



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Divine Purpose

TRANSCRIPT

The Nature of the Present Age (5): The Viewpoint of Paul – II

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father we come to Thee in the name of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. And we give Thee thanks for the Scriptures and the way in which they unfold for us the person and work of Christ. We thank Thee too for the way in which they give us insight and to the plans and the purposes that Thou hast in marvelous and infinite wisdom devised for this entire creation. We thank Thee for the way in which the Holy Spirit has brought home to our hearts the nature of our sin, the nature of us as human beings, and the nature of our sin and the facts of the redemption that the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished for sinners.

We thank Thee particularly, Lord, for the fact that Thou hast brought us to know him whom to is life eternal. And we give Thee praise and thanks for the forgiveness of sins. We give Thee thanks for the gift of a righteousness that is acceptable to Thee. We thank Thee also for the assurance of the eternal nature of the life and status that Thou hast given to us. Enable us Lord to effectively represent Thee in our day. May by Thy grace we be fruitful as we seek to give testimony and witness to that which Thou hast in grace done for us. We pray for each one in this auditorium. We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon them. May the things that we think about tonight be helpful in building us up in

our faith and encouraging us and motivating us in service for Thee. We commit the hour to Thee now.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] In our studies of the covenants and the dispensations in the light of the purposes of the ages, we have come to, in recent times together, to study the nature of the present age. And we first spent some time on the viewpoint of James, and we looked specifically at the quotation from Amos 9, and Acts chapter 15. In fact, we looked at it more than once because the first time we looked at it I'm afraid I confused a number of people in the audience and we went back over it again. And the next time I was lucid and clear and everybody understood it perfectly. And then in our last study, we began to study Paul's viewpoint as represented in Romans chapter 11. We didn't spend nearly as much time on Romans chapter 11, as probably we should have, but since in recent days I had given seven messages over KRLD on Romans 11, and since also we had looked at this in some other contexts in this series, I thought it was profitable for us to just spend the one time, which we spent last week, on Romans 11. I do think that is probably the most significant chapter in all of Paul's writings with reference to this question, the nature of the present age. But we do have a lengthy passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians that contributes a great deal to this. And so tonight we are going to be looking at Ephesians chapter 2, verse 11 through verse 22. And then next week, the Lord willing, we'll be looking at Ephesians chapter 3, verse 1 through verse 13, and both of these passages, it's really, of course, one lengthy passage. I have a great deal to say about the question of Paul's attitude and viewpoint toward the present age. So let me read verse 11 through verse 22 and then we'll launch into a discussion of this particular passage and we'll try to follow the outline that I have given you to have before you as we study. In verse 11, the apostle writes,

“The Nature of the Present Age: The Viewpoint of Paul, part II” by S. Lewis Johnson
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“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands.”

Incidentally, you can see that from the way the apostle words this that he understand that there is a sense of circumcision that touches not simply the flesh but the heart. And he’s thinking, of course, about all of the passages in the Old Testament that make reference to that both in the Mosaic law as well as in books like the Book of Jeremiah. So he speaks about the circumcision in the flesh made by hands because there is one in the heart made by the Spirit.

Then, “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.”

You’ll notice in the Authorized Version those words “between us” are added but probably do give the sense of the original text.

“Having abolished.”

Now, that word is a word that means to bring to naught or to the no.

“Having annulled or abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man,

so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”

Now, notice that there are two occurrences of the term “enmity” and probably if you study this carefully you will see that there is a slight difference of force in these two words in this context; that’s something that one must be careful about because ordinarily authors use words in the same context in the same sense. The reason for that is a very simply hermeneutical one. If a person in the same context uses a word in a difference sense, then that tends to confusion unless there’s some clear reason why and a reason that’s available to the person who is either listening or reading. So rules of hermeneutics tend to say, specifically, that words that are used in the same context should be given the same meaning unless there are reasons to think otherwise.

In this case, there is reason to think that the term “enmity” is used in two senses; in one case the enmity that exists between the Gentiles and Jews because of the law of Moses, and in the other case the enmity that exist between Jews and Gentiles and the law of God simply because we are sinners. So if you bear those two in mind, you’ll be able to tell which of these passages has that particular sense for enmity.

In verse 17, we read.

“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints.”

Now, you can see that he’s using the terms saints in the sense of Old Testament believers.

“Fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

So the nature of the present age, the viewpoint of Paul, modern use of the term alienation, and you can see that that's one of the important terms here in this passage. It comes from Ludwig Feuerbach. Ludwig Feuerbach was a Barvarian theologian philosopher and Karl Marx was indebted to him for the use of the idea of alienation also. It is come to be attached to those who are disillusioned with the system with the established order of things. You even hear people speaking about alienation with our technocratic age. So it's a kind of term that has become a very modern term but it goes back to Feuerbach and Feuerbach's philosophy. The answer for such people who appeal to that kind of alienation is either reform, revolution, or in those that are not intellectual and not as anxious to change society or feel they don't have the ability to do so, it leads to dropping out of society, which all of which leads ultimately to an infinity to Socialism and sometimes to Communism.

Well, Paul, as you can see from the passage, we've read has something much better, and what he has which is much better is the new man. He refers to this new man in verse 15. He says, “To make in himself or to create in himself one new man, so making peace.” In other words, Paul's answer for the problem of alienation is the new, I think, we can call this the new humanity, the new man in that sense. It's a reference to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and that new humanity or that new man is entered and there one finds reconciliation without class struggle, which is to my mind, a great benefit but Ephesians chapter 2 in verse 15, sets forth the fact that there is today one new man.

Someone has said, incidentally, with reference to the Epistle to the Ephesians, one of the contemporary commentators, that Ephesians reads very much like a sermon on the

eternal purpose of God. Well, we know that's one of the things that Ephesians has a lot to say about because in verse 11 in chapter 3, the apostle mentions the eternal purpose of God as he comes to the climax of the doctrinal section. Well, if this is something like a sermon on the eternal purpose of God, then as we read through it, it becomes quite evident that the apostle does give us some significant insight on the relationship of Gentile and Jew in the church of Jesus Christ.

Now, we've been thinking about this in the light of Acts chapter 15, in fact, Acts chapter 10, as well. Acts chapter 15, Romans chapter 11, and so now we're adding another chapter to our studies. We have, I think, noted, at least I have noted I hope you've been able to follow along, that the stages in the unfolding of the matter of the present age within the eternal purpose of God in the New Testament are three fold. First of all, we learned as we study the ministry of the Apostle Peter in Cornelius' house that Gentiles may be saved; that's evident from what happened in Acts chapter 10. Then in Acts chapter 15, we learned that Gentiles may be saved as Gentiles and, in fact, the present day is said by James to be a day of selective Gentile salvation. Not of all the Gentiles, but today is a day in which God is visiting Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name. And James seems to find that particular fact in Old Testament teaching and I think personally that he's correct. I think, one can also see from Acts chapter 13, that they Apostle Paul believed that present day Gentile salvation has been anticipated by the Old Testament record.

Now, the third stage, first stage Gentiles may be saved. Second, they may be saved as Gentiles. That is they don't have to come under the Mosaic Law again. Thirdly, the Gentiles when they are saved share equally with the saved of Israel in covenantal blessing. Now, that's an important point and that's the point that the apostle will put particular stress in Ephesians chapter 2, and Ephesians chapter 3. So if we can remember those stages: Gentiles may be saved, they may be saved as Gentiles, and third when they are saved they share in the covenantal blessings of the nation Israel. That is, the

covenantal blessings of the saved of the nation Israel because obviously the unsaved of the nation Israel know the covenant was made with the nation they do not share in it, as Paul says, “Not all who are of Israel are Israel.”

Now, as we look at this particular passage, it's always helpful, to my mind, it's always necessary, absolutely necessary, if you are studying one passage out of a book to be sure that you understand the connection. Well, the connection, fortunately, in the Epistle to the Ephesians in these Ephesians in these opening chapters is quite easy to find and you don't have to know any Greek to be able to find the connection. Notice the way that verse 11, begins, “Wherefore remember.”

Now, you know you often hear Bible teachers say whenever you see a “therefore” you want to be sure and find out what it's there for. Well, “wherefore” is the same kind of thing expect that “wherefore” this particular inferential particle that is used in this context is even slightly stronger than the inferential particle *oun*. So “wherefore” we do look in the preceding context very carefully for something which the following context may be related.

