and reliable, you have much more confidence in the latter.

To the Father.—This is the vertical schism that Christ has healed. Isaiah lamented it (59:1,2), but now we can approach the Father through the finished work of the Son.

Note the contrast between “without GOD” (v.12) and “access to the FATHER” (18). This is an important clue to the role of the third member of the godhead:

By one Spirit.—This phrase probably emphasizes the new covenant, promised to Israel in the prophets but available to all who are in the Lord Jesus.

- Ezek 36:25-28 points out that the gift of the Spirit results from the New Covenant.
- See Rom 8:14-16 on how this Spirit enables us to know that we are God’s children, thus giving us access to “the Father,” not just to God. Cf. also John 3, which connects the Spirit with the “new birth” that makes us God’s children. Recall from our discussion of 1:3 that the notion of God as “Father” is rare in the OT.
- Our Lord at the Last Supper conveyed this covenant on all believers, and when Paul instituted the Supper for the Corinthians, he validated its applicability to Gentile as well as Jew.

The Two Unions.—18 emphasizes a dynamic that is worth noticing. The social union is subordinated to the spiritual. “We both have access to the Father,” and it is that joint access that draws us together. Compare 1 John 1:3: our fellowship is realized as we have fellowship with the Father and his Son. The closer we draw to them, the closer we come to one another. The solution to social alienation is not socialization, but drawing nearer to a common spiritual center.

Contrast this with the dynamic underlying the problem: The Gentiles’ lack of knowledge of “the covenants of promise” resulted from their “alien[ation from] the commonwealth of Israel.” But God has not fixed the problem by bringing them through Israel. Rather, he has brought both Jew and Gentile directly to himself through Christ Jesus.

19-22, “You”: Current Union

The main sentence is v.19, with two contrasting finite verbs. As 11-13 ended with a glance forward, so 19a glances back at what we were, “strangers and foreigners.” These are a recap of 11-12. By way of contrast, 19b gives us two pictures of our new condition, and 20-22 gives a detailed meditation on a third picture. Concentrate on these three pictures. Paul is seeking the right image to emphasize our precious condition. He touches briefly on political and family images before settling on an architectural one.

Political

“Ye are ... fellowcitizens with the saints.” This explicitly addresses the “aliens” problem in v.12. As partakers of the new covenant, we are fully franchised citizens of heaven. He is not just Israel’s God and king, but our God and king as well. In this status, we enjoy God’s *protection*.

Family

“Ye are [members] of the household of God.” Not “fellowcitizens of the household of God”; the noun translated “of the household of God” is nominative, not genitive, and we would today add the word “members.” This is a stronger image than the political one; we can tolerate people in the body politic that we would not want to acknowledge as family members.

Here the contrast is with the image in v.11 of Israel as a closed family, from which those not descended from the patriarchs were excluded. Now what counts is not having Abraham as our Father, but having God as our Father. The new covenant relation that makes God our Father brings us and Israel into the intimacy of this relation, in which we enjoy God’s *love and affection*.

Architecture

Though the grammar marks these clauses as subordinate, the semantics shifts to a new and independent image, that of architecture, with a foundation, a chief corner stone, a temple. Now the emphasis is on God’s constant *presence*, through his indwelling Holy Spirit. Let’s follow Paul as he develops this image. He discusses first the *structure* of the building (20), then its *purpose* (21, 22).

20, Structure

Paul describes the structure of the church “from the ground up.”

Chief Corner Stone

Not “chief (corner stone),” as though there could be many (Peter being one), but “chief-corner stone,” the stone at the main corner which determines the location and orientation of the building. Christ is declared to be this here and in 1 Pet 2:6, which traces his role back to the prophecy in Isa 28:16. (Note that Peter himself declares Christ to be in this position, invalidating the papist claim that Peter is the cornerstone.)

This element in the building, the first one laid, is not to be confused with the “head of the corner,” 1 Pet 2:7, Ps 118:22, Zech 4:7 (cf. 9), the crowning stone that completes the entire edifice. Christ also occupies this position. He is the beginning and the end.

