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## Sermon Study on Eph. 2, 19-22

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wrote the letter to the Philippians, which was most likely delivered by Epaphroditus upon the latter's return to his home town.

In conclusion it may be well to list the arguments against the theory which has attempted to make the letter to the Ephesians an encyclical epistle.

1. The introductory sentence of the epistle surely did not read *τοῖς οὖτοι . . . καὶ πιστοῖς*, for that would be almost nonsensical in view of the careful manner in which the apostle at other times designates his readers. If the Holy Ghost had intended this letter for an encyclical epistle, He would undoubtedly have given the names of all the congregations concerned, just as He does in 1 Pet. 1, 1 and with regard to the seven letters of the Apocalypse.

2. Though the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* are missing in Codices  $\alpha$ , B, and in Codex 67, of the twelfth century, they are found in all other ancient manuscripts as well as in the most ancient translations, some of which antedate the most ancient manuscripts now known.

3. The entire ancient Church has designated the letter as that addressed to the Ephesians, as, for instance, the Canon Muratori, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius, and others.

4. The testimony of Tertullian, formerly thought to have been adverse to the traditional view, has upon closer examination been found to speak in favor of the letter as directed to Ephesus. Further witnesses are Jerome and Basilus the Great. In short, the external proofs for Ephesus as the address of the letter outweigh other, supposedly negative proofs nine to one. Let us not forget that the argument *e silentio* can at best be only a supporting argument and should never be admitted as primary. Since Ephesus is excluded as the place of the Captivity Letters, one of the main reasons for suggesting the possible encyclical character of the letter to the Ephesians has dropped away. The simple acceptance of the transmitted data is not a blind bowing to tradition, but is thoroughly scientific in the best sense of the word.

P. E. KRETZMANN.

## Sermon Study on Eph. 2, 19-22.

(Eisenach Epistle Lessons for Pentecost.)

Pentecost, 1930 A. D., which reminds us that the nineteen-hundredth anniversary of the great day described Acts 2 is upon us. And the Lord, who sent His Holy Spirit in accordance with His promise, has not yet returned "from thence" in His glory, as He has also promised. Faithful is He that promised, and He it is who calls to us even now: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

But from the Word of our God, which shall stand forever, what shall I choose for the message to my church on the solemn occasion



of the nineteen-hundredth return of Pentecost? As always, we are aware that much, very much, depends on our choice of a telling text. We look at several—but! Then, to relieve our suspense, the words of Jesus suddenly present themselves to our mind: "Every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto an householder bringing forth out of his treasure things new and old," Matt. 13, 52. Accordingly, no matter which of the many texts we choose, what we shall bring forth from its inexhaustible storehouse will contain "things new and old." Reassured, we read this Eisenach text once more. It begins to "draw" us. Its concrete, realistic, suggestive "figures" begin to suggest those very "things new and old," so prudently recalled by our supreme Teacher of the art of preaching. There is furthermore a wonderful "sweep" or "movement" in the text: citizens of a commonwealth, children of a family, a great temple in the building, rising from foundation to finished fane, are presented to our eyes. And any doubts as to its fitness for our Pentecost message are removed as the full force of its last phrase bears down upon us: "in the Spirit."

In order to increase our enthusiasm and our appreciative understanding of the text, we cannot refrain from at once reading it in the tongue originally employed by the Spirit who uttered the words through Paul, the preacher to the Gentiles of the *unsearchable*, unfathomable, inscrutable riches of Christ, Eph. 3, 8. In that very adjective "unsearchable" we feel the Spirit coping with the limitations of human speech and understanding over against "the deep things of God," Rom. 8, 23; 1 Cor. 2, 10. Slowly, cautiously, with ear intent solely to hear what the Spirit is uttering in these words, we read the four verses in Greek. What is the Spirit conveying to our mind?

"So, then, now therefore"—a familiar expression indeed to introduce an inference in Pauline dialectics—"no more, no longer, are ye"—a change, a tremendous change, is come to pass—"foreigners, aliens, strangers, and sojourners," *i. e.*, *inquilini*, *Beisassen* (such as the people of Israel themselves were once upon a time, when they dwelt as "sojourners" in the land of Egypt, Acts 13, 17; cp. 7, 6. 29; Luke 24, 18; 1 Pet. 2, 11; 1, 17. The Greek word means such as, coming from elsewhere, sojourn in a land or city without having the right of citizenship),—"but *ye are*"—emphatically so—"fellow-citizens of, with, *the saints* and"—we grope for a single English word, there is none, however—"domestici, Hausgenossen, household-members (?) of God," members of God's house=family, the family dwelling in a home of which God is the Householder, *οικοδομασμένης*; cf. Num. 12, 7; Hos. 8, 1; 1 Tim. 3, 15; Gal. 6, 10; 1 Pet. 4, 17; Heb. 3, 2. 5. 6; 10, 21,— "built up"—*superaedificati*; namely, at the time of your call and conversion, aorist participle; for the force



