

Exegesis of Ephesians 2:11-22

Interpretive Translation

¹¹ *Because of this, remember that formerly you, the Gentiles, physically, the ones being called uncircumcision, by those called circumcision (physically performed by human beings), ¹² that you were at that time separate from Christ, having been alienated from the citizenship privileges of Israel and were strangers to the covenants about the promise, not having hope and without God in the world.*

¹³ *But now in Christ Jesus, you, the very ones, formerly being far, have come to be near by the blood of Christ.*

¹⁴ *For He Himself is our peace, the One who made both of them one and who destroyed in His flesh the middle wall of the Law, the enemy, the Law consisting of commandments contained in ordinances. ¹⁵ He made it of no effect, to be our peace, in order that He might create the two of them in Himself into one new living entity, so making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might decisively reconcile both of them in one living entity to the holy God by means of His crucifixion, having first killed, instead, the enemy by it. ¹⁷ Having so come, He proclaimed peace to you, those who are far off, and, also, peace to those who are near ¹⁸ because through Him we have entrance, both of us, by means of the same Spirit to the Father.*

¹⁹ *Therefore, again, you are no longer strangers and aliens but instead you are equal to anyone who belongs to God and are part of His family, ²⁰ by means of the crucial early work of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ is at all times first and determines all they have done. ²¹ In relationship to Him and by His efforts, the whole church is being carefully composed so that it is growing into His holy sanctuary in relationship to Him, our authority. ²² Also in relationship Him and by His efforts you Gentiles are each being developed together for God's continual presence by means of the Spirit.*

Exegetical Outline

Ephesians 2:11-22

Central idea: Jews and Gentiles are now united because of the death of Jesus Christ and are growing together for fellowship with God.

- I.** Gentiles should remember they were formerly separate from Christ, physically and spiritually (2:11-12).
 - A.** Being a Gentile is physical in nature just like circumcision is (2:11).
 - B.** Gentiles were spiritually separate from Christ (2:12).
 1. They were separated from Israel and the promises (2:12a).
 2. They were separated from God and hope (2:12b).
- II.** Jesus Christ has, now, removed the Law and made tranquility by bringing Jews and Gentiles together by His death (2:13-18).
 - A.** Jesus Christ is peace and unity for Jew and Gentile (2:14).
 1. He made Jew and Gentile united (2:14a).
 2. He destroyed the Law in His body (2:14b).
 - B.** Jesus Christ removed the Law by His death to bring Jew and Gentile together in tranquility (2:15-16).
 1. He made tranquility by forming one unit out of two (2:15).
 2. He brought Jew and Gentile together by His death (2:16).
 - C.** Jesus Christ preached tranquility since both Jew and Gentile come to God (2:17-18).
 1. Jesus Christ preached tranquility (2:17).
 2. Both Jew and Gentile come to God (2:18).
- III.** Now Gentiles are a legitimate part of God's people, with Jesus Christ the basis of coming together for fellowship with God (2:19-22).
 - A.** Gentiles are a legitimate part of God's people (2:19-20a).
 1. Gentiles are separated no more from Israel or God (2:19a).
 2. Gentiles are legitimately part of God's people (2:19b).
 3. The ministry of apostles and prophets is the basis for this (2:20a).
 - B.** Jesus Christ is the basis of coming together for fellowship with God (2:20b-22).
 1. Jesus Christ is the basis of coming together (2:20b).
 2. Jesus Christ brings everyone together so united growth can take place for fellowship with God (2:21).
 3. Jesus Christ brings everyone together so individuals can grow together for fellowship with God (2:22).

Commentary

Ephesians 2:11-22

Introduction

After laying the groundwork in chapters 1-2:10, Paul now turns in earnest to his purpose in writing this epistle, the unity of the church, in particular the joining of Jew and Gentile into a new entity in reference to Jesus Christ. In the first three verses of the section Paul enjoins his readers, the Gentiles to realize the dramatic shift God has worked for them in Christ.

Gentiles should remember (2:11-12).

Physical in nature (2:11). Διό, “therefore”, is the first word and refers us to verses 1-10, to which the current section is in parallel, returning to the temporal terminology used there. In addition to the general nature of the two sections, we have a repetitive ποτε twice in each section (vs. 1 & 3, 11 & 13). The temporal nature of the current section is strong, being reinforced by “at that time” (v. 12) and “now” (v. 13), in addition to “remember” (v. 11).

The imperative, μνημονεύετε, begins this section in a reflective mode, bringing the Gentiles back, again, as in vs. 1-3, to their pre-Christian state. Barth is right to comment on the reluctance of Scripture to bring attention to the past of God’s people. The force of Scripture is very forward and only a few particular reasons warrant returning to the past, one of which we find here. O’Brien is correct that God’s intention here is to draw a contrast with current blessings to highlight them, not the past itself (O’Brien, 187).

A ὅτι of indirect discourse follows μνημονεύετε to give the object, the “what” they were to remember. The ὅτι clause, however, is interrupted by Paul’s concern to identify and describe those he is addressing, Gentile Christians. Paul’s alternate subject in Ephesians to this point, “you,” is specifically identified in verse 11, “the Gentiles in the flesh” (NASB). ἐν σαρκί is a superficial physical qualification of “Gentile”, compared to the religious emphasis given by the περιτομῆς, the circumcision or Jews. The phrase containing this emphasis follows and uses “uncircumcision” to give the separatist slang the first century Jew used to refer to all non-Jews. The distinction between Jew and Gentile, seen in the Jewish use of “circumcision” and “uncircumcision,” is undermined by another ἐν σαρκί clause to close verse 11. The object of this clause is an interesting word, χειροποιητου, “made by human hands.” It was used in the LXX to refer exclusively to idol worship and in the New Testament to refer to earthly temples, made by man. The inference here is clear in defining Jewish ritual circumcision as a man-made, not God-made, physical designation. Paul may even have inferred that the Jews gave circumcision an idolatrous emphasis. See Appendix #3, WS #1 for more. The parallel ἐν σαρκί clauses draw attention to the same physical inference in regard to the “Gentile” designation, demoting both to the physical level and undermining their theological importance.

Separate from Christ (2:12).

Separated from Israel and the promises (2:12a). The ὅτι clause resumes with a parallel temporal marker, τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, further indicating this clause is resumptive to verse 11. The clause contains an indicative verb, ἦτε, with a prepositional phrase, χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, to close it. The prepositional phrase is predicative and describes the Gentiles in a general way, as a subset proposition, “separate from Christ”. There are then two parallel dependent phrases headed

by two participles, one a perfect passive, the other a present active. Both are followed by predicate nouns. The participles are parallel semantically, if not syntactically. The perfect, of course, describes a state of being alienated, the present describes a continual possessing (ἔχω, stative idea) dependent on the imperfect past indicative (ἦτε), semantically equivalent to a state of “having (in this case, negated by μη, so “not having”).” This structure indicates that the two participles and their nouns (ξένοι and ἄθεοι) give the resultant conditions of being “apart from Christ.” Best (240) and Lincoln (136) see χωρὶς Χριστοῦ as predicative, with Best also recognizing the main ὅτι clause as the basis for what follows. Best (240), Lincoln (136) and O’Brien (188) all see only a list of five parts, simply stringing together, with slight differences, these descriptions of the Gentiles plight “at that time.” I believe they have missed the parallels with the incumbent dependency of the participles.

