

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes September 26, 2007

Ephesians 2: 11-22

Ephesians, chapter 2

- 11: Therefore,
remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh,
called the uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision,
which is made in the flesh by hands --
- 12: remember that you were at that time separated from Christ,
alienated from the commonwealth of Israel,
and strangers to the covenants of promise,
having no hope and without God in the world.
- 13: But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ.
- 14: For he is our peace,
who has made us both one,
and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility,
- 15: by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances,
that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two,
so making peace,
- 16: and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross,
thereby bringing the hostility to an end.
- 17: And he came and preached
peace to you who were far off
and peace to those who were near;
- 18: for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.
- 19: So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners,
but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
- 20: built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
- 21: in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;
- 22: in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Introduction:

- There is a very common misunderstanding, which to a certain extent could be called a heresy, running rampant amongst Christians today. Even you listening might be a victim of this misunderstanding. Those encouraging this may not intend to do so; they may not even realize they are doing so; though there are many who truly believe this heresy and promote it, from pulpits, television, radio, and in print. The danger of this heresy is that it is a subtle truncation of the full Gospel message: what this heresy teaches is true; it is what it leaves out or ignores or even denies that is the problem. This is part of what we will discuss today on **Deep In Scripture**.

Discussion:

- Welcome....website ... Phone numbers ... special...
- In our study of Ephesians, we have been approaching this epistle from the assumption that it was very likely written to be read as a homily in the weekly liturgy, written by St. Paul while in prison in chains, to the newly baptized Gentile believers in Ephesus.

- Chapter 1 consists a greeting and then two long sentences of praise to God for what He has done by grace in the lives of these newly baptized Gentile believers.
- Chapter 2 is a continuation of St. Paul's thoughts, beginning with 1:13-14, and this context is very important to understanding the meaning of Ch. 2:

*"In him you also, who have **heard** the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and **have believed** in him, were **sealed** with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."*

- In Chapter 2, St. Paul details the changes that have truly happened in their lives as a result of their having heard, believed, and been sealed in the Holy Spirit [baptism].
- Regardless of whether they "feel" any different, or even whether they are fully acting upon these changes, they are different not "in Christ." (cf. 22 Cor 5:17-19)

16: From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer.

17: Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.

18: All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;

19: that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

We looked at 2:1-10 under the question: "Are you dead or alive?" & under three headings:

- (1) Before "hearing...believing...and being anointed" (baptized): dead in sin (2:1-3);
- (2) After, they were "made alive" (2:1, 4-7);
- (3) How did this happen? Grace (2:8-10).

»» **This refers to the healing of our vertical separation from God due to sin.**

»» **But there is another important dimension of separation that is healed:**

- This refers to the healing of their horizontal relationships "in the flesh".
- The Great Commandments as expressed by Jesus...love God...love neighbor...are enabled, as never before, by grace through our "hearing...believing...anointing through baptism."
- "Salvation" is not only reconciliation with God...but to each other.
- 1 John 2:9-1, indicates that this became a continuing problem.

9: He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still.

10: He who loves his brother abides in the light, and in it there is no cause for stumbling.

11: But he who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

In 2:11-22, St. Paul addresses this other dimensional change: the horizontal dimension.

1. What were they before "hearing...believing...and being anointed" (baptized)? (2:11-13)

- Therefore remember that at one time you **Gentiles in the flesh**,
 - called **the uncircumcision** by what is called the circumcision,
 - which is made in the flesh by hands --
- remember that **you were at that time separated from Christ**,
 - **alienated from the commonwealth of Israel**,
 - and **strangers to the covenants of promise**,
 - **having no hope and without God in the world.**

»» **What about us today?**

- Many of us were not ever where they were, because we were baptized as children;
- However, many of us were there, because we were brought up in families without faith and separate from the People of God;
- Regardless, many of us, because of our ancestry, were apart from Judaism;
- And many of us have lived as if our baptism were irrelevant;
- And many of us have lived as if our baptism was magic!

2. Afterward, what are they? (2:13-18);

(13) "...you who once were far off **have been brought near...**"

(14) "...who has **made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility...**"

(15) "...**one new man in place of the two, so making peace...**"

(16) "...**might reconcile us both to God in one body** through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end."

(18) "...for **through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**" [The TRINITY!]

»» **What about us today?** [This is true for every baptized believer.]

3. How did this happen? (2:13-22) "In Christ"

(13) But now **in Christ Jesus** you who once were far off have been brought near **in the blood of Christ.**

(14) For **he** is our peace,
who has made us both one,
and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility,

(15) **by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances,**
that **he might create in himself** one new man in place of the two,
so making peace,

(16) and [**he**] might reconcile us both to God in one body **through the cross,**
thereby bringing the hostility to an end.

(17) **And he came and preached**
peace to you who were far off
and peace to those who were near;

(18) for **through him** we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

»» **What about us today?**

John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

4. So what are they [we] now? (2:19-22)

»» **St. Paul uses three metaphors to describe their new existence with God & each other in the Church:**

a. They are citizens in the household of God

19: So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners,
but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

b. They are stones in the building of the Church

20: built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
21: in whom the whole structure is joined together

c. They are living stones in the Temple of God

and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;
22: in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

»» **What about us today?**

Here in lies the modern misunderstanding or heresy: "Jesus & me"

- Salvation by grace through faith, sealed in baptism,
- Is NOT just in the vertical dimension;
- And NOT just reconciliation in love in the horizontal dimension;
- But we become united with Christ and in Christ in the Body of Christ, the Church.