Application: We are gathered together unto Christ (Matt 18:20), not unto a particular theological orientation or a physical building or a charismatic pastor. Most of the difficulties of the church down through the ages can be traced to a focus on something other than the Lord Jesus.

Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets

Eph 2b-3 God's Inheritance in the Saints

The key to this expression is 1 Cor 3:10,11. Jesus Christ, not the apostles and prophets, is the foundation, but they (Paul among them) have laid it. Subjective genitive, “the foundation founded by the apostles and prophets.”

How can mere men be said to have laid the foundation that is Christ? Consider the relation between Christ as

- the cornerstone (establishing the location and orientation of the building) and
- the foundation (establishing its extent).

The historical event of Christ’s coming is the cornerstone of the church. But we have access to this event only through the writings of the apostles and prophets (cf. 3:5; 4:11; both in the NT era). As the Spirit guided them in their teaching and writing, they determined the extent of the structure, selecting some things from the life of Christ and passing over others, and putting in place the authoritative interpretation of his life.

Application: Our unity with one another is to be based on the teaching of the scriptures, the foundation that the apostles and prophets laid in the first century, not pragmatic considerations or the later traditions of men.

Ye are built...

Paul uses three verbs in these verses to describe the action by which we are incorporated into the building:

εποικοδομεω (“built,” 20).—8x in the NT. In Acts 20:32, describes what the word of God can do for us. Jude 20, describes progress in the individual Christian life. 4x in 1 Cor 3:10-14 to describe our work for the Lord. The point is not that we are just added to the foundation, but that in union with the foundation we increase day by day. *Application:* Believers must not grow complacent in their spiritual lives. Salvation is not to a static state, but to a dynamic process as we daily become more like the Lord Jesus.

συναρμολογεω (“fitly framed together,” 21).—only here and 4:16. “Building” here emphasizes the process of construction, not the finished edifice; “all the building that is done.” Αρμολογεω is a term from stoneworking that denotes the entire process by which stones are fitted together (like drums in a column, without mortar, but just by the closeness of the fit). Thus this verb, like εποικοδομεω in 20, emphasizes the process of our growth, this time with special reference to our interfaces with other believers. *Application:* Edification is not a solitary process. It is intended to fit us together with other believers. The Lord promised, “I will build my church,” and our individual spiritual progress is only valuable as it contributes to the growth of the church.

συνοικοδομεω⁵ (“builted together,” 22).—Now the focus moves from process to the final effect, our unification with one another. While 1 Cor 6:19-20 may call an individual’s body a “temple” (see notes), Eph focuses on the assembly rather than the individual.

⁵ In 1 Esd 5:68, the συν- is subjective, referring to the several joint builders. Here it appears to be objective, referring to the things that are built together.

21-22, Purpose

The result of this unification of Jew and Gentile in one church is the production of an edifice that is described in two ways: a temple, and a dwelling place of God. The difference between the two is one of perspective.

21, “An holy temple in the Lord”

The emphasis here is on the outward appearance of the universal church, what it means to those who observe it. In support of this, consider:

- The preoccupation of the ancients with temples. The Ephesians in particular were proud of their temple of Diana (Acts 19:27). The body of believers is to be a *holy* temple, one set apart and distinctive. In particular, the Ephesian believers must conduct themselves in a way that will silence any opposition from their countrymen.
- The phrase “in the Lord.” Robinson’s discussion shows that “in Christ” (e.g., 2:10) is used with reference to our exalted position, while “in the Lord” (e.g., 6:10) focuses on our life here in the world. As the promised Messiah he has brought us into fellowship with God, from whom we were estranged by sin; as our Lord, he is the one whom we obey assiduously.

So the point of 21 is the importance of our unity as a testimony to unbelievers concerning the one whom we serve. Cf. John 17:20-23.