The above structure supports a bleak picture of the Gentiles’ former condition without Christ, setting up the dramatic turnaround in verse 13. We have them in a state of alienation from two very great advantages to God’s relationship with Israel. The first is the πολιτείας of Israel. There are three possible lexical senses to this word: 1) citizenship, 2) state or body politic, and 3) way of life (BAGD s.v.). Lincoln prefers 2) but the context here, written to Gentiles of Asia Minor, would more likely support 1), the rights, privileges, and duties of citizenship in Israel (Best, 241; Barth, 257). The following καὶ is a simple connective and ties the two parts of the participial phrase together. This is followed by a predicate noun, ξένοι, “strangers” linked to the equative ἦτε, the main verb of the ὅτι clause. Its distance from the equative verb leaves it awkwardly isolated, serving to draw attention to it in a staccato-like punctuated way. The covenants that qualify this word are the second great advantage these Gentiles were not a part of. Probably all the pacts God had made with Israel are in view here since there is nothing to specify any of them for us. However there is only one promise signified by the singular ἐπαγγελίας, almost certainly the promised “blessing to all the nations of the earth,” Jesus Christ.

Separated from God and hope (2:12b). The second participial phrase, which is not preceded by καὶ but contains one (contributing to the parallel structure of this passage), has the Gentiles without two more important spiritual necessities. Whereas the first participial phrase mentions two things that are specifically Jewish in nature, this phrase contains two more spiritual deficiencies of a general nature. The first was hope. Being “apart from Christ” left the Gentiles without any true hope no matter how they might have consoled themselves culturally. Even with cultural consolations, “the absence of hope in the face of death is amply attested in the literature and epigraphy of the day” (O’Brien, 189). The predicate noun that follows, ἄθεοι, indicates that the Gentiles were without the true God, not that they were irreligious, to their own gods, or did not know about God. The final clause of verse 12, ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, is spatial, indicating the sphere of the former life, the point of reference and extent of experience of a Gentile “separate from Christ.” This sets up the next parallel grammatical construction of ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, verse 13.

Tranquility by His death (2:13-18).

“But now” is the dramatic turnaround in 2:11-22 and verse 13 is the dramatic transition in the progress of Paul’s thinking about the unity of the church. If Ephesians spins with 11-22 as its center, 11-22 itself spins with verse 13 as its center. As the transition in this section, verse 13 actually belongs to both the paragraph above, connected by δε, and the paragraph below, connected logically by γὰρ (verse 14). Not only is verse 13 the dramatic and syntactical transition, it is also the narrative transition taking us from the temporal language of verses 11 and

12 to new spatial referencing that continues through the next paragraph. We go from “formerly” and “now” to “far” and “near.” The primary position of emphasis in this dynamic is νυνι δε at the beginning of the new sentence. It is reminiscent of the equally powerful ὁ δὲ θεὸς in verse 4 of the parallel 2:1-10. Two prepositional ἐν clauses serve to define the main verb. The first more emphatic one defines the sphere, the general environment of the change in Gentile fortunes, “in Christ Jesus.” The second gives the more specific means, “by the blood of Christ.” The verb itself is interesting given the spatial nature of the new context. One would expect to find a verb of motion, and most English translations use one, but the Greek has ἐγενήθητε an aorist passive of γινομαι, to become or happen. Bouttier calls this a divine passive (Best, 245). What seems to be in view is a change in nature as they come to exist (are “born”) in a new relationship, no longer “separate from,” but, in Christ.

This relationship consists in nearness contrasted to the “far” of their relationship “formerly.” Near and far were common terms used in relation to the proselytism of Gentiles into Judaism. This seems to be the usage here rather than an explicit reference to Isa 57:19. However, reference to this verse is almost certainly in view in verse 17 and Best (245) sees that context informing the reference here. Both backgrounds are probably influential but proselytism is the dominant theme in verse 13. An alteration of the strict traditional usage is necessary here, though, since these Gentiles are not proselytes to Israel but to a “new man” in Christ, the church (O’Brien, 191; Lincoln, 139).

Jesus Christ is peace and unity (2:14).

The verse begins with a logical causal connective, γαρ, tying this to the previous verse, as per above. The previous verse indicates the means of the change in Christ as “in His blood,” a theme returned to later in the paragraph. Paragraph 14-18 deal with the means of church unity and the establishment of peace. The means is expressed several ways but is always related to the death of Jesus Christ. In the first phrase of verse 14 we have this expressed in a more basic way, as the basis even for the means of peace and unity (cf. γαρ indicating cause). The basis or reason the death of Christ could be the means of unity is the fact of his person, who He is. So verse 14 focuses on His person with ἐστίν, stative of existence, reinforced with αὐτός to emphasize the subject. The predicate nominative description is “our peace,” equated to Christ Himself. So the basis for the Gentiles to have (be)come near by the blood of Christ is the fact of His nature, who He is, He Himself is our peace. This forms the basis for 14-16, the next indicative being in verse 17.

Jew and Gentile united (2:14a). The following two participial phrases are adjectival, sharing an article, and so continuing the emphasis on the person of Christ. They do however indicate what he has done. He has made the two groups of Jew and Gentile into one group. The neuters used here refer to the groups (O’Brien, 194; Best, 252), later changed to masculine in verses 15 and 16, a more personal context.

Destroyed the Law (2:14b). He has also destroyed an obstacle, a barrier between them. Το μεσοτοιχὸν τοῦ φραγμοῦ introduces an interesting series of three accusatives strung appositionally together. They are shared between two participles and have an awkward prepositional phrase, ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, inserted but apposition is still in view with the first and third parallel, preceding their participles, and the second serving as connection between them. It is further noted by all that Paul’s style in Ephesians includes the multiple use of synonymous terms. This helps to define the “middle wall of the fence” as the enmity, the Law. See Appendix #4, P#1 for more discussion on the problematic phrase το μεσοτοιχὸν τοῦ φραγμοῦ.

The above triple accusative is one of five informative structural elements in 14-18. The others are the three aorist participles, two of which are connected by a *καί*, the third, often seen as parallel (O'Brien, 192), is probably adverbial to the main indicative controlling verb *ἐστίν*. Also to be noticed in this paragraph are three prepositional means clauses (four, if the transitional verse 13 can be included), repetition of the word "peace", and three "both to one" statements (four, if *δύο* in verse 15 is allowed). These will be discussed at the appropriate places.

Jew and Gentile together in tranquility (2:15-16).

Tranquility by forming one out of two (2:15). The third of the triple accusatives begins verse fifteen followed by the third aorist participle. "The law of commandments in ordinances" refers to the Mosaic Law in whole or part. It must be acknowledged that Jewish literature had come to focus on the "moral" law rather than its cultic aspects, continuing a trend established by the OT prophets before the exile. The problem if one chooses to divide the Law into its composite parts is where to make those divisions since the Law itself was given as a unit without subdivisions. It seems most natural to take the whole Law to be in view here and not force an artificial solution simply to avoid the appearance of doing violence to a God-given instrument. Paul is able to hold the necessary tension in force by acknowledging the "goodness" of the Law itself while facing its tragic effect on humanity (Rom 7: 12-14). The three nouns piled together are, again, characteristic of the letter and serve to emphasize "a sense of the oppressiveness of all the Law's commandments" (Lincoln, 142). F.F. Bruce refers to the Law "as a written code, threatening death instead of imparting life" (Bruce, 298). Jesus Christ has "made the Law of no effect," the aorist making *καταργησας* means or causal to the main indicative, *ἐστίν*. The following *ἵνα* indicates the purpose of God to form Jews and Gentiles into a new spiritual organism. This should be understood to be immediately linked to *καταργησας* making unity between these groups the reason for doing away with the Law, in this context. But this purpose is also linked to the main verb *ἐστίν* by the second occurrence of *εἰρήνη*, the first time Christ is peace, this time He is making peace (*ποιῶν*, present participle) by creating (*κτίσῃ*) a new "one" out of "two".

