"REMEMBER & APPRECIATE"

(Equal Standing in Christ)

Ephesians 2:11-18

3-15-2023

INTRODUCTION:

***Remember your past to appreciate your present standing in Christ!**

I. The Past to be remembered (v. 11-12)
We saved Gentiles were once . . .

A. Pagans separated from God's covenant people (v. 11)

B. Orphans separated from a relationship with Christ (v. 12a)

C. Aliens separated from the blessings of citizenship in Israel (v. 12b)

D. Strangers separated from the covenants of promise (v. 12c)

E. Unbelievers separated from the confidence of eternal life (v. 12d)

F. Lost pilgrims separated from our Creator in this world (v. 12e)

II. The Present to be appreciated (v. 13-18)
We now have . . .

A. Direct Access to the Presence of God (v. 13)

B. Peaceful unity with the People of God

1. Barriers to unity have been removed (v. 13-15)
   a. No more distance (v. 13, 17)

   b. No more dividing wall (v. 14)

   c. No more hostility (v. 15a)

   d. No more restricted ordinances (v. 15b)

2. The price for unity has been remitted (v. 13, 15, 16)

   a. By the blood (v. 13)

   b. In His flesh (v. 15)

   c. By the cross (v. 16)

3. Analogies of unity have been revealed (v. 15-18)

   a. "One new man" (V. 15c)

   b. "One body" (v. 16)

   c. By "one Spirit" (v. 18)

We are:

C. Fellow Citizens in the Family of God (v. 19)

D. Building Blocks upon the Foundation of God (v. 20)

E. A Holy Construction Forming a Temple of God (v. 21)

F. A Dwelling Place for the Spirit of God (v. 22)

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D. _____ upon the _____ of God (v. 20)

E. _____ Forming a _____ of God (v. 21)

F. A _____ for the _____ of God (v. 22)

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INTRODUCTION:

V. 11 - "Wherefore" - looks back; something is coming based upon what was previously said.

Previously God revealed our great salvation as being by grace through faith. Now so as to deflate any pride or Gentile arrogancy regarding our salvation, God calls upon us to remember what we once were.

Paul is building a case for the unity of the Church and Christ's relationship to this singular organism (1:22-23).

***Remember your past to appreciate your present standing in Christ!**

I. The Past to be remembered (v. 11-12)

We saved Gentiles were once . . .

A. Pagans separated from God's covenant people (v. 11)

The Jews because of their distinct, unique practice of circumcising the male child on the 8th day were called "the circumcision" as another identifying marker to distinguish them from the rest of the world.

"Circumcision" is qualified by the phrase "in the flesh made by hands" in order to distinguish this physical operation from God's work of spiritual circumcision of the heart.

B. Orphans separated from a relationship with Christ (v. 12a)

"At that time ye were" - Praise God this is past tense, history.

"Without Christ" - lit. apart from Christ. We had no relationship with him.

- To be without Christ is to be without direction (because He is the way)
- To be without Christ is to be without knowledge (because He is the truth)
- To be without Christ is to be without vitality (because He is the life)
- To be without Christ is to be without forgiveness (because he has the power to forgive sins)
- To be without Christ is to be without refreshment (because He is the living water)
- To be without Christ is to be without sustenance (because He is the bread of life)
- To be without Christ is to be without protection (because He is the Good Shepherd)
- To be without Christ is to be without fruitfulness (because He is the true vine)
- To be without Christ is to be without the Rapture/Resurrection (because He is the resurrection and the life)

C. Aliens separated from the blessings of citizenship in Israel (v. 12b)

D. Strangers separated from the covenants of promise (v. 12c)

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II. The Present to be appreciated (v. 13-18)

"But now" - to contrast the "time past" (v. 11), God now unfolds the blessings we have in Christ (blessings we often take for granted).

"In Christ Jesus" - all spiritual blessings are located "in Christ" (1:3)

"Sometimes" - At some time in the past, formerly

We now have . . .

A. Direct Access to the Presence of God (v. 13)

"Made nigh" - were brought near or close

Near to whom and what? Near to the throne of God. We now have bold access to the throne of God (SEE: Heb. 10:19-22a)

B. Peaceful unity with the People of God

1. Barriers to unity have been removed (v. 13-15)

a. No more distance (v. 13, 17)

Those who were **"afar off"** - Gentiles; them that were **"nigh"** =
Jews

NOTE: Both needed peace with God - even those who were nigh. To be close but to be not in, is to be out is about as good as "afar off." If you miss Heaven by inches you are not better off than one who missed it by miles. You both came short.

b. No more dividing wall (v. 14)

Jesus is our peace; He not only gives peace - He is our peace. Peace with God and peace with others in Christ.

"Both one" - Jew and Gentile

"The middle wall of partition" - an allusion to the wall that separated the court of the Gentiles from the Temple grounds (accessible only to Jews - Acts 21:28-29)_

The Gentiles were all on the outside looking in. They were segregated from many of the privileges the Jews had.

c. No more hostility (v. 15a)

"The enmity" - the hostility that existed between Jew and Gentile

d. No more restricted ordinances (v. 15b)

"Abolished" - nullified; invalidated

"In His Flesh" - Christ literally and physically died for sin

"The Law of commandments contained in ordinances" = the ceremonial (religious, sacrificial) aspect of the Law

2. The price for unity has been remitted (v. 13, 15, 16)

a. By the blood (v. 13)
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3. Analogies of unity have been revealed (v. 15-18)

a. "One new man" (V. 15c)

Gentile and Jewish believers are illustrated by the analogy of a "man" (similar metaphor as the "body"; as a "man" has a head (Christ) and limbs and organs)

"Peace" - no man fights against his own body. If believers would come to grips with out unity with each other, there would be less gossip, less bickering, less jealousy, less fighting and

warring.

b. "One body" (v. 16)

"Reconcile" - to transfer from a certain state to another which is quite different. To turn from hostility to friendship; to restore to favor.

