

The Victorious and Glorious Church, Part 4
The Church → The Living Temple of The Spirit of CHRIST
Ephesians 2:14-22 -- 01/17/2016
NEW LIFE FELLOWSHIP
<http://NLFJI.org/teachings>

Main Text for Today (01/17/2016)

Ephesians 2:14-22 - For He Himself (i.e. Jesus Christ) is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow **citizens** with the **saints and members of the household of God**, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the **whole building**, being fitted together, **GROWS** into a **HOLY TEMPLE** in the **LORD**, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Facts regarding the Church being the **Living Temple of God**

- 1. The Temple of God in Jerusalem** (some background) – Eph. 2:14-18
The Tabernacle in the Wilderness → The Temple of Solomon → Rebuilt after the Babylonian Captivity (see Ezra and Nehemiah, Haggai, Malachi, Zechariah)
It was a Place of **WORSHIP**, Praise, Thanksgiving, and Sacrifice (remember this)
In the Temple Complex → Various **Courts** → for Men, for Women, and then for Gentiles (non-Israelis)
The **Court of the Gentiles** is the place that Jesus overturned the Tables of those selling animals -- thus there was no room for Gentiles to come and Worship and Pray, etc. (Mark 11:15-17)
In between each was a **Separating Wall**. In Christ, today, we are all equal before God, the Wall of Separation has been removed, the Veil was torn, and now, the Temple has been destroyed.
We, now, all, male, female, Israeli/Jew, or Gentile ... we all have the same equal access to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, His Son, in the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18) ... Paul is using the Picture of the Physical Temple.
The Physical Temple represented the OLD Covenant.
The New Living Temple, in Christ (in the Messiah) in the Spirit, represents the New Covenant
- 2. Picture of the church is of a Living, Growing TEMPLE - A Dwelling Place of God's Spirit**
The Apostle Paul is talking about people, groups of different kinds of people ... that make up this new, living and growing temple. It is founded upon JESUS Christ, His Apostles and the Prophets of God (i.e. Jesus Christ & The Whole Bible). Just like the Physical Temple, this **Spiritual, Living Temple** is a Dwelling Place of the Spirit of God and it's focused on **Worship**. (Eph. 2:19-22)
Just like the physical temple was composed of bricks, stones, mortar, etc. the New Living Temple is composed of **people**, in Christ (like building blocks) → we are **LIVING STONES**
1 Peter 2:5 → **you also, as LIVING STONES, are being built up as a SPIRITUAL HOUSE, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**
And **Jesus** referenced that even the "**stones would immediately cry out**" if folks were kept silent instead of worshipping Jesus Christ in His Triumphant entry into Jerusalem (**Luke 19:40**).
The TEMPLE that Grows and is ALIVE → it is Fitted together (see Eph. 4:11-16), it Grows, it is being built up ... growing into a **HOLY TEMPLE** ... it is growing and becoming **HOLY**
It is **HOLY** because of **WHO Dwells in Her** ... God the Holy Spirit. The Picture is of a Living Temple . . .
Like a Tree that Grows and Bears Fruit ... Like a few trees becoming a Forest
Like a Meadow that Grows and Grows and covers ... Living and Growing ... like living cells that are organized to become a Human Body . . .

3. How does this Apply to us?

- a. We are Saved, Reconciled, Brought Near to God as Worshippers and Citizen of God's Kingdom (His Commonwealth) (Eph. 2:1-13)
- b. We No longer need to be kept separated because of our Ethnic Backgrounds
Jesus Himself, by His shed Blood, Crucifixion, Death, Burial and Resurrection is our PEACE ... our Peace between us and God and between each other, regardless of our earthly genetic backgrounds. He broke down the walls and barriers.
This is ONLY found in Christ, not in any Governmental Program or anything else.
True, Lasting Peace among humans is ONLY found in Christ.
(Special NOTE: we are NOT being reconciled to non-Christians)
- c. Worship is LIVING, ORGANIC, and is at its **Height** when we worship God, **together**, when we Gather together, or assemble ourselves for that purpose.
We EXPERIENCE GOD (or at least we should) in our **innermost being** (heart/soul)
When we gather together or assemble ourselves
(→ that is the basic definition of "church" or "ekklesia")
we BECOME the Dwelling Place of God, the Spirit. (Matt. 18:20 – 2 or 3 or more...)
in Christ ... we all are, collectively (the whole Body of Christ) IS a Living Temple
- d. If we focus on Worshipping, Praising, Thanking, and Praying to God in our personal daily life, in our small group gatherings, and in our public Worship Celebrations, HE is the One Who Builds us up (**Edifies** us) and **FITS** us **together** for His Glorious Use (**together**). It is always in relationship with others within our local church family. Each of you are, individually, LIKE a Puzzle Piece, and the other folks in our local church family are the Other Puzzle Pieces. When God fits us together ... it is a HOLY and Beautiful Picture of His Glory for His Glory (another example → car parts ... that are put together to become a functioning car – useful, functioning, travelling, etc.).
Once, my focus is off me and onto Him, He does His miraculous work. WORSHIP is the key that unlocks His Growth and Transformation in our lives, **TOGETHER**.
The focus of my life should not be on ME, but on Growing in Christ to Glorify Christ so that I can be used of God to Build-up others in my local church family. I grow, so that my fellow "living building blocks" in Christ's Temple can grow, as well. WE GROW TOGETHER.