The idea of peace is major in the paragraph 14-18, being mentioned four times and linked with the death of Christ and unity between Jew and Gentile. Besides the current usage there are two other concepts of peace that inform the mention here. The OT sense of *shalom* includes a broad sense of well-being and blessing this is extended in the NT to include relationships, especially with God (see O'Brien, 193 for more). The Gentile readers might have been more informed, though, by the political sense of the *Pax Romana*, the forced resolution of differences that created the environment for prosperity and travel in the Roman world. The peace in view by Paul is, of course not a political one, but spiritual. Nevertheless the mention of enmity and the adversarial relations between Jew and Gentile do form a scenario where peace forms quite a contrast.

Jew and Gentile together (2:16). The purpose of God also includes reconciliation (*ἀποκαταλλαξῇ*), this verb being parallel to "create" in verse 15b. The word here, *ἀποκαταλλαξῇ*, is a uniquely Pauline word, apparently intensifying the normal word for "reconcile". The contexts here and in Col 1:20-22, the only other place the word is used, are particularly intense and "bloody," with the graphic death of Christ and far-reaching restoration of relationship in view. Please, see Appendix #3, WS #2 for more. Paul deals in verse 16 with the vertical aspect of the parties relationships with God (*τῷ θεῷ*), these being restored or reconciled

“through the cross.” The phrase “through the cross” is one of the four prepositional means phrases mentioned earlier. The other three are considered parallel, all using ἐν (vs. 13, 14, and 16b) and speaking of the death of Christ in various ways. The current prepositional phrase, διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ, uses a different preposition but is nevertheless parallel to the other three, at least semantically so. All are means prepositional of the same selfless act of Christ. These comprise the fourth major structural feature of the paragraph mentioned above, all of these features reinforcing Paul’s message. A “both to one” repetition (the second such phrase uses δυο, in verse 15, to make the same point) is in this verse, as well, with both, Jew and Gentile finding themselves in one body being reconciled to God through the cross together. The enmity of verse 14 is “killed” (again, note the intense, bloody context that is the backdrop for both ἀποκαταλλαξῇ and εἰρήνῃ).

Jesus Christ preached tranquility (2:17-18).

Preached tranquility (2:17). “Being peace and making peace do not avail or benefit unless the peace is made known” (Best, 270) so here we have the proclamation of the peace just made through the cross. The language indicates that it is Christ that did the preaching and that it was a past event (two aorists, participle and indicative verb). There are other views on this (please see Appendix #4, P#2) but καὶ is a continuative conjunction and links verse 17 to the previous material. The preaching here is clearly to both Jew and Gentile since not only is the near and far referencing used but peace is unnecessarily repeated for both groups. The clear allusion here is to Isa 52:7 and especially 57:19, which is almost quoted verbatim. The context of salvation, “near” and “far,” and the message of peace all indicate an intentional parallel, more explicit than the earlier language of proselytism employed in verse 13. The only difference is an inserted “you” (O’Brien, 208; Best, 270) for the sake of Paul’s audience, the Gentiles.

Both Jew and Gentile (2:18). The basis for preaching peace, declaring the cross, is given in verse 18 (Lincoln, 149) using familiar “two to one” language but new imagery. Access is the picture here, the probable reference being either religious or political, as to entrance to the presence of God, forbidden under the Law to all but the high priest, or to a political authority. The former is to be preferred since the letter is dealing with spiritual realities and political concerns are not to be found. Authorities, etc. are found in Ephesians but these are spiritual powers “in the heavenlies” not emperors, magistrates or the like. Too intimate a term is used, τοῦ πατέρα, to be referencing any but God, even this is quite in contrast to the unapproachable glory of God of the Old Covenant. Since πνεύματι is almost certainly the Holy Spirit here, we see all the Trinity involved (O’Brien, 210) in this very personal access (ability to approach or see), to God.

Gentiles of God’s people, for fellowship with Him (2:19-22).

Gentiles are legitimate (2:19-20a).

Separated no more (2:19a). The next paragraph begins with an “emphatically inferential connective” (Thrall, 10-11) presenting the summary some saw in verses 17 and 18. Paul now draws together the truths of the last paragraph and presents them in the form of images of citizenship, a household and a temple. The connective, ἀρὰ οὖν, is a double particle that is used quite frequently by Paul (Best, 276). It is strengthened by its duplication but is only emphatic with the same inferential meaning as either particle alone. It is not uncommon but the textual variant, well attested (see Appendix #1, TC #2), probably occurred by dropping the οὖν

as redundant. Paul clearly had presented his case and was ready to close. He refers back to verse 12, the former alienation of the Gentiles with one of the same words, ξένοι, strangers, and adds another synonym for emphasis, “aliens.” But this is to say what they are not.

Legitimately a part (2:19b). He goes on, repeating the verb, ἐστε, to emphasize his positive point, that the Gentiles are now included in the citizenry and household of God, lending both legal and personal status to their new standing. The saints mentioned are all Christians, as the rest of Ephesians (for a full discussion see Lincoln, 150-1). To be a member of a household in the first century afforded much of the same advantages of identity, security and provision as a family of today but was not limited to genetic relationships. It was a ready and familiar remedy for many who were without personal advantages, being parted for various reasons from their own genetic families (for more on this see P. H. Towner, “Households and Household Codes,” DPL, 417-419.).

Basis of apostles and prophets (2:20a). The second of five words with the same root in this paragraph occur to start verse 20. Using οἰκεῖται in verse 19 as introduction, these word form the main semantic device, that of a construction process or a building, to communicate Paul’s message in the conclusion to this key passage. This imagery was foreshadowed by the use of μεσοτοιχόν, an architectural term, in verse 14. The aorist participle indicates the basis for the Gentiles change of fortune indicated in verse 19. In the word here this is looked at as a completed construction while the rest of the paragraph uses the metaphor of progressing construction. So we see the dual tension of a completed action that is ongoing. This is in keeping with Paul’s common element of realized eschatology in Ephesians. The first element of the construction project is a foundation consisting of the apostles and prophets. The metaphor has changed since 1 Cor 3:9-17 where the foundation was Christ. There the context concerned the lives of individuals here we are concerned with the corporate structure of the church. The Twelve and Paul are the authoritative representatives of Christ that started and formed the early basis for the church to build on ever since. The prophets are the NT prophets that, along with the apostles, were given the revelation of truth that has made the church structurally sound and able to weather the stresses of the centuries. For more on this phrase, please see Appendix #4, P# 3.

Fellowship with God (2:20b-22).

