

Notes: *God's Dwelling Place* (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Intro: Paul pictures church members as being citizens in God's kingdom, children in God's household, blocks in God's temple. How we need Paul's grand perspective lest our worship and work become something which is only formal, routine, or according to personal preference.

#1: We are citizens of God's kingdom (19a). In the 1st C. Roman citizenship was an immense privilege (Acts 22:28)! But Paul, writing when the Rom. Emp. was at the zenith of its glory and with no signs of its eventual fall sees the immensely greater glory of God's kingdom. His kingdom cannot be identified with a political or church government. God's kingdom is composed of individuals whom he has liberated from the kingdom of Satan and darkness, and in whom he has established his rule (2:1ff.). By his atoning sacrifice for sins and victorious resurrection from the grave, Christ shattered the powers of sin, Satan, and death (Eph. 1:21-23). This is the One whom Isaiah taught Israel to look for as "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). By his appearing, the old covenant national theocracy has been replaced by a new covenant international community. In Christ's kingdom believing Jew and Gentile are citizens on equal terms. Christ's resurrection has inaugurated this kingdom and his return will consummate it. Our love is imperfect now. It will be perfect then. The church looks for its coming King saying "Come Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20). How must we live? Our Royal Rights. We were strangers and aliens to God's kingdom. Sons of disobedience. Like resident aliens who are out of sync with the foreign culture in which they are living we felt out of step with God's K. We are created for worship but we didn't know how to worship the Lord. Longed for truth but found God's Word strange and offensive. Needed God in our lives but found prayer difficult and unpleasant. But God delights in choosing and making them citizens. He applied the merits and power of Christ's atoning death and victorious resurrection to us. He gave us the minds and hearts of God's subjects. We are not naturalized citizens in God's K. but supernaturalized citizens. Our citizenship frees us from anxiety because we know the One who is Lord of heaven and earth. We have the Good Shepherd, the Lord, to rule and guide us. He has promised to support us in all our temptations and sufferings. At God's right hand he pours out effectual prayers for us (Lk 22:31ff.). He restrains and overcomes all our enemies. Even our own deaths will be overruled by eternal life (1 Cor. 15:25). Let us access his throne of grace daily in worship, his Word, and prayer (Heb 4:16). Our Royal Responsibilities. The Spirit has given us a new allegiance—removing our hearts of stone and replacing them with hearts of flesh. The King has inscribed his laws on our new hearts (Ez. 36:26ff.). This insight is important to American believers who are long on pragmatism but short on principle! Our first love must be for our King!

#2: We are children in God's household (19b). God delights to make citizens out of former rebels and children out of former orphans. We were alienated from God's household. But God predestined us to adoption as sons (1:5). He sent his own Son to be born of woman as our representative. On the cross, God's Son received the condemnation our disobedience deserves so that we might receive the Father's love his obedience deserved. Think of it! In Paul's day adoption was of young adult males of good character to become heirs of the childless rich but the gospel proclaims God's gracious adoption of persons of bad character to become "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17). This adoptive privilege is available to all who are far and near through faith in Jesus (Joh 1:12). Our Family Rights. God puts his name on us. In Christ he has given himself to us as our God and Father (2 Cor. 6:18). He has poured his Spirit

out in our hearts enabling us to approach God as Jesus did saying “Abba Father” (Gal 4:6). He will share with us all that is Christ’s now (Rom 8:38-39). Our Family Responsibilities. Honor one another as brothers and sisters. But must also imitate your Father (5:1). God’s intent is to conform us to the image of our “Elder Brother.” Packer on our trials: “In this world, royal children have to undergo extra training and discipline which other children escape, in order to fit them for their high destiny. It is the same with the children of the King of kings.”

#3: We are stones in God’s temple. God’s temple is no longer localized in Jerusalem but present wherever God’s people gather in Jesus’ name. God’s Foundation. “apostles and prophets”. The Twelve and a couple others perhaps (James, etc.) plus prophets (small group of inspired teachers with the inspired apostles; cf. 3:5; 4:11). The church, if it is to be apostolic, must be founded on the NT Scriptures. God’s Cornerstone. The stone with which the rest of the building was lined up so that it was true. Remove it and all would collapse. Members must be united to Christ and in communion with him otherwise the church’s spiritual life will collapse. God’s Stones. “Joined and built together” we are the dwelling place of God. The Temple of Diana in Ephesus was one of the great wonders of the ancient world. Believers indwelt by God are the First Wonder of the New World.