Well, Paul has been defending the calling of the church. In fact, he does that in the entire three chapters. That's why chapter 4, verse 1, begins, “I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that you will walk worthy of the calling wherewith you are called.” So the calling has been set forth in the first three chapters, and the last chapters are exhortations from the apostle that we walk worthily of the calling to which we had been called. So as we look back at chapters 1, 2, and 3, we can say Paul has been defending the church and its calling. He is discussed in chapter 2, in the opening seven verses, the church is calling individually. He has talked about personal salvation. He reached the statement, he made the statement in verse 4, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he

might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” And someone might have asked a question at this point, “Well Paul you haven’t really explained to us the nature of grace.” So verses 8, 9, and 10, are verses in which the apostle talks about grace. It’s a kind of an explanatory argumentative parentheses not a true parentheses in the sense that it doesn’t have to do with what has preceded, but it’s an explanatory section in which Paul explains more fully just what grace is, the grace that he’s talking about. So he says in verse 8 and 9.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Now, in a sense, that is a passage in which he has stressed the grace that is individually manifested and exercised by God toward us. Now, the grace of which he talks is marvelous grace. I, whenever I teach this particular passage, I think of the words that J.H. Jolly spoke on grace. He said, “Grace is holy love on the move,” and he then he said, “Grace is God is unmerited undeserved going out towards the children of men so that he might win them into the glory and brightness of his own likeness.” Well, I like that brief definition of holy love on the move.

Now, that’s a kind of rhetorical description of what grace is and Paul has outlined the details of it here. Now, when he says, “Wherefore remember,” in verse 11, we shouldn’t think that the connection is with verse 8, 9, and 10, but rather with verse 1 through 7. In fact, if you were drawing it on the board as a diagram I would draw something like a rectangle, and then I would put verse 1 through 7, and put the comment and then I would draw another little square with 8, 9, and 10, and label an explanation or argumentative explanation and then with the next section another rectangular section 11

through 22, and I've drawn an arrow out from that section all the way up to 1 through 7, rather than verse 8 through 10. Ordinarily, passages relate to the immediately preceding context, but when you have a passage in which the author argumentatively explains something that he referred to in the context, it's not surprising that then in this next section he should go back to what he's talking about in the previous section discussing the new calling individually. But now in verse 11 through verse 22, he will discuss the new calling collectively. So you can see that the context moves from the discussion of how we are individually saved and the manifestation of God's grace to the relationship that exists between Jews or Israel and the Gentiles and one another and the relation between Israel and the Gentiles and God. So here we have then the discussion of our calling collectively, “Wherefore, remember that ye being in time past Gentiles.”

Now, we are concerned in our study only in Paul's viewpoint of the present age. So I'll so forego a complete exposition of the passage we couldn't do it in thirty-five minutes anyway. So we'll lay stress on the ways in which this passage contributes to helping us to understand what is Paul's view of the present age. The first thing that he speaks about is the alienation of the Gentiles. Remember that you in time past were Gentiles in the flesh who are called uncircumcised by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands.

Now, when he says in time past he's referring to everything what we would say during the age of B.C. That is before Christ has come, offering an atoning sacrifice. That's what he means remember that “ye” being in time past. In a moment he will say but now. So he's talking about the age before the coming of Christ and what's he's done and then he'll talk about the age afterwards. He asks them to remember what they were. It's never bad to shed a tear or two of remembrance over what God has done for us. John Newton's great text was “thou shall remember that thou was a bondman in the land of Egypt and the Lord thy God redeemed me.” Well, Paul calls upon them to exercise something of the same kind of remembrance. Remember what you were. There's

nothing wrong in shedding a tear over what you were and what God has done for you because listen if you don't understand it, if you don't think it was grace that God saved you we who know you do. We know of that. We know that it was grace that saved you and if you don't think of your own salvation, I'm sure you'll have plenty of reason to give thanks to God and maybe in private and sometimes even in public shed a tear or two over the magnificent manifestation of the grace of God to your sinful soul.

Now, Paul says then, “recollect what you were.” Now he will talk about the disabilities of the Gentiles and I'm going to center attention on five of them. I think they're plainly set forth here. He says first of all, “You are separated from Christ that at that time ye were without Christ separated from Christ.” Now, the Jewish privileges are not set forth here. The Jewish privileges if you want to know what they are you can turn to the Epistle of the Romans. In fact, I think, it might help us to turn there and just think about them to be sure you have them in mind. Romans chapter 9 in verse 1 through 5, reads this way. While you're finding Romans I will begin to read. Paul says, “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites.”