Jesus Christ is the basis (2:20b). At this point, concluding the accomplished portion of the Gentiles’ new position, and providing a basis for the ongoing aspect of their new relationship with God is an independent genitive absolute phrase about the importance of Christ to the church. Again our attention is drawn to the person of the Savior. Αὐτοῦ makes Him emphatic as the subject of the phrase which, being predicative, is subsumed in Him. He is the cornerstone. Ακρογωνιαίου is actually somewhat uncertain in its meaning though it is clear that it is a key element in the construction process. A textual variant, adding λιθοῦς, tried to help clear up the mystery but has only informed us of the scribe’s opinion, which is late and follows a common pattern in Western witnesses. Please, see Appendix #3, WS #3 for more on the current level of understanding about this word.

United growth for fellowship (2:21). Two parallel relative clauses in verses 21 and 22 reinforce the key position of Christ in the progress of the church. In verse 21 the whole church, or building, is in view. A textual issue concerns the addition of an article to οἰκοδομῇ. Strong evidence for omitting it, coupled with the tendency to add, especially to clarify, ensures that the texts are correct to go without it. See more at Appendix #1, TC #1. The article is not needed for the context is clear that the universal church is in view. The συν present passive

participle, “being fitted together,” is to be taken with the following indicative αὐξεί, “is growing,” in a causal sense. It indicates the constant care necessary for a sound structure to be raised. Each stone is important even though the whole building is in view. Αὐξεί does not mean we have a mixed metaphor in this verse as supposed by O’Brien (219) for buildings grow, figuratively, as do living organisms. Αὐξεί and συναρμολογουμένη are used by Paul again in 4:15-16 to give a strongly progressive view of integrated individual and corporate function in the church, here a “holy temple.” We see now what this building is, a place of worship, the ναός, the sanctuary where the very presence of God was in times of the Old Covenant. What an honor for God’s people to be involved in such a project, themselves being considered worthy to comprise this place of worship, described as “holy,” for the God of glory.

Individual growth for fellowship (2:22). The second of the parallel relative clauses continues the emphasis on Christ, her head, in the ongoing progress of the church, it is always “in Him.” These ἐν remind us of the constant theme in Ephesians of all that happens “in Christ,” now the personal growth of individuals in verse 22. That individuals are in view here is clear not only in the form of the verb but an explicit plural subject is added for emphasis (O’Brien, 220; Best, 288). The renewed second person address makes these things personal and reminds of the way the passage started in verse 11, heightening the contrasts involved. The parallel structure is further strengthened by the presence, again, of another συν verb, this one unique to this occurrence in the NT. We are reminded twice, at the end of this key passage on the unity of the church that it is “together” that God’s work is accomplished. The parallel continues with “into a dwelling of God” in the place of “temple” of verse 21, both objects of the same preposition. Here the emphasis is more on the continual presence of God, less formal than “temple,” a place of worship. Paul will return to this idea in 3:17, more intimately. Both of these parallel images speak to the intimate nature of God’s relationship with His people in Christ, with them forming the structure in which His continual presence resides.

Application

The most important part of knowing God and His word is becoming like Him and obeying Him. In this crucial section of Scripture we find a maligned group of people, the Gentiles, becoming a part of God eternal plan. We must be careful not to overlook those we might otherwise consider unworthy and reject or even ourselves, at times. Because God looks on the heart and “has chosen the weak things . . . and the despised” (1 Cor 1:27-28 NASB).




A second application is to keep the Savior central to our life. This is obvious and trite but critical to practice continually. We see in our passage that it is He Himself who is the focus of the critical paragraph. He is not only our salvation but also our unity, the One who destroyed what condemns us all and keeps us apart from true unity with others, expectations on which acceptance is based. Whether it is Law or laws or rules or simply demanded expectations, none of us match up but must find in the death of Christ our unity with God and others.

Finally, we read here of a church that is growing and of individuals who are being made a part of that structure. Paul elaborates on the picture of a body growing and developing itself in chapter four, but the importance of the individual can be seen here, as well. It is what we all do together that makes the church and her local representations worthy of the supreme price that has been paid to purchase the opportunity for us to be a part of this great task. Individual greatness can be achieved by ordinary people made saints and parts of a living palace worthy, somehow, of the living God.


Appendix #1

Text Critical Issues

TC Issue #1: ῥ̅ in Ephesians 2:21

Variant #1: w/   -  A C P 6 81 326 1739^c 1881 *pc* Or^{com 1739mg}

Variant #2: w/o   - * B D F G  33 1739* M Cl Or


Variant #1 has primary Alexandrian evidence from the 5th century, A and C (uncials), and from the fourteenth, 1881 (minuscule). The rest are secondary. Variant #2 has primary Alexandrian evidence from the 4th century, * and B (uncials), and from the 9th and 10th centuries, 33 and 1739 (minuscules). Also supporting this reading are the Byzantine majority (minuscules) from the 9-16th centuries. Western support includes uncials D (6th century), F and G (both 9th century). The rest here are secondary, also.


Genealogical solidarity pushes the dates for #2 Alexandrian uncials further back to the 2nd century and for the Byzantine majority to the 4th century. Geographical distribution from the fourth century and earlier show #1 with no evidence that early but with #2 present in Alexandrian and Byzantine areas. A side note shows variant #2 even present in Western areas, at a later date, but in opposition to its own text-type, as well as probable Byzantine pressures, both having tendencies to conflate and paraphrase.

This tendency of Byzantine and Western texts to conflate and paraphrase was compounded by scribal inclination to add for the sake of clarity. All this pressure was resisted by variant #2 to hold to its reading without the ῥ̅. More pressure to add came from the fact that this passage is the only place Paul used οἰκοδομη with a definite sense, the absence of the article might obscure this and it might be added later to clarify. There was some Atticist conflict about this word and Hebraism issues to further incline a scribe to add the article. Variant #1 does this but #2, against the pressures above, does not. It is therefore more difficult and shorter and more likely accounts for the variation.

External evidence, including the primary manuscripts involved, dating and geographical distribution, as well as internal evidence, especially resisting the trends of text-type and scribal tendency, all point to variant #2 as the most likely original reading. There was not article before οἰκοδομη.

TC Issue #2: οὐν in Eph 2:15

Variant (omission): P^{46, vid} F G  1739, 1881 *pc* sy^p

The Alexandrian evidence for omitting the οὐν consists of P⁴⁶, an excellent Alexandrian papyrus from about 200 AD (however the reading is difficult to be certain of) and the primary minuscules 1739 and 1881 from the 10th and 14th centuries, respectively. The western uncials F and G, both from the 9th century, and a mixed text from the 9th-10th century, , contain the omission as well.

Dropping the conjunction goes against the tendency of the western uncials for paraphrasing. This would favor the reading in these. The tendency on the part of scribes was to add to the text to clarify, so deleting would usually favor the variant also. However, in this case, involving a double particle, the conjunction would more likely have been dropped for the reason

most texts were added to, for clarity. Especially since the construction here is highly unusual, being used only by Paul and only twelve times, at that, with only four of these outside of Romans. It might have been considered redundant by copyists. While the “shorter is better” canon does not apply here, the “more difficult is better” does, and best explains the variant.

The external evidence, though normally sound, being primary sources, is uncertain in the case of P⁴⁶ and late in the case of the rest. The preponderance of support to include the conjunction οὐν is not even listed by the editors of the NA²⁷ because of its weight in behalf of the text. Internally, the likelihood of scribal shepherding the text to clarify or correct the unusual construction makes the possibility of intentional omission very probable. The clear probability is that οὐν should be included here as the choice for the original reading.