22, “An habitation of God through the Spirit”

By contrast, this expression emphasizes the importance of our unity from God’s perspective. He desires a single, unified dwelling place for his habitation in the person of the Holy Spirit.

Contrast this final phrase, “in the Spirit,” with 2:11, which twice emphasized the fleshly basis of the initial alienation of Jew and Gentile.

Notes

“Hope” in the NT (2:12)

Refs with ‘v’ are to verb (1679); others to the noun (1680).

Idea: “faith” looks backward to a past event or promise that provides the foundation for our assurance; “hope” looks forward to what it is that is promised. “Love” governs our interactions right now.

OT Promises to the Fathers

Acts 26:6 (noun), 7 (verb)

Acts 28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see [you], and to speak with [you]: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

Rom 4:18 (Abraham, that he should be the father of many nations)

Gift of the Messiah

Rom 15:12v,13n (cf. OT references in vv.8-12);

Heb 7:19, promise of an eternal priest after the order of Melchizedek. (Maybe this is 6:18 as well!)

Chronological Distinction

1 Tim 4:10v (cf. 8);

1 Cor 15:19v, hope in this present life is not sufficient.

In this life

Short-term hope

Acts 16:19 (of gain); 27:20 (of salvation from the storm); 1 Cor 9:10 (harvest), 16:7v (to visit the Corinthians); 2 Cor 1:13v; 5:11v; 10:15; 13:6 (acceptance by the Corinthians); 2 Cor 8:5v (manner of the Macedonians' gift); Rom 15:24v (to see the Roman believers); Phil 2:19v, 23v (intent to send Timothy); 1 Tim 3:14v (to visit); Phm 22 (to visit); 2 John 12 (visit); 3 John 14 (visit)

Comfort in tribulation

2 Cor 1:7 (cf. v.4); 2 Cor 1:10v; 1 Tim 4:10v; 1 Tim 5:5v (widow)

Eschatological

Salvation

Col 1:23 "of the gospel"; 1 Thes 5:8; Tit 1:2; 3:7 ("eternal life")

Righteousness

Gal 5:5 (by faith); Eph 1:18; 4:4 (practical)

Return of Christ

1 Tim 1:1; 1 Thes 2:19 (presence of other believers at that time); Tit 2:13; 1 John 3:3 (likeness to Christ at that time); Rom 5:2,4,5 (glory of God, closely linked with resurrection); 2 Cor 3:12; Col 1:27 ("Christ in you, the hope of glory"); 1 Pet 1:13v

Resurrection

Acts 2:26; 23:6; 24:15; 26:6,7; Rom 8:20,24n,25v; 1 Thes 4:13

Heavenly

Col 1:5; 1 Pet 1:3, 21 (cf. v.17); 3:15?

God himself (cf. Jeremiah)

Ambiguous

Rom 12:12 rejoicing in hope

Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. (emphasis on previous promise)

1 Cor 13:13; 1 Thes 1:3 (faith, hope, charity)

1 Cor 13:7v (beareth, believeth, hopeth, endureth all things)

2 Thes 2:16 “everlasting consolation and good hope through faith”

Heb 3:6 “confidence and rejoicing of the hope”; 6:11 “firm assurance of hope”; 10:23 “profession of our faith”

1 Tim 6:17v (trust in God rather than riches)

Heb 11:1v (faith is substance of things hoped for)

1 Pet 3:5v (holy women trusting in God)

Connection of v. 15

15 τὸν νομον τῶν ἐπιτολῶν ἐν δογμασὶν *katargh/sas*,
ἰ/να

τὸυ̅ς̅ du/o kti/sh| e)n au)tw^| ei)s e(/na kaino\n a)/nqrwpon *Check Hollenbach; finite verb can't depend on participle. Yes, he actually expounds this paragraph thus, citing 4:10 and Col 1:18 as precedent for purpose clause attached to “to be.” I think we must understand some sort of figure as active here, semantically similar to metonymy of the effect: Christ IS our peace, and he was MADE our peace in order that....*