Now, notice what Paul says about them, “To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.” Notice the plural for Paul to use the singular in the passage that we are talking about tonight. “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Now, those are the benefits and blessings that belong to Israel by covenantal bestowing. On the other hand, the Gentiles were excluded. Paul says, “You were without Christ.” You were separated from him. No covenantal sign in the flesh circumcision characterized Gentiles the Jews not only had the covenants. They had the covenantal sign and so their males were circumcised on the

eight day as a sign that they belonged to the covenant. They were in covenantal relationship to the Lord God.

Gentiles, in fact, they were without the covenantal sign and they came to be known as the uncircumcision, just as Israel was known as the circumcision, a figure of speech for referring to them. That’s the first of the disabilities of the Gentiles. Paul continues by saying, “Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel alienated from the citizenship of Israel.” Citizenship in the people of God that the Gentiles did not have. “Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel.”

Thirdly, strangers from the covenants of promise, the foundation promised to Abraham probably is referred to by the expression the promise or of promise from the covenants of promise. In chapter 3 in verse 6, when he will say that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. He uses again the singular and so almost all the students of the Epistle to the Ephesians trace this back to the Abrahamic covenant promise expanded by, of course, the Davidic covenant and the New covenant but, ultimately, centered in the Lord Jesus Christ as the covenantal head of the people of God, strangers to the covenants of promise.

Now, I do think that this expression promise is and covenants of promise is an expression that is inclusive of those expansions. Next week if we have time I’d like to say something about “alienated” there because that verb suggests the possibility that there is a time reference suggested by alienated from the covenants of promise but we don’t have time to do that tonight. It’s not necessary to do it.

So we look at the fourth of the disabilities having no hope to sustain the Gentiles. They didn’t realize the context of the Abrahamic promise and a lot of it, incidentally, was due to Israel’s failure to be the kind of nation that God had sought for them to be. He had told them they were to be witnesses unto him, but instead of witnesses of him they generally witnessed to themselves and in their self righteous way placarded their relationship to God as being due to their own righteousness, but the Gentiles had no

hope. And, finally and climactically, Paul says, "Without God in the world." Some of the commentators think that expression in the world qualifies all these other words in the verse. If it does, well that might give a more universal sense to the passage. It's not necessary that that be stated dogmatically, without God.

"So here are the Gentiles separated from Christ, alienating from citizenship in Israel, strangers to covenants of promise, having no hope without God in the world; churchless, hapless, hopeless, Godless, and homeless," so John Edie, a well known Scottish exegetic, said with reference to their condition. Mr. Edie also said, Their future was a night without a star." That's the Gentiles as Paul sets them forth here. That was their condition in time passed.

Now, remember Paul is writing as the apostle of the Gentiles. He lays stress on that in chapter 3, and we'll talk about it a bit next week but beginning with verse 13 and through verse 18, he will deal with the reconciliation of the Gentiles and you can easily see where the thought changes again. But, now, incidentally, that adverb "now" is particular adverb which in classical Greek, which I grew up studying, was generally speaking temporal in its force. A "now" can be both temporal and logical. In fact, you use the English word now in that way too. You say now we're in the auditorium of Believers Chapel. We mean now at this present time, but I might give in you an argument which has two or three different steps in it and I might say first this then this now this, and I'm not saying now in the sense of it in the present time, but this is the next step in the argument. That's a lot magical now. I think that what Paul has in mind here is the temporal now. He says, But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made now by the blood of Christ." In Christ is opposed to in the world. Spiritually, our league of nations is opposed to spiritual union; Before they were in the world now they are in Christ. If you want a good illustration of what it means to be in the world and then to be in Christ maybe the best illustration is the Apostle Paul himself.