Appendix #2 Structural Layout

Ephesians 2:11-22

11 Διὸ μνημονεύετε

οτι ποτε ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί

οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς
λεγομένης περιτομῆς

ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου

12 ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ

ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας του Ἰσραὴλ καὶ (ὄντες) ξένοι
τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας,

ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ (ὄντες) ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

13 νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

14 Αὐτὸς γάρ ἐστιν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν,

ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφότερα ἐν
καὶ
τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας,

τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ

15 τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν

καταργήσας,

ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον

ποιῶν εἰρήνην

16

καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἑνὶ
σώματι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ,

ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ.

17 καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς·

18

ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφότεροι ἐν ἑνὶ
πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.

19 Αρα οὐν οὐκέτι ἐστε ξένοι καὶ πάροιχοι

ἀλλὰ ἐστε συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ,

20 ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν,

ὅντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,

21 ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη

αὕξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ,

22 ἐν ᾧ καὶ

ὕμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι.

Appendix #3

Word Studies

WS #1 - χΕΙΡΟΠΟΙΗΤΟΣ in Eph 2:11

The basis sense of this adjective is *made by hand*, to describe something that has been made or created by humans, opposite that coming into being naturally. Often it refers to man working with natural materials but forming or manipulating them into his own forms, as the wood and natural materials of an ancient road (X. *An.* 3.4.5, IV/V BC). This sense is also evident in the example from Thucydides (2.77, V BC) where the referent is fire, a natural phenomenon, set by human design.

All references in the Septuagint use χΕΙΡΟΠΟΙΗΤΟΣ, usually in the neuter plural, with reference to pagan idolatry, either, substantively of, or, attributively, describing the idol itself. It usually translates the Hebrew כְּסִידִים (Ksidim), worthless.

BDAG lists the LXX with extra-biblical citations to support a sense of "made by human hands" without commenting on the different referents. This overlooks the significance of the LXX evidence which clearly makes the association with idolatry. The sense of χΕΙΡΟΠΟΙΗΤΟΣ in the LXX is clearly to idolatry with all the referents referring to idol worship and most referring directly to idols themselves.

All the Hellenistic sources follow Moulton-Milligan giving the sense of χΕΙΡΟΠΟΙΗΤΟΣ to be *made by hands (human)*. The various referents range from works of art (MM, P Lond 854, 4 (=III. 205, *Selections*, 70; I AD) to buildings, especially temples (BDAG, Philo *Mos.* II. 88, 168). The one slight distinctive referent, which might require a different translation, is that of fire (πυρ) by Josephus (TDNT) indicating a fire started on purpose by humans. This distinction was made in the classical period by LSJ from a reference by Thucydides to an intentional fire. These referents are all consistent with the basic sense of χΕΙΡΟΠΟΙΗΤΟΣ to be *made by human hands*.

New Testament usage of χΕΙΡΟΠΟΙΗΤΟΣ, outside of Paul, is very uniform. It is always used of a temple or temples (once), either as one(substantively) or to describe one (attributively). One mention (Mark 14:58) is of the physical Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, twice in Acts (7:48 and 17:24) of pagan temples and twice in Hebrews, once of the earthly, physical Jewish Temple opposite "the true one" (9:24), and once of "the true one" ("greater and more perfect"), not made with hands (οὐ χΕΙΡΟΠΟΙΗΤΟΥ) (9:11). The last reference is similar to that in Mark 14:58 where the negative is expressed with the prefix α- instead of the Hebrews' οὐ, a matter of style. The sense for these non-Pauline referents is that of *temple*, in the case of the substantives and *made with hands*, in the case of the attributives, but always describing temples.

Paul only uses the term once, with the attributive sense, the more secular *made with hands*. Though BDAG cites some sources (Jewish in nature) that used the term in reference to temples, as the New Testament, above, the basic secular Greek usage was much broader. Paul's usage, therefore, would speak more to his Ephesian audience designated in verse 2:11, Gentile Christians. The referent in this one usage is to circumcision, a religious practice of the Jews.

Ephesians 2:11

The use of χΕΙΡΟΠΟΙΗΤΟΣ in Eph 2:11 has two layers of meaning, each to a different audience. One to the Gentile Christians, the verse was directly addressed to, and one to Jewish

believers and non-believers who might consider the Gentile brethren as second class citizens in the church.

As the Gentiles read this verse, their reading would be more informed by the secular usage of the term. Our understanding of this usage dates from Herodotus and extends to the records of usage we have in the Hellenistic, though Jewish, Josephus, the papyri and others of the then current Hellenistic/Koine culture of the first century AD. This usage simply indicated something *made with hands* and had been used to reference projects from lakes and roads to art and, most recently, to buildings, especially temples. All this would have lent an easy reading of the verse to mean, periphrastically, circumcision that was *performed by people, much as any other act of surgery or skill might be performed*.

The more pointed usage of the term, though, was also the more subtle. Anyone reading, Gentile or Jew, would have picked up the general sarcastic tone of the verse and the delegation of the practice of circumcision to a purely human achievement, quite apart from the religious significance given to it by most religious Jews. Yet, probably the most powerful impact would have been upon anyone, whether Jews or “God-fearing Gentiles,” who were familiar with the Septuagint, as most were in the Hellenistic first century. Every usage of χειροποιητος in the Septuagint was to idolatry. The implication drawn by linking circumcision with idolatry was drove home an important point, that any human effort to reach God was not an aid but an obstacle similar to another object of worship. His intent in the section is to reaffirm to the Gentiles that they were fully qualified and co-equal “fellow-members of the body” of Christ, the church. The use χειροποιητος in verse 11 serves well to help de-emphasize the external nature of any Jewish claims to superiority.

“For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor 4:18 NASB)

WS #2 - ἀποκαταλλάσσω in Eph 2:16

This word, defined as *reconcile* is found only three times in the NT, in Ephesians 2:16 and in Col 1:20, 22, all Paul, of course. It is found nowhere before Paul and is thought to have been coined by him. “Its meaning and use are essentially the same as those of καταλλάσσω” (TDNT, 258). Therefore we will look at the information that is available for this ancestor and then return to ἀποκαταλλάσσω to note any special nuances.

BDAG gives the general sense of καταλλάσσω to be “the exchange of hostility for a friendly relationship, *reconcile*.” That was the longstanding sense of the word dating from Herodotus (5.29; 6.108). The general background idea was that of “‘exchange’ one thing for another” (LSJ, 899). This included changing money (Plu. *Arat.* 18) to trading or exchanging one thing for another (Pl. *Phd.* 69a). A second sense was to “change a person from enmity to friendship, *reconcile*” (LSJ, 899). Aristotle referred to reconciling “someone to another” (*Oec.* I 34. 8b, 9) and Herodotus, “to reconcile the enmity with someone” (1.61). A later reference referred to a crime that needed atonement before reconciliation (*OGI* 218.105, Ilium, III BC).