of the compound compare Col. 2, 1; 1 Cor. 3, 10. 12. 14 — "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, [there] being [the] Cornerstone" — *הַבֵּינִי הַבֵּינִי*, *lapis angularis summus*, Vulgate — "He Himself" — note this peculiar "He Himself" — "Christ Jesus, in whom all [the] building" — we are purposely using the ambiguous term "building" — "being framed, joined, welded together" — the process is now going on, present participle; this rare verb occurs only once more in the New Testament, *viz.*, in our letter at 4, 16 — "groweth, increaseth into, unto a temple holy in the Lord" (= Jesus Christ, not God), "in whom also ye are being builded together," *i. e.*, with the others (present tense again), "unto a habitation, dwelling-place (*habitaculum*, Vulgate), of God in the Spirit." The preposition *ἐν* is not merely instrumental, as *διὰ*, through; for the Spirit is not the means or instrument only, but the medium or agency (agent) by virtue of which (whom) God dwells in the habitation, *i. e.*, in the Church. By or in His Spirit God dwells in the Church, *the saints*, His temple.

Thus we have labored in the Word, but the labor has but begun. Feeling the great variety of important terms which we have met, we read the passage at least three times more in order to get a firmer grasp of its meaning, taking a glance also at the text-critical apparatus. We feel happy to find the text wonderfully well transmitted. In verse 19 the repetition of the copula is by far the best-attested reading, the reason for its repetition, namely, marked emphasis, being easily felt if we consider the context. Again in v. 21 *πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ* (without the article) is by far the preponderant reading. Hence our translation. Beyond that there are no matters of textual purity involved in our passage. Ergo!

After a pause we return to our study. The passage of but four verses has called forth a host of thoughts in our mind, an experience we can enjoy only with Bible-verses. We feel a sense of mystery and awe as we view afresh the temple-building described here by the apostle. We are induced to let some of the other sacred structures mentioned in the pages of Holy Scripture pass in review before our mind's eye. There is the Tabernacle of Moses, Ex. 25-40, the Temple of Solomon, 1 Kings 5. 6; 2 Chron. 2-4, of Zerubbabel, Ezra, 3 ff., of Herod, three temples built on the same spot. Then there is the temple described in Ezekiel's vision, Ezek. 40-47, the longest and most elaborate single vision in the Old Testament. Our text being from Ephesians, we think also of the temple of Diana, or Artemis, at Ephesus, Acts 19. Then, somehow or other, we are reminded also of Noah's ark, of the tower of Babel, the temple of Dagon, Judg. 16, etc. What an array of "building" descriptions, and that in a book of 1,189 chapters! Surely there must be a reason for the prominent proportion given to this subject!



We glimpse at random again at a few more details. From a casual remark of the Jews who were contemporaries of Christ, a remark occasioned by His words, "Destroy this temple," we learn that the Temple in the days of Christ was forty-six years in building, John 2, 20. Josephus, who was thoroughly familiar with that Temple, adds the interesting information that the work on the entire complex of courts and buildings was not completed until the procuratorship of Albinus, 62—64 A. D. (*Antiq.*, XV, 11, 5. 6; XX, 9, 7.) That very Temple, then, in which Jesus Himself, the Glory of His people Israel, taught and worshiped, was "being built" in His day, having been begun in 19 B. C., and was still in process of "building" when Paul wrote our words, being finally completed about 62—64 A. D. Where, we ask, is that third Temple some six or eight years later? What happened to it?

Another instance will serve to lead us nearer to "sensing" the meaning of our text. "Teacher, behold, what manner of *stones* and what manner of *buildings*!" remarks one of the disciples to Jesus on the last day of His teaching in that Temple. Mark 13, 1; Matt. 24, 1: *ποταφοὶ λίθοι καὶ ποταφαὶ οἰκοδομαί.* Note that stones and buildings are mentioned here. What did Jesus reply? "Seest thou these great buildings, *οἰκοδομάς*? There shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down," Mark 13, 2. Read Josephus. Ah, that third Temple, too, is no more! On its site Emperor Hadrian, 136 A. D., dedicated a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus. In 363 A. D. Emperor Julian undertook to rebuild the third temple in order to defeat the prophecy of Christ; but his plans were frustrated by flames which burst from the foundation. Finally there is the Dome of the Rock, generally called the Mosque of Omar, which now occupies the site of the three Temples of Israel. Read Rom. 9, 1—5 and feel the full tragedy of all this as a Christian Jew felt it.