Turn to Philippians chapter 3, and read the description of the things that happened to him as he describes them in verse 4 through verse 9. This expression but now in Christ Jesus is the heart of Pauline theology. As we've said when we've been expounding the Epistle to the Colossians recently the doctrine of union with Christ and we've spelled it out as being covenantal union representative union. The various ways in which one might want to speak about it, but its the heart of Paul's theology. Someone has called it "the *corcordium*." If you know your Latin you know that means the heart of hearts. "The *corcordium* of his writings, the key note, the one master chord which vibrates and pulsates through the whole divine symphony recalling as an Old Testament parallel," Mr. MacDuff has said, "The watchword of the great Elijah shall over liveth. Paul's great watchword is in Christ Jesus. Used scores of times in his writings and if you add the in him, in whom, etc. you have literally hundreds of times in which Paul refers to a covenantal union with the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, in verse 13 through verse 15, he will talk about the reconciliation of the Gentiles to Israel because remember the law stood as a great separating force between Gentiles and Jews. The law was given to Israel and so we read here, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." The apostle himself had a very practical part in the successful accomplishment of this in reality. Because remember the struggle that took place in Antioch as recorded in Galatians chapter 2, was a struggle between Peter on the one hand who had fallen prey to falling back under certain of the conditions of the Mosaic law, some of the requirements of the law as understood by the Jews of his day, and it was Paul who stood up and rebuked Peter before the whole church who stood as the one that prevented, humanly speaking, we're talking about the church from falling back into the legalism that characterized the Judaism of New Testament times. The middle wall of partition was the Law of Moses and

it produced the enmity between the two national bodies the Gentiles on one hand and Israel on the other.

You know there's some remarkable things in the story of archeology that have had to do with this. When the temple was constructed, it was constructed in the structure instructed or constructed in such a way as to reflect this kind of thing. I thought I had some material here. I do have but I've got it in something else. When the temple was constructed, it was constructed in such a way that the difference between the Gentiles and Israel was marked out in a physical way. There was a middle wall of partition between the court of the Gentiles and the temple proper. The Gentiles were permitted to come to a certain place in the temple but they could not enter the temple proper. The barrier that was set up was a wall that was about three and a half feet high and certain signs were placed on the wall to tell Gentiles that they were not to enter. Well, Clement Gano in 1871 did some excavation on the site of the temple and he found one of the stone pillars which were set up upon the barrier. This stone pillar was about five feet high and the inscription on the stone pillar was as follows and if the Gentiles read this, I think you could see why some enmity existed. This is the way it reads, "No man of another nation to enter within the fence and enclosure around the temple and whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues." So you can see the Gentiles didn't particularly like things like that around the temple and that contributed to the enmity between the two.

Now, Paul says in verse 15, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man." That one new man is Paul's way of referring to the church and the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many ways in which the church is not new and there are some ways in which the church is new. We've talked about that previously and I have tried to lay stress upon the fact that one of the ways in which the church relates to the Law of Moses, the people of God until the time of our Lord's death was under the Mosaic Law. I mean,

well, let's say the people were the people were under the law of Moses but when our Lord died on Calvary's Cross and the veil of the temple was rent in twain, then the Mosaic law as Paul says here was abolished. The law was an entity, and the law was abolished in the sense in which Israel was under the law. That doesn't mean that the moral principles of the Law of Moses were abolished. That's not true. The apostles of the New Testament and our Lord make that quite plain, particularly, the apostles who wrote in the present age. So one new man is constructed.

Now, the “new man” that term is suggestive of two things. Of course, the new man represents the new position of the Gentile. He's now in relation to the Lord God. He'd never been in relationship before, but it was also a new thing for Israel because they are in a new relationship to the Lord. They are not under the law in the sense in which they were under the law. So the body the church is truly new.

Now, that doesn't mean that they're not part of the people of God, but there was a newness that had to do with the church of Jesus Christ from the day of Pentecost on. So he says, “To make in himself of twain one new man.” John Chrysostom has some interesting words on this point. He says, “Not that he has brought us to that nobility of theirs. He's talking as a Gentile. Not that he, God, has brought us to that nobility of theirs but both us and them to a greater as if one should melt down a statue of silver and one of lead and the two should come out gold.” So he is suggesting that even the nation Israel and the believers in Israel have come to a better position before the Lord God as a result of what Christ did on the cross than they enjoyed previously. And, of course, the statues of lead having become gold have come into a relationship with the Lord God and not simply the relationship that an Israelite in the old covenant days had with the Lord but the relationship that one may have today. So the position of the church and the members of the church is a higher position than Israel enjoyed in Old Testament times. That's what Peter meant when he says, “Don't put them under the law that was a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. Steadfast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made

us free.” So even Israel rejoiced in the transformations that took place when the promised redeemer came and completed his saving work.

If you don't read the Epistle to the Ephesians and the Book of Acts and, particularly, the Epistle to the Hebrews in chapters like chapter 7, you will not understand some of these tremendous changes that took place when the Lord Jesus as the promised redeemer came and accomplished his work. So when he came the law was done away with. The Gentiles are reconciled to Israel. The law no longer stands between them but there's a further reconciliation and Paul will talk about that next verses 16 through verse 18, and this reconciliation is the reconciliation of the Gentiles and the Jews to God -- in other words, the reconciliation of both of these national entities to the Lord God. Listen to what he says verse 16, “And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body.”