The synchronic usage came to be more personal instead of the ancient idea of changing or exchanging inanimate things, though the ancient sense was preserved in the only use of καταλλάσσω in the Septuagint (Jer 31:39), a negative change in circumstances for Moab. 2 Macc 7:33 then restored the personal nuance to a slave-master relationship. Philo (*Leg. All.* 3. 134, I AD) and Josephus, “God being reconciled to” a person (*Ant.* 6.143, I AD) both helped establish the contemporary usage of the New Testament era. As to reconciliation between

people, a papyrus fragment (*POxy.* 104. 27, I AD) echoes the usage in 1 Cor 7:11, of a woman to be reconciled to her husband.

This passage in 1 Corinthians is the only usage in the NT that refers to restoring a relationship between people. *καταλλάσσω* and its noun cognate, *κατλλαγή*, find their way into the NT ten times in all. The other nine all refer to reconciliation between God and man. The verb is used five times, in Rom 5:10 (twice), 2 Cor 5:18, 19, 20, and the noun four times, in Rom 5:11, 11:15, 2 Cor 5:18, 19. God is always the subject, the One doing the reconciling, while the object mentioned are individuals (2 Cor 5:18, 20 and Rom 5:10) the world (2 Cor 5:19). The noun is used of the reconciliation of the world (Rom 11:15), of the ministry and word of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18, 19) and of reconciliation received by individuals (Rom 5:11). The main thing to be gleaned from these usages is the spiritual context and emphasis of relationships being restored. The overwhelming emphasis is on the restoration of relationship with God. This is what Paul pleads for in 2 Cor 5:20, “be reconciled to God.”

Returning to *ἀποκαταλλάσσω*, we see, as stated before from TDNT, the same basic meaning as *καταλλάσσω*, “the exchange of hostility for a friendly relationship, *reconcile*.” However, two different nuances are to be noted. First is that Christ is the subject of *ἀποκαταλλάσσω* whereas it is always God when the verb is *καταλλάσσω*. This is noted by both O’Brien (201) and Best (264). The context of Eph 2 and Col 1, where our word appears, are both overwhelmingly Christological, so the change of subject is not too surprising but still interesting to consider since there is no overlap. The second nuance to be noted is the intensification of the word by the addition of another prefix (a double compound, now). Again, both O’Brien and Best comment on this additional emphasis, even though it was not mentioned in the lexicons. They are right, of course, and the context should indicate this if nothing else. Both contexts are very focused on the cross and broad in scope. Both Eph 2 and Col 1 are especially intense and “bloody” in depicting the struggle of the Lord Jesus Christ to reestablish relationship between God and His creation. The relationship in Eph 2 concerns the uniting of two widely diverse and antagonistic groups into one in Christ. The scope of Col 1 is cosmic in its consideration of “all things” being reconciled, especially the people created in the image of God and, even beyond reconciliation, to the further purpose of bringing them into the presence of God perfect and without moral stain. No wonder Paul had to invent a word to express this change in status, “making peace.”

WS #3 - ἀκρογωνιαίος in Eph 2:20

This adjective is used to describe Christ in the genitive absolute phrase of Eph 2:20 as the predicate genitive. It is found only in biblical literature in Isa 28:16 LXX, 1 Pet 2:6 and Eph 2:20. Formed from *ἀκρος* (extreme, highest) and *γωνία* (corner, angle) the exact meaning of the term is in doubt.

Again this term is not found in classical Greek or any purely secular literature. However, its probable etymological ancestor, the adjective *γωνιαίος*, meant *on or at the angle* (LSJ). It was used by Josephus, of the middle wall in the temple (*BJ* 5.3.5, I AD), and by Dionysius Halicarnassensis, of a column (3.22, I BC). Mention in the Septuagint occurs only at Job 38:6, of a stone (cornerstone, fig.). The nominal ancestor of our word, *γωνία*, occurs 32 times in the Septuagint, usually as simple *corner*, but once for the leaders of Israel (1 Sam 14:38).

Marcus Barth mentions several references to extra-biblical literature in his efforts to pin down meaning for our word but it's difficult to know what his referents are, some are only to generic mentions of "stone" with tenuous links to ἀκρογωνιαίος. Best (285) mentions three extra-biblical references, the *Peshitta* of Isa 28:16, 4 Kingdoms 25.17 (Symmachus) and *Testament of Solomon* 22.7-23.3 and infers others, giving the background of the last two to be the Jerusalem Temple. TDNT gives one more, *Aphrahat* (I, 6f., p. 17, Parisot). All of these references tend to indicate that the ἀκρογωνιαίος was an important stone high in a building that was placed later, or in some cases, last, in the construction process.

This would give our word the sense of a "keystone" or "capstone," placed higher in a building or perhaps as the final stone placed in an arch (domes did not exist during the period we are concerned with). Joachim Jeremias first proposed this view in the 1920's and 30's. It has been supported by numerous scholars, among them Veilhauer, Hanson, Conzelmann, Bruce and Beare. However the literature is somewhat unreliable and late in date (O'brien, 217). Also contextual problems make this understanding of the word difficult to rely on. One such problem would be the problem of Gentile Christians in Asia Minor not being familiar enough with the Jewish contexts above to grasp the illusion in the passage (Best, 285). Also there is the need to blend into the imagery of a building that is growing in Christ, the ἀκρογωνιαίος, not one that is finished or nearly completed. There is some sense in which the Jew-Gentile relationship has been completed, by implication of the aspect of the aorist participle, ἐποικοδομηθέντες, "having been built," but this is mentioned to be on the basis of the foundation mentioned. The mention of the foundation is too close to this term to be ignored, with Christ being the already installed (present participle) ἀκρογωνιαίος.

This leads to the second possible sense of this term, "cornerstone". The only other two biblical mentions of the term, 1 Pet 2:6 and Isa 28:16, by virtue of their connection to one another, are, also, closely related in context to the foundation of a building. In fact, five other references to Isa 28:16, in the gospels and Acts, are implied to be related both to ἀκρογωνιαίος and the mentioned foundation. The foundation is actually mentioned twice in the LXX version of Isa 28:16. This doesn't settle the issue but it is strong evidence for those who would value the Scripture as their primary source. This sense of the word is preferred by O'brien, J.A. Robinson, Schnackenburg, Pfammater and R. J. McKelvey. However, the weight of external evidence, as we now have it, militates against this view. Ernest Best abstains from an opinion (286) after retreating from the first view, above, in earlier writing. The current writer leans toward the second view, related to a foundation, "cornerstone," but more work needs to be done.

Appendix #4

Problem Solving and Validation

P #1 – το μεσοτοιχον του φραγμου, Eph 2:14

Introduction. In the middle of the exciting and pivotal passage, Eph 2:11-22, as Paul brings the Gentiles into the body of Christ, we find the metaphor, το μεσοτοιχον του φραγμου (verse 14), used to refer to the separation of the Gentiles from the people and presence of God. This phrase could be translated, “the middle (or, dividing) wall of the fence.” There is some question about what this phrase refers to. Almost certainly the fence refers to the Law, mentioned in the following verse. However, there is not unanimous consent to this view.

Being a metaphorical term it is ambiguous and non-specific. Being that which has kept the Gentiles out of the franchise of God, it is important to the exegesis of the passage. This is our introduction to the Gentile solution.

Issues. The main working issue with the phrase, το μεσοτοιχον του φραγμου, is to identify what it refers to in the key context we have here. First the lexical meaning, sense and referent, must be determined.. Issues in determining the synchronic sense and referents include the rarity of these words usage, their grammatical relation to one another (one is the focus, the other is descriptive of it) and to the context, the audience, their cultural orientation and, as will be shown for this phrase, their geographic location. All of these will be a factor in determining the referent of our phrase in its context in Eph 2:14.

