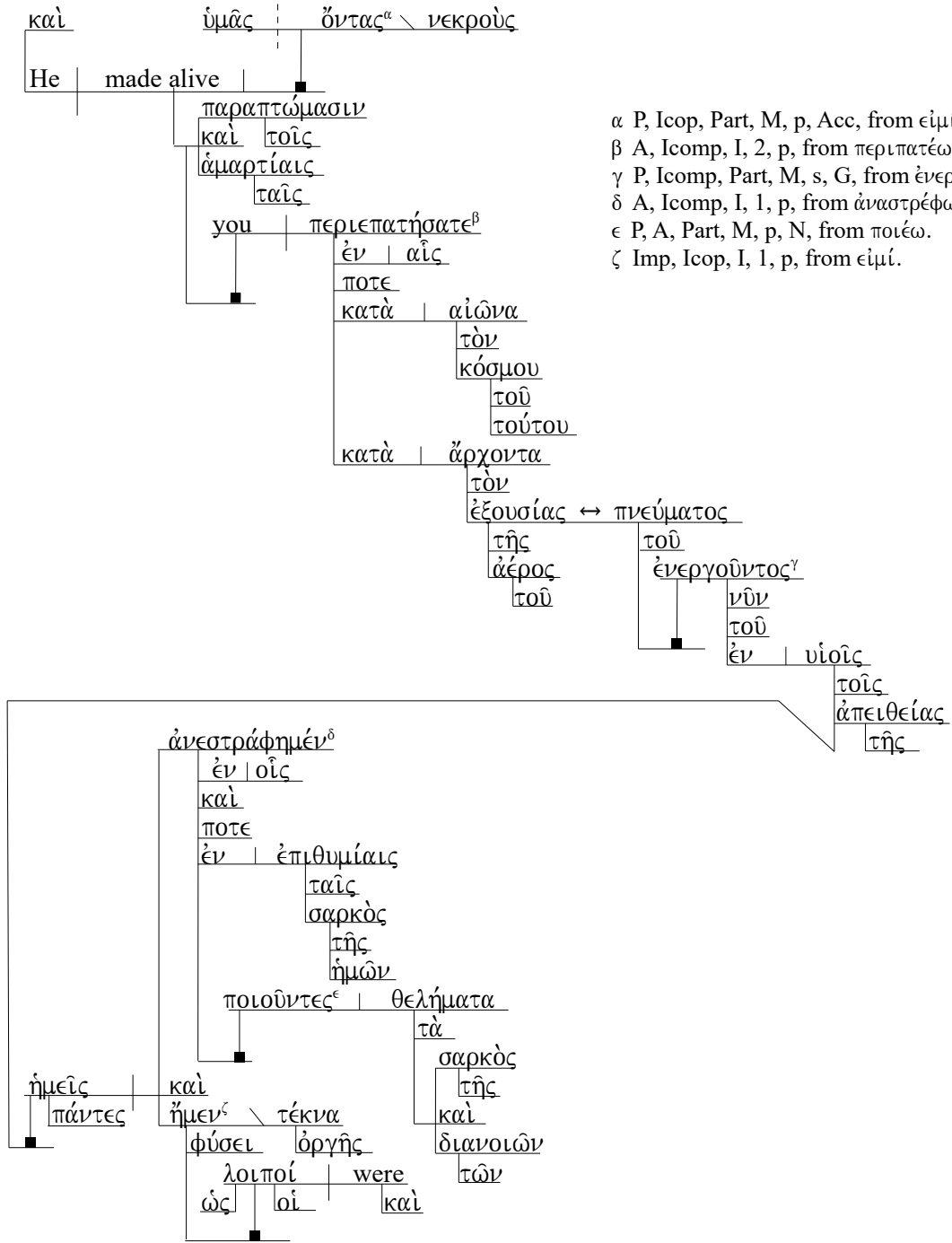


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2:1-3 καὶ ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ² ἐν αἷς ποτε περιπατήσατε κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργοῦντος ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας· ³ ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἀνεστράφημέν ποτε ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν ποιοῦντες τὰ θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν καὶ ἤμεν τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποί.



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Translation: And you He made alive when you were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which formerly you walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit who is now working among the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom we all also formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, performing the desires of the flesh and thoughts of the mind, and we were by nature children of wrath, as were also the rest.

Exegetical Considerations

Contextually, Chapter Two continues the discussion of God's sovereignty begun in Chapter One.

1. Ephesians 1:3-14 deals with the topic, "The Sovereignty of God Manifested through the Trinity."
2. Ephesians 1:15-23 deals with the topic, "The Sovereignty of God Manifested through the Saint."
3. Now in Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul deals with the topic, "The Sovereignty of God Manifested through the Sinner."