"Enmity" - in this verse, refers to the hostility that came in between God and man.

c. By "one Spirit" (v. 18)

"Him. . . Spirit . . . Father" - The Trinity in one verse!

Through Him - Jesus is the Provider of salvation

By one Spirit - The Spirit is the one who unites us to Christ (I Cor. 12:13)

Unto the Father - The Father is now approachable

"Access - entrance; a way of approach; a way of admission.

(Part 2)

We are:

C. Fellow Citizens in the Family of Christ (v. 19)

"Now therefore" = because of this unity between Jew and Gentile (in Christ) and because of the direct access that Gentiles have through Christ by the Spirit to the Father (v. 18), we are no longer strangers and aliens.

"Strangers" - to be unaware of and unrelated to God and His program

"Foreigners" - lit. to live along side of. There was a time when we were not in the household of God but were outside ("next door"), shut out. The Bible often refers to unbelievers as those that are "without" (lit. on the outside). Just as Gentiles were outside of the commonwealth of Israel (2:12), we were once outside of the family of God.

"Ye are" - not "you will be," but presently you are in God's family (Jn. 5:24 - "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.").

"We know that we have [already] passed from death unto life" (I Jn. 3:14).

"Fellow citizens" = to live in the same city with. Both Jew and Gentile believers share the same Lord, the same faith, the same baptism (4:5). We share one Spirit, one hope (4:4), and have the same Father (4:6).

We will inherit the same heaven, walk the same streets of gold, enter the same pearly gates, and inhabit the same New Jerusalem. We will reign together, sing together, glorify God together, enjoy eternity together. So why can't believers get along together now?

"To dwell above with saints we love, Oh that will be glory,
But to dwell below with saints we know, well, that's another story."

"Our citizenship is in heaven"

"Fellow citizens with the saints" - We are not fellow citizens of this world or with the world, but with the saints (saints meaning "sanctified, set apart, holy ones")

"Household" - family

Because we are of the "household" of God, we should especially do good to those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). "Family" comes first! among human relationships

EX: Song "I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God"

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (I Jn. 3:1)

--We are brothers and sisters. WE have the same Father. We received the same adoption. We inherit the same eternity. Calling each other "brother" is more than a title-- it's a reality.

D. <u>Building Blocks</u> upon the <u>Foundation</u> of God (v. 20)

"[Ye] are built upon" - Every believer is a building block connected to the foundation and ultimately to the cornerstone who is Christ. SEE: I Peter 2:4-7 - Peter says the same thing Paul said.

"Foundation of the apostles and prophets" - This does not mean that the apostles and prophets <u>were</u> the foundation, for <u>only Christ is</u>! (I Cor. 3:11)

Paul and the other Apostles and N.T. prophets <u>laid</u> the foundation (I Cor. 3:10).

This verse disproves apostolic succession. If they laid the foundation, then their office ceased when the foundation was laid! In a building project, the foundation layers leave when the foundation is complete.

These "prophets" were N.T. prophets (Eph. 4:11) who authoritatively spoke God's Word.

"Jesus Christ <u>himself</u>" - Emphatically, He and no other is the chief cornerstone.

"Cornerstone" - the key stone of a building from which all the other stones extend out and gain their straightness.

"The cornerstone was the major structural part of ancient buildings. It had to be strong enough to support what was built on it, and it had to be precisely laid, because every other part of the structure was oriented to it" (MacArthur, p. 82).

The cornerstone not only lines up the stones, giving them direction, but it also binds them together, giving unity.

"Chief cornerstone" = it is upon this Rock that Jesus is building His Church (Mt. 16:18).

In Rev. 20:2, the New Jerusalem is likened unto a "Bride." The Church is Christ's bride; therefore it could be that a major aspect of that new city is believers who will make it up.

READ Rev. 21:9-11 - The "Bride" is described as a "city"

E. A Holy Construction Forming a Temple of God (v. 21)

"In whom" - It is only by being "in Jesus Christ" (connected to the chief cornerstone) that we become part of the temple of God.

"All the building" - singular - building referring to the one true Church which will one day assemble in Heaven.

Whenever studying a context describing the "Church" a Bible interpreter must discern whether God is referring to a local church or the ultimate collective church.

A local Body is a visible manifestation of the real, greater, spiritual Body of true believers. When Paul said, "We are all baptized into one Body" (I Cor. 12:13), he was not a member of the Corinthian church.

"Fitly framed" - passive voice. It is God who fits us into a temple. We do not fit ourselves.

Groweth" - numerical growth occurs every time a person believes the Gospel.

A holy temple" - the corporate gathering of believers will comprise a holy, pure, set apart, undefiled temple. May we as individuals be this way now!

"Temple - just as we as individuals are temples (plural) of God (I Cor. 6:19ff), so we collectively form a temple in which God has chosen to dwell.

"Temple" = naos - the inner sanctuary or holy of holies inside of the holy place.

F. A Dwelling Place for the Spirit of God (v. 22)

"Habitation" - a place of dwelling; a place to live in; an abode.
a permanent home

"an habitation of God through the Spirit" - proof of the deity of the Spirit.

God dwells in us through (in the person of) the Holy Spirit.

It is an amazing reality that God lives in me! Such truth, if reflected upon daily, will keep us from sin.

Since the true God resides in our lives, it is vital that we allow no idols to also remain in our lives.