Next the symbolic referent may be determined from both the immediate context and parallels in other contexts. The major issue at this level is the historic uniqueness of the subject matter in context and the rarity of usage elsewhere, even in the New Testament. We will find no exact parallels using the words of our phrase but some ideological parallels will be considered to attempt to develop a frame of reference.

Options. Five different views on μεσοτοιχον του φραγμου have been surfaced. These will be considered in perceived order of ascending credibility.

1) The veil of the Holy of Holies. This view is only discussed by Ernest Best, Barth, and Charles Ellicott. This temple veil represented the separation of Jews and mankind from God. Best and Barth correctly mention that “curtain” is not mentioned here, but “fence.” The Gentile addressees would not relate to this and only the vertical problem with God is addressed, not the horizontal one between Jew and Gentile. Also if this option were true, we would still be left with a symbol not a tangible referent.

2) Gnostic/Apocalyptic. This is perhaps the oddest of the interpretations of the “fence.” It is discussed, however, by Peter O’Brien, Best, Barth and Rudolf Schnackenburg. H. Schlier popularized this view that sees Paul using allusions to the gnostic concept of separation of the earthly realm from the heavenly realm. The gnostic Redeemer penetrates the “wall,” which Schlier suggests must include the Law as well as other elements, and after a struggle with angelic powers, destroys both the powers and the Law. Objections to this are numerous, including the late date of the Jewish/Gnostic material used as sources (O’Brien, 195; Best, 255), not dealing with the textual issues, especially the horizontal relations between Jew and Gentile (Ibid.), no contextual justification for this view of heaven and earth in Ephesians (Schnackenburg, 113), and the fact that μεσοτοιχον is never in the sources used to develop this option (Best, 255). I would add that this view seems to end with the Redeemer destroying the Law, as in 6), below, so accomplishes nothing different in the end.

3) Ordinary metaphor. Ernest Best has been alone among the commentators examined in properly insisting on usage of μεσοτοιχος in source material for the various views. He has identified the most probable referent the addressed Gentiles would identify with. It has been hard to find biblical or non-biblical use of this term. Best gives credit to Professor Peter Richardson for uncovering a common Greek architectural usage of the term, “middle wall.” It was apparently well known in Asia Minor, the geographical location we are concerned with and was even used by Josephus about a temple wall but not the balustrade (5), below). A secular metaphorical usage is attributed to Athenaeus in *Deipn.* 7.14.281D (ed. G. Klaiber). Best, however, sees only a secular symbolic referent to modern usage of a subjective obstacle between people as being a wall between them. He does not establish this same usage in the historic period we are dealing with. I must reluctantly part with Best in his conclusion.

4) Temple balustrade. This option regards το μεσοτοιχον του φραγμου as the wall in the Jerusalem Temple that separated the court of the Gentiles from the inner courts and the sanctuary. This wall was about 5’ tall and was posted with signs warning Gentiles to proceed no further into the Temple or risk punishment by death. It would have been a powerful symbol of separation between Jews and Gentiles and would inform the context some since this section ends with a discussion of temple building in verses 19-22. Paul, also, would have been painfully aware of this wall since he was probably in prison, at the writing of Ephesians, falsely accused of bringing a Gentile beyond this wall. There is considerable doubt, however, about widespread knowledge of this feature of the Temple by Gentiles in Asia Minor, some distance from Jerusalem. The problems with this wall being both the lexical and symbolic reference of το μεσοτοιχον του φραγμου are: 1. Lexical- The words used for this wall would have been λιθινος, σορεγ and, especially, δρυφακτος. Neither of our words were used for this wall. Josephus used δρυφακτος (Best, 254) even reserving μεσοτοιχος for another inner wall in the same Temple (Ibid., footnote 39, 257). 2. Context- Whatever our phrase refers to it must be other than physical for much more is at stake in the context than a physical barrier in one building in one city in Palestine. There is no symbolic referent here. This is an interesting and graphic view to consider, in light of the separation between Jews and Gentiles, but it must be rejected.

5) Law. This view would equate the το μεσοτοιχον του φραγμου with the Mosaic Law, the Jewish Torah. There is the advantage of extra-biblical ideological support in the 2nd century BC *Epistle of Aristeeas*, 139: “Our lawgiver . . . fenced us about with impenetrable palisades and with walls of iron to the end that we should mingle in no way with any of the other nations. . .” (O’Brien, 196, footnote 165). The Mishnah, as well, in *Abot.* 1:1; 3:18 refers to the Torah as a wall which separated the Jews from the Gentiles and protected them from impurity. Oral tradition is included in this protection, even as erecting a wall around the Torah to ensure its observance. The Jewish Torah would also be familiar to Gentiles wherever there was a Jewish synagogue. The strongest argument for this view, however, would be the context, especially what follows in verse 15. The two phrases, τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας and τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας are parallel (Lincoln, 141; O’Brien, 196) and probably appositional, equating our phrase with τὸν νόμον. Problems with this view would be that the wall of the Torah would only exist from the Jewish point of view and our context is Gentile. Some would also see Paul’s favorable use of the Pentateuch at times to preclude his negative reference here. Neither of these objections are fatal. The Gentiles would see the Torah as the source of the exclusive Jewish positions and attitudes that they were so familiar with from their neighbors in the diaspora. Paul seems to have looked at the Law on several levels so we should not be narrow in what we require of him on this subject (cf. Rom 7:12). The most difficult

objection is raised by Best. The words we are dealing with here are never used of the Law. The lexical referent for "middle wall" is a serious unanswered question. Nevertheless, most of the examined commentators come down here.

Solution. It seems to be a far better fit to regard τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ to be referring to the Mosaic Law than to any of the other options suggested by the examined commentators above. However, I would like to try to resolve the remaining issue of an adequate lexical referent and refine this option regarding its statement if not the end result.

The context alone establishes the symbolic referent as the "Law of commandments contained in ordinances" (verse 15 NASB). However the lexical referent is a different matter, even though most of the commentators treat them as one and the same. Neither μεσότοιχον nor φραγμοῦ have been identified lexically though I believe Law is the correct term being referred to symbolically. Best has helped us here by bringing μεσότοιχον, "middle wall," to light as a common architectural term that would be familiar to Paul's Gentile audience. Φραγμοῦ is the common word for "fence" in the New Testament and Hellenic Greek (BAGD). It stands as a genitive of apposition to μεσότοιχον and so is the specific reference to which μεσότοιχον is the general class. So we can have the translation "the dividing wall which is the fence" (O'Brien, 195; Lincoln, 141). Again, the symbolic referent remains the Law.

Conclusion. τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ occurs at a crucial point in the development of Paul's argument in Ephesians. There must be no confusion here, the unity of God's family is at stake. The Law is the "hated thing" that has kept Jews and Gentiles apart from each other and from God. The Law is the structural wall, specifically, the fence which Jesus Christ has removed in Himself. This fits the common usage for Paul's audience and, especially, the context with its grammar.

P #2 – και ἐλθων εὐηγγελισατο εἰρηνην, Eph 2:17

Introduction and Issues. A "notorious crux" (O'Brien, 205), the words και ἐλθων εὐηγγελισατο εἰρηνην, lit. "and having come He preached peace," begin a different aspect of the mechanism of unity presented in v. 14-16, that of its proclamation. The issues are dual. When did Christ come and how (means) did He preach?