After this somewhat roundabout approach we return to our text. We want to feel the striking contrast as keenly as possible. What a different "building" we have here! Not one built of wood and stone at all, but wholly of persons: saints, Jesus Christ, apostles, prophets, God, the Spirit. See Rev. 21, 3. 22.

Having "sensed" this keen contrast to the full, we next proceed to study the commentators. We are simply bewildered by the multitude of variant interpretations, "*ein Denkmal exegetischer Not und Kunst zu Ehren unserer ganzen Zukunft*," to speak with Reusz. We finally decide to go *propria via*, feeling that something is wrong somewhere.

The Gentile Christians at Ephesus, St. Paul declares, are on the same plane with any Jewish Christians, belonging 1) to the city of God, which consists of the saints, the true believers, "Israel," the true theocracy, Rom. 2, 28. 29; 2) to the family of God, the true children



of the Father. This is very simple, to be sure. "Built up," he continues, there being no "and" in the Greek. Built up *when?* we ask. As the aorist shows, at the time of their conversion. Their lamentable state prior to their conversion is described in 2, 1-3. "Built up upon the foundation," θεμέλιος, *masc. adj.* (with λίθος understood), more often than neuter, "of the apostles and prophets." The incontrovertible fact that they were built up at the time of their conversion shows that these apostles and prophets are the same as those at 3, 5 and 4, 11, unto whom "the mystery" is *now* revealed. The idea that "apostles and prophets" (for "prophets" see 1 Cor. 12) should refer to "writings" is excluded by the very context. And what is "the foundation"? Why, St. Paul tells you what the foundation is, was, and always will be. Even if he did not add the words, the unanimous reply of all Christians would be: Jesus Christ. But now he says expressly: "(there) being Corner-stone," ἀκρογωνιαίος (*sc. λίθος*) — "chief" is not in the original text — "He, He, [even] Christ Jesus." Neither you nor any one else can build without a foundation. If in this case you build without the only conceivable foundation, see what happens, *e. g.*, Luke 6, 49. Compare: "Upon *this* rock I will build My Church." On what rock? Answer: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the *living* God." Ponder that statement well, Matt. 16, 18. Now, in Biblical language "to lay the foundation" and "to lay the corner-stone" are *identical* expressions. (See, *e. g.*, Is. 28, 16; Jer. 51, 26; Job 38, 6, where we have הִנֵּחַ הַבֵּיטָה, and Ps. 118, 22, where we have הִנֵּחַ אֶת־הַבֵּיטָה. New Testament: Matt. 21, 42-44; Mark 12, 10, 11; Acts 4, 11; 1 Pet. 2, 6; Rom. 9, 33.) They are identical because the first stone laid is the corner-stone. It marks the beginning of all subsequent building. See, *e. g.*, the laying of the "foundation-stone" of the first Temple, 1 Kings 6, 37; that of the second Temple, Ezra 3, 10.

The apostle is already beginning to leave the idea of corner-stone, when he continues: "*in* whom all building, fitly framed, groweth," v. 21. It is amusing to have commentators urge that one must not press a figure to the extreme and then see them forthwith disregarding their own sound principle. So, for instance, here, there is a great deal of calculation about how a building, especially a large temple building, can be said to be built and fitly framed "*on*" a corner-stone, a single stone. Literally speaking, of course, it cannot be done. Others even wonder why nothing is said of the four walls, the ceiling, the roof, etc., of the Temple. Now, the simple fact is that the apostle is gradually leaving the figurative idea for the literal one, as is most easily seen from the change in preposition, *ἐν* before, now *ἐν*. Before they were being built *up* upon the foundation, now they are growing into an holy temple *in* the Lord, the entire "building" being "*in* the Lord."



Finally we have to give account of "all building," which is the best rendering of *πᾶσα οἰκοδομή*, for it conveys the same intermediate meaning evidently intended by the apostle. There is building activity or process, with the result that something is brought into existence, is added to the building. See 1 Cor. 3, 9, 10, which will make plain our meaning.

In order to make sure that this is Paul's meaning, we carefully reread the entire context, and we find that this and nothing else can be his meaning. The Ephesian Christians, like all other believers, Jews or Gentiles, are built up upon the foundation-stone of the apostles and prophets, who are preaching "Jesus Christ crucified and risen, yea, sitting at the right hand of God" to all men everywhere. This mystery was revealed to them by the Spirit, Eph. 3, 5. This same Spirit is also the Agent through whom the Ephesian Christians have come to be "a habitation of God." See 1 Cor. 3, 16—23.