Now, that is a reference to our Lord accomplishing the atoning work, “In one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” Now, that is the enmity that existed between sinful men both Jews and Gentiles and the Lord God. Christ in his atoning work slaying that enmity. “And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.” That's a very interesting expression. I don't have time to talk about it.

I just suggest to you this for your own study. You'll find that those clauses there are clauses that are very closely related to two passages in the Book of Isaiah. Isaiah 57, and Isaiah 52, and there seems to be an allusion to those passages intentionally by the apostle. When he says that, “He came and preached to you which were a far off and to them that were nigh.” he's talking, of course, about the Gentiles and Israel and the chances are in the light of the flow of the thought he's talking about the preaching either of our Lord after the resurrection. After all, he did come into the meetings of the apostles and say, “First peace be unto you.” There may be some reference to that or this is a reference to the preaching of the apostles in the general sense of their preaching peace through the work of Christ after our Lord's death barely in resurrection. Almost all

commentators seeing the flow of thought temporally think of this coming after the time of our Lord's death. So from enmity toward God to amity toward God for both Gentiles and Jews as a result of what Christ has done. Included are peace through nullification of the law by his death the preaching of peace in post resurrection appearances through the Holy Spirit access particularly. Look at verse 18, “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” So through the Lord Jesus both Jew and Gentiles now have access by one spirit to the Father.

The apostle often likes to speak in Trinitarian fashion and you certainly see it here. Through him, that is through Christ, we both have access by one spirit to the Father. Access one might ask the question access to a king. This term that is used here was a term that is often used of an introduction to a king just like some of you might have been introduced to Ronald Reagan who came to town today. You might have, if you were using Greek language, you might have used something like that. I wouldn't call him a king, of course, but in the minds of some he stands about on that level but to be introduced to an important person like a king well, the *Pareisago* was the person who did the introducing and this verb is that is related to it *prasago*. On the other hand, it was also or could be used of the introduction of a priest to the Lord God and it may be that the apostle is thinking about that when he says, “For through him we both have access.” That is we are all priests of God and we have the privilege of access to the Lord through Christ in the Spirit.

You know that is really the great end of the trinity. We sometimes forget that. We think the great end of the trinity is that we be saved. It's amazing to me after nineteen hundred years people still say the great work of the Christian church is evangelism. That's not the great work of the Christian church. It's a great work. One would not want to downgrade evangelism but as we saw in Colossians as we see all through the New Testament the whole work of salvation is the great work of the church evangelism yes but evangelism with a view to communion with a view to maturity with a

view to edification. Never forget that. Don't be carried away because some popular person has made a cliché statement like that. That's not true. Stick to the Bible. Stick the words of Scripture. Follow Scripture and you'll be wise unto full salvation. That's what the Lord would like for all of us to have a closer more intimate relationship to him in edifying growth and the knowledge of him. So through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Now, after that little word of exaltation eighty percent of you will go out and won't be long before one of you will say, “Well the great work of the church is evangelism.” You won't pay a bit of attention to me but when you get to heaven you'll have to answer for that because I'm going to be there and I will say you went out and you said that after I told you that. That's all right just please remember the great work of the triune God is to bring us into relationship to the Father. Communion with him. That's what our Lord is concerned about. He wants to introduce us to the Father. In fact, that's one of the self-abnegating ways of the Lord Jesus. His purpose he says is to introduce us to the Father because that's, of course, where he gained his special joy in communion with the Father.

Now, finally, in the last three verses the apostle sums it up for verses 19 through 22. Notice the way in which verse 19 begins. You can tell he's going to sum it up. He's going to give the consequences of what he's been talking about. “Consequently then,” for those of you that have the Greek Testament before you *achar oun*. “Consequently then” here is the inference that we're to draw from the preceding comments concerning reconciliation of the Gentiles to Israel and the reconciliation of the Gentiles and Israel to the Lord God. This is what we used to read in Latin *utpote illa res es sic*, “since these things are so.” So since these things are so, “You are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

