

The believer's salvation is more than an individual experience (Eph 2:1–10), it includes being joined together with all other believers (2:11–22). In Christ God has removed that which separated Gentiles from all the promises made to Israel, so that both Jewish believers and Gentile believers could be made into one new man, the church, and become a holy temple to the Lord in which God Himself dwells. God has joined together both Gentile and Jewish believers to be one people for Himself.

I. *In Christ God has given Gentile believers the same status that Jewish believers have as the people of God (2:19–20).*

1. Thought previously foreigners and aliens they are now fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household.
 - a. In the OT the “foreigner” was viewed as the spiritual and ethnic opposite of Israel. The “alien” was the non-Jew living among them, who had no rights and was dependent upon the host hospitality. (See 2:12; cf Acts 7:6, 29.) God's promises had been to the nation of Israel (cf. Romans 9:4; Matthew 15:22-28), though individually each still needed to be a true Jew of the heart.
 - b. Gentiles, who had been “outsiders,” were now, as believers in Christ, citizens of the heavenly commonwealth (see Philippians 3:20) with the same community privileges and responsibilities as all others who had been set apart to God by the work of Christ. They had a common family relationship, with the expected commitment and accountability to family.
- If you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior, there is a clear distinction between you and non-believers around you. There is a closer relationship to other believers than with fellow countrymen or even your own flesh and blood.
2. The people of God in this present age are joined together into one new man (2:16), which is the church (2:20).
 - a. The church is built upon the apostles (authorized emissaries) of Jesus Christ and the N.T. prophets, as the first believers and the spokesmen for Christ, revealing the mystery of Christ and the church (3:5; 4:11). The church as one new man, the body of Christ, includes Jewish and Gentile believers alike without distinction.
 - b. Jesus Christ, as the cornerstone of this new ‘house’, is the crucial element by which all else is aligned (cf. Isaiah 28:16 “a cornerstone and stone of testing;” 1 Peter 2:6). As thoroughly established in chapter 1, the work of salvation from start to finish is in Christ alone.

→ No matter what our earthly ethnic differences, the believer has been moved from being an outsider with God to being an “insider”. You, as a believer, are now merely a resident alien in this world, and have been joined instead to other believers as a heavenly community with all its obligations and privileges.

II. *In Christ God is making both Gentile and Jewish believers into His holy dwelling place (2:21–22).*

1. The term “built upon” (v.20) further advances the figure from citizenship and household to a building.
 - a. “Building” (NIV) translates a word meaning either the process of building or the final structure. The former, which is most frequent, fits best here as the structure is “growing”, that is, it is still being built. This structure is first called a holy temple in the Lord (v.21): the inner place of the temple (not the general complex) in which God made His presence known, which now happens in the church by being united with the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:25).
 - b. This new structure includes as well the Gentile believers of Ephesus (v.22), who are also made part of this “dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”
2. The theme of unity in “fellow-citizen” (v.19) is advanced in “being fit together” (v.21) and “being built together” (v.22).
 - a. The phrase ““being fit together” comes from construction terminology in which stones were cut and fit together so precisely that mortar was not needed. So also believers are exactly fitted together into the church.
 - b. The word “being built together” (v.22) further emphasizes unity with a special consideration of the Gentile readers. They, too, are part of this building. No true believer in this age is excluded from being part of the body of Christ, the dwelling place of God.
3. The divine quality of the building—“household of God” (v.19) and “cornerstone being Christ Jesus”—is advanced and emphasized by “a holy temple in the Lord” (v.21) and “a dwelling place of God by the Spirit” (v.22). This “one new man” (v.16) is set apart to God by virtue of being in Christ and grows by being in Christ (cf. 4:15–16), in which body God also dwells by His Spirit.

→ Be careful how you treat the church and how you treat other believers as those indwelt by God. Remember that you are set apart from the world to God for His use.

In Christ the believer's relationships have changed: to God, to the world, and to other believers. The believer lives as a pilgrim, passing through this world and heading to eternity with Christ. But it is not a solitary journey. God has joined believers together and made them His dwelling place. We head toward our heavenly home together, as God's own people.