Lest we forget, the "remnant" of the Jews is still an integral portion of the Church, the true Church, Rom. 9—11.

At this point it will be well to read the Lutheran Confessions on the Church, at least Articles VII and VIII of the Augsburg Confession. Also the reading of hymns on the Church will be refreshing, such as Nos. 452, 451 (especially stanza 6), 466, etc. The marvelous hymn of John Marriott (1780—1825) is worth quoting in full, though it has no direct bearing on our text:—

Thou whose almighty word  
Chaos and darkness heard  
And took their flight,  
Hear us, we humbly pray,  
And where the Gospel's day  
Sheds not its glorious ray,  
"Let there be light!"

Thou who didst come to bring,  
On Thy redeeming wing,  
Healing and sight,  
Health to the sick in mind,  
Sight to the inly blind,  
Oh, now to all mankind  
"Let there be light!"

Spirit of Truth and Love,  
Life-giving, holy Dove,  
Speed forth Thy flight!  
Move o'er the water's face,  
Bearing the lamp of grace,  
And in earth's darkest place  
"Let there be light!"

Blessed and holy Three,  
All-glorious Trinity—  
Wisdom, Love, Might!  
Boundless as ocean's tide,  
Rolling in fullest pride,  
Through the world, far and wide,  
"Let there be light!"

It is due to men of such spirit that the Gospel is translated into some 850 languages and dialects. Pentecost 1930!

The following themes and subdivisions might be helpful: *The Church Is the Creation of the Holy Spirit*. 1. He founds it upon the one corner-stone, i. e., Jesus Christ. 2. He causes its growth into the one holy temple in the Lord. Or: 1. By calling it to faith; 2. by granting it increase in sanctification. — *The Church the Habita-*



*tion of God.* 1. By the Holy Spirit's work (faith and sanctification); 2. by the holy Spirit's workmen (apostles, prophets, ministers).—*What the Spirit Saith to the Churches.* 1. Repent (strangers and sojourners in sin). 2. Believe (fellow-citizens, family members, holy temples in Christ). Or: 1. There is but one foundation (faith in Christ). 2. There is but one destination (holiness), Phil. 3, 12 ff.

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## Dispositionen über die Eisenacher Evangelienreihe.

### Evangelium.

Joh. 7, 33—39.

Diese Worte wurden am Laubhüttenfest gesprochen, Joh. 7, 2. „Jeden Morgen zur Zeit des Morgenopfers holte ein Priester in einem goldenen Gefäß Wasser aus der Quelle Siloah, trug es zum Tempel hinauf und goß dies Wasser an der Westseite des Altars aus unter den Lobgesängen des Volks.“ (Mezger, Magazin 42, 150.) Es geschah dies zur Erinnerung an die zweimalige Tränkung aus dem Felsen während der Wüstenwanderung. Jes. 12 wurde gesungen. Diese Sitte mag Jesum zu seiner Einladung veranlaßt haben. War er doch der geistliche Fels, der mitfolgte, 1 Kor. 10, 4. Jesus wendet sich an alle, sowohl an die Heilsbegierigen als auch an die Feinde, die in Gefahr standen, sich zu verhärten, V. 33—36.

Kommt zu Jesu!

1. Trinkt bei ihm Lebendiges Wasser!
2. Kommt, ehe es zu spät ist!

1.

V. 37. Durst ist Heilsverlangen, die Sehnsucht einer um ihrer Sünden willen geängsteten Seele nach Vergebung, Frieden, Ruhe des Gewissens. Dieser Durst kann allein bei Jesu gestillt werden. Wenn man die Welt durchlief, man könnte keine andere Quelle finden, die diesen Durst löschen, die Seele befrieden kann. Wenn aber dürstet — keiner ausgeschlossen —, der komme zu Jesu, Jes. 55, 1 ff.; Offenb. 22, 17. Ohne Geld und umsonst! Da ist Stillung des Durstes; da schöpft man mit Freuden Wasser aus dem Heilsbrunnen; da trinkt man in vollen Zügen Wasser der Erquickung, des Lebens; da findet man Gnade, die gewissen Gnaden Davids.

Ist man zu Jesu gekommen, steht man durch den Glauben in der Gnade Gottes, dann geht in Erfüllung Jes. 58; Sach. 14, 8. Lekt. V. 38. 39. Schon im Alten Testament wirkte der Heilige Geist, 1 Mos. 6, 3; 41, 38; 2 Mos. 31, 3; 4 Mos. 11, 17—29; 1 Sam. 10, 10; Ps. 51, 13. 14; 1 Petr. 1, 11. Doch waren das immer vereinzelt Fälle.