Options. The most important views on these verses are as follows.

1) A pre-incarnational coming is seen as a possibility by Best (271) though not even included by Hanson in his supporting scripture for this general idea. Certainly this was covert and the message muted before the incarnation but where are the instances of this?

2) The incarnation as the coming, sometimes coupled with the earthly life of Christ, is a possibility. However, Jesus was sent "only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," whereas the preaching here in verse 17 is to both Jew and Gentile ("near" and "far"). The earthly life of Christ also stands out in the context too much as inconsistent.

3) O'Brien gives the cross as a possible time of ἐλθων here. Coming and preaching are tied closely in this view though no reason is given. Isa 52:7 and 57:19 are tied in closely and the message is that of 52:7 of victory over the world. The whole phrase is taken to be a transition and summary of verses 14-16 which precede and the cross is the preaching of peace. O'Brien rightly sees a problem with this view in making the content of the message to be sovereignty and "thus is different from any notion of gospel" (206). The OT context is actually that of salvation but O'Brien sees a distinction between the achievement of peace on the cross and the proclamation of that peace. Best dismisses this view, nevertheless there is much to commend it.

4) Best mentions the resurrection as a possible referent to the described coming with the preaching to consist, in this view, of Christ giving instructions to the apostles. This does not describe the resurrection well and giving the command, considered alone, is not preaching.

5) The coming of the Spirit and preaching through the apostles as the meaning here has widespread support. Some see the work of the Spirit and the apostles as separate options here. The Spirit is said to convict the world (John 16:8) and the apostles or any messenger is said to be an extension of the one who sent him (Matt 10:40, etc.). However both of these activities are perpetual and ongoing while our participle and verb are both aorists.

Solution. O'Brien holds to number 5), above, as "the most likely meaning" (207). Best doesn't like any of the options and joins Barth in saying the meaning is impossible to be specific about. He refers to 2) and 5), b as the "least objectionable" (273). However there are some observations that can be combined with the strongest points above to move toward resolution.

As mentioned, there is much in view 3) to commend it. The summary and transitional aspect of that view is suspect, though, for the conjunction is continuative not inferential. We are just looking at the next action in sequence. The aorist participle points to a time prior to or concurrent with the preaching for the coming that ἐλθων describes. The καὶ connects verse 17 with the preceding material so while our verse introduces a shift in the narrative description, there is not a complete disconnect. This connection along with the two aorists (participle and indicative εὐηγγελισατο) indicate the completed action preceding is tied to the main verbal action here (καὶ provides the previous tie-in and the participle provides the forward tie-in to the main verb). The coming and preaching should be taken together as their relationship is very close, being either that of a causal participle to its controlling verb or, more likely, a participle of attendant circumstance. All the requirements of attendant circumstance are met and both the NASB and NIV translate the construction this way while the NLT (New Living Translation) actually combine the two words into one, "brought (peace)." This would all mean that Christ came and preached peace by the way He made peace, through the cross, rendering the Law powerless.

Conclusion. Not by words but by His most supreme act of love, uniting men in Himself through the cross, Jesus Christ has made peace known through the centuries. In this He has provided the content of our message and the power to live and proclaim it. Verses 17 and 18 are by extension, in completion of and with common vocabulary, to be taken with verses 14-16. "Being peace and making peace do not avail or benefit unless the peace is made known." (Best, 270).

P #3 – τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, Eph 2:20

Introduction and Issues. Some discussion has been stirred by the phrase "the foundation of the apostles and prophets." There are three basic issues: 1) the foundation imagery, 2) the relationship between apostles and prophets, and 3) the identity of apostles and prophets.

Options. The NEB translates this "the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets." This is the meaning of 1 Cor 3:10 referring to Christ as the foundation laid by Paul. A few others (Meyer and Sandnes) have taken the position of the NEB in apparent attempts to correlate the imagery in the two passages. The genitives in this case would be producer, source or subjective with the apostles and prophets laying the foundation. Alford took these to be genitives of possession. These are forced readings to make the imagery unnecessarily consistent. Besides if Christ were the foundation here, He would be neither produced nor possessed by the apostles and

prophets. The genitive of apposition, “the foundation consisting of the apostles and prophets,” is easier to read and fits the context here (Robertson, 498; O’Brien, Best). The REB has altered its translation to reflect the genitive of apposition.

But were the apostles and prophets composing this foundation separate commodities or the same people? Grudem (with Harless and Pfammater) takes the position that the single article indicates the same person is in view, noting the reduced position of NT prophets over that of those in the OT. Grudem considers the OT prophet to be analogous to an apostle in authority. This is a good comparison and NT prophets are certainly a diverse and secondary group. Cf. 1 Thess 5:19-22 and 1 Cor 14:29-33, 37-8 where a prophet’s message is to be scrutinized with wisdom and they are placed under the authority of Paul with restrictions in public ministry. However, OT prophets are also more indistinct than commonly thought with schools of many prophets (1 Sam 10:10-12; 1 Kings 22:10-23; 2 Kings 2:3-15), both true and false, ministry that includes a musical element (Exo 15:20-1 and Psalms) and women prophetesses that served along with and in subjection to men at times (Miriam and Deborah). Grudem oversimplifies the possibilities (O’Brien, 215) and subordinates the NT prophet too much since a distinction is also made between apostles and prophets in Eph 3:5, given equal emphasis, and 4:11 with 1 Cor 12:28, listed as separate gifted persons. The single article involved does not necessitate a single person being in view, ie. apostles who are prophets. Actually, Wallace demonstrates that, in this type of construction, plural personal nouns are never identical in the NT (*Greek Grammar*, 285). So two distinct groups are in view here.

But who are these apostles and prophets? The word apostle is used in two senses in the NT, one being the early Twelve and Paul as equal in status, the other being a secondary group of “sent ones” with unspecified function. Only the Twelve with Paul are given authoritative status in the NT. Best sees the apostles mentioned in 3:5 to be the Twelve separate from Paul because of his prior mention in that passage. This, however, does not preclude him from being included in the group, after being mentioned separately for his special ministry to the Gentiles, in fact his authority is enhanced by the special attention. He is specifically included. Neither is Paul reluctant to include himself in 2:20, clearly stating his authority elsewhere, as well. Nor is the foundation necessarily made up of past players since it is laid under a relatively new building. The prophets in view here are New Testament prophets. Some have suggested they are Old Testament but their testimony concerning the church has needed clarification and must be considered preliminary. Other reasons would be: 1) the close relationship indicated with the apostles (here, 3:5; 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28), 2) the word order would probably be reversed (O’Brien, 214; Best, 282), and 3) the proximity to 3:5 where NT prophets are clearly in view.

Solution and Conclusion. Grammar and sense both indicate the foundation to be the apostles and prophets, here Christ is the cornerstone. The apostles and prophets are separate groups as indicated by grammar and parallel mention in the NT. These groups are the Twelve and Paul as the early authoritative apostles and the NT prophets, together providing the basis, the substructure, for the temple being built. The single article in this phrase does indicate a relationship of unity, if not identity (O’Brien, 216; Best, 281), between the two groups, at least one common element being the revelation from God used to found the church in truth and give her early direction.