

## "The Church: The Holy Temple of God"

Eph. 2:19-22

There are many different names or metaphors for the church used in Scripture—body, bride, family, fellowship, army, priesthood, golden lampstand, one loaf, vineyard, field, city, elect, sheepfold, and a household and Temple.

In Chapter 2:18-22 Paul talks of Jews and Gentiles together as the household of God or **temple**.

The church today is a living, growing **temple** and when it is completed, Christ will return and take the temple to glory. God dwelt in the Jewish tabernacle and earthly temples, in the temple of Christ's body, and today in the individual believer and the church (Eph. 2:21-22). What a privilege to be the very habitation of God through the Spirit!

**TT:** I want to share three key components that are in the beginning of NT church:

### **I. The Foundation [2: 20a].**

The foundation is not the apostles and prophets, but the divine revelation they taught. They laid the foundation in written form called the New Testament that you have in your hands.

**1 Cor. 3:10-11**, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

**Apostles** were foundational to the early church in that they established the teaching of the church. They authenticated their office and message by signs and wonders (2 Cor. 12:12).

We do not have **the twelve** with us today or any subsequent apostles. They don't meet the four criteria of the twelve! Plus, the foundation is not the building. A building has only one foundation.

**Prophets** here speaks of NT prophets in the early church that were part of laying the foundation with the apostles.

They are listed with the apostles. They spoke the word of God to the church before the NT canon was complete.

The fact that they are identified with the foundation reveals they were limited to a certain foundational period. They are last mentioned as active in 1 Cor. 14:32 in A.D. 55. They are not mentioned in the following 19 letters up to A.D. 96.

**Eph. 4:11-12**, And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

**1 Cor. 12:28**, And God hath set some in the church, **first** apostles, **secondarily** prophets, **thirdly teachers**, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

The apostles and prophets gave way to evangelists and pastor- teachers who teach and edify the church for ministry. Deacons came later as servants (Acts 6).

**I. The Foundation [2: 20a].**

**II. The Chief [first] Corner-Stone [2:20b].**

The corner stone was the strongest stone in the building that had to be precisely laid because it supported and squared the whole building.

It was the standard for the whole building. It was the support, the centerpiece, and unity of the whole building.

**Isaiah 28:16**, “Therefore says the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tied stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believes shall not make haste.”

**Acts 4:11-12** Peter said he was this corner stone they rejected and there is salvation in no other.

The church is not built on a social programs, busy activity, or material prosperity, but Jesus.

**I Peter 2:6**, Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

**I. The Foundation [2: 20a].**

**II. The Chief [first] Corner-Stone [2:20b].**

**III. The Stones [2:21-22].**

*"In whom"* [v.21a]. Chief means "first" and all other stones are laid on Him (v. 21). We enter the temple by confession of Faith in Jesus.

*"Fitly framed together"* [v. 21b] means every part is carefully joined to fit snug, strong, and right where God wants to place it. He gifted you and placed you right where he wants you to help built up the temple. So every stone is important and needful.

**1 Peter 2:5**, “You as living stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

**Eph. 4:16**, From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

*"Growth unto an holy temple in the Lord"* [v. 21c] means that living stones continue to be added upon the chief cornerstone and it will not be complete till the last stone is added an in its place. The temple is continually growing.

There is a reason the temple was laid out like it was, and there is a reason the church is designed as it is.

*"In whom"* [v. 22a] means one must come by the chief corner stone and his teachings. We go out with the gospel to bring the stones in to add to the church.

*"You also are built together for a habitation of God"* [v. 22b]. This carries the idea of a permanent home. God in the Spirit makes His earthly sanctuary in the church- the church of all ages, the local Church, and the believer's body.

We sing the song “Lord make me a living sanctuary,” what's wrong with that title? You are a living sanctuary!

*Through the Spirit* [v. 22c] It is the Holy Spirit who draws, imparts life, seals, gifts the believer, and places them in Christ and in the church, the temple of God as He pleases.

So we see the foundational teaching, the chief cornerstone that lives in us, and the living stones that are added.

Many so-called churches today have got off track with the NT teaching, left the chief corner stone out of the church, and the stones have become tares.