Now, you can see there are two principle figures. Here one is a civil franchise. You are fellow citizens with the saints and the saints, of course, are the saints of Israel. The preceding saints and the present saints that belong to the body of Christ and then a domestic figure of speech of the household of God. So we have civil franchise domestic privilege. We're citizens and we're family members. Well, it's plain that Paul's view of the present age here is not as broad as that set out in Romans 11. The apostle in Romans 11 gives an indication of the relationship between the nation and the nations in past time the relation between the nation and the nations in the present time. And then, of course, near the end of Romans he looks into the future and he sees that all Israel shall be saved in the future and then gives a little study of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles as the ages unfold in verses 28 through 32 of Romans 11. The emphasis here rests upon the Gentiles sharing covenantal blessings. Let me put them in contrast. Without Christ we were. Now we are in Christ. We were aliens. We are now fellow citizens. We were strangers. We are now of the household of God. We formally had no hope. We now are at peace with God. We formally were without God. We know have access into the presence of God through the Holy Spirit and the work of Christ.

Notice one final thing. There is no erasing of national identity in this body. Nowhere in this context does Paul give us any understanding of or any claim that Israel is no longer Israel or that the Gentiles are no longer Gentiles. He simply says that both Israelites who are believers and Gentiles who are believers are now within the one new man.

Now, of course, Paul in this particular place will not give all of the things that he might have given. One has to read all of Paul's letters, his thirteen epistles, to find out all of the things he might say but it's very plain that he doesn't he suggest in any way here that an Israelite is now a Gentile or a Gentile is now an Israelite or that neither one are any longer Gentiles or Israelites. They are on a certain level Gentiles and Israelites but when in the church of Jesus Christ when it comes to the privileges that they enjoy they

belong to the one new man and they share in the blessings that he describes here as fellow citizens of the household of God. He says, incidentally, they are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Occasionally, individuals seeking to make the claim that the church and Israel are the same well they stress on this. Now, let me say it's possible, possible that the expression apostles and prophets is a reference to the apostles of the New Testament and the prophets of the Old Testament but it's not necessary at all. As a matter of fact, as you well know, if you read the Book of Acts you will come across prophets in the New Testament times. They were prophets of the church. Agabus, two of his prophecies are given in the Book of Acts. Silas was a prophet. It's specifically stated that he is a prophet. Look at the order of the words. Its apostles and prophets.

Now, if you look at that in the Greek text you'll discover something else. While we don't want to be dogmatic about this because it's possible, I say possible, to understand in a different way but in the original text when we read apostles and prophets we have one article with two nouns. Now, we can't lay a very much stress upon this but generally speaking, only generally, when you have one article with two nouns then there is often some kind of unity between them suggested. Now, we can only say some kind of unity and we have to say there are exceptions to this and the very fact that these are plural nouns indicates a well-known grammatical rule does not apply in this particular case anyway. So we'll only mention that but I want you to notice this in chapter 3 in verse 5 we read, “Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.” Chapter 3, verse 5 and so again we have that same order and the implication is, I think, the order and he says, “As it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets,” that he's talking about New Testament prophets.

Now, if you'll turn on just another chapter to chapter 4 in verse 11 we read concerning spiritual gifts for the church, “And he gave apostles and prophets and evangelists and pastor/teachers.” So in the context of the Epistle to the Ephesians it

would appear that when Paul writes in chapter 2 here, “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,” he’s talking about the teaching ministry of the church of Jesus Christ and the one new man composed of both Gentiles and believers from the nation Israel that have been brought together and reconciled to one another and to the Lord God stand together upon the basis of the teaching ministry of the apostles of the Lord Jesus and the prophets who from time to time gave teaching concerning the Christian church. One final, I said one final a moment ago that’s like preachers you know, but this is really final.

I noticed one final thing. The new man is being built not rebuilt. He is talking about the church in its new character no longer under Law of Moses as the newness of the Christian church and also new in that both Gentiles and Jews share in the promises equally. No need to circumcise Gentiles. In that sense we have a new man in the Christian church.

Now, next we’ll look at chapter 3 and we’ll see in more detail what Paul thinks about the present age.

Let’s bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for the word of God and we know Lord we’ve not followed every nuance of the apostles thought and no doubt have not followed him completely as he would have taught us were he here but we thank Thee for the things that are plain and clear. Makes us students of the word. Especially Lord may we not lose the significance of this teaching that through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit we’ve been introduced to Thee and there is now a holy temple of the Lord and we’re in that temple and are to serve and worship Thee and commune with Thee [End of Tape]