In verses 1-3 Paul reviews the condition of the unbeliever with the Ephesian believers. The problem with this structure is that Paul appears, beginning in vs. 2, to interrupt his original sentence, and expands on the statements in vs. 1. He ends the sentence of the first two verses with no written main clause. Hence, in the formal translation of verse one, we insert the words "He made alive" from verse 5 (a common practice among translators), in order to have a main clause from which to suspend the subordinate elements in vss. 1-2.

Paul then takes up the topic of God's sovereign response to unbelieving man's condition in vs. 4, but not supplying the main verb structure until vs. 5.

It is important to note that this section is written to believers, explaining their transition from an unsaved state to a saved state. Paul makes it clear here, as he did elsewhere, that as an unbeliever, the believer could not have been saved apart from God's action in bringing him to salvation.

1. καὶ ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροῦς (*kai humas ontas nekrous – And you while being dead*)

Because *humas* (you) is in the accusative form, one must supply a subject and verb, which is taken by most students of the Word to be "He made alive" (See translation above). *Ontas* is a present participle with an accusative subject *humas*. Paul uses the whole participial clause as an object to the elliptical verb "He made alive."¹

The death mentioned is generally called "spiritual death," in order to distinguish it from a physical condition. It refers to the *state* of separation² from God that is true of all unbelievers, but emphasized here as the previous state of the believers to whom he is writing.

Why does Paul consider "spiritual death" at this point in his presentation? Since the previous context encourages the Ephesian believers concerning God's working His sovereign plan, some have understood Ephesians Chapter Two to begin a new topic. However, this is a short-sighted view. Paul is continuing his discussion of God's sovereignty, though now applying it to the issue of initial salvation.

While this passage is often removed from that context, it is God's sovereign application of saving grace that is the theme here, and Paul begins by introducing the "death" condition of the believer before he became a believer.

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Paul is writing to Christians, explaining something which they may not have realized, or that new believers may not have been taught. Salvation is all of God, and none of the dead unbeliever.

The implications are strong, and quite unpopular today in an era of mass evangelism, where unbelievers are encouraged to “make a decision for Christ.” Paul would have strongly disagreed with this approach. The dead cannot decide anything. It is not the individual unbeliever who can make a decision for Christ, it is God who has already made a decision, the decision of choosing some for salvation.

The Bible teaches evangelism, but it does so in a specific manner. When Paul gave the gospel to the unbeliever, he gave them the facts of the death and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-5). He clearly explained those facts as being the thing one must believe to become saved.

But nowhere in the New Testament writings of Paul³ do we ever see him saying, “Make a decision for Christ.” Indeed, there is no indication that he even asked unbelievers to believe. He gave them the facts, and gave historical evidence of those facts, but he wisely left it to God to illumine the mind of the unbeliever.

In speaking to the Ephesian believers, Paul provides in 2:1-10 the doctrinal basis for his approach in evangelism. This is a doctrine, however, only for believers. Paul would never have broadcast this truth to the world. It is not for the world, it is for the family of God.

τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις (*tois paraptomasin kai tais hamartiais – in (the) trespasses and (the) sins*)

The nouns *trespasses* and *sins* indicate the area or sphere⁴ in which the death exists. The expression is not causal, as some exegetes have supposed, because this death is applied to the individual apart from any activity. Rather, these two nouns imply the result of being dead, that is, the activity of the ones spiritually dead.

Both nouns have the article *the* before them. When connected by *and* (*kai*) the two words have an association, but they are also distinguished. They are distinct, although occasionally the first word is translated “sin.” It should not be. It is a term that is broader than sin, and includes acts of wrong-doing⁵ that may not be sin because of some factor.

καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις (*kai tais hamartiais – and sins*)

The NT writers are consistent with the use of the word *sin* or *sins* when referring to acts of individuals, as here. It is common to make the word *hamartia* too broad, and to make it refer to every act of wrong-doing possible. This is simply not accurate, and may be the result of wrongly interpreting 1 John 5:17, which is translated in many (most?) versions, “All unrighteousness is sin.”⁶ Granted that while 1 John 5:17 is difficult to translate accurately into English, it should be understood in a somewhat different way than the common translation suggests.

John did not mean that every act of unrighteousness is an act of sin. To paraphrase his expression, “All kinds of unrighteousness is sin.” For technical grammatical reasons,⁷ the careful student cannot identify sin acts and unrighteousness in a one-on-one definition in this sentence. The best idea is that sin is a kind of unrighteousness. This is confirmed by the next statement in 1 John 5:17, “There is a sin not unto death,” because John is speaking of not only all kinds of unrighteousness, but various kinds of sin.⁸ Some sins were liable to capital punishment under the Roman system, and some were not. The same is true today in many states in the U. S.

What, then, is the correct definition of sin as Paul is using it here? Several passages of Scripture bear on this question. Note for instance Paul's statement in Romans 7:7, “What shall we say, then? Is the law

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sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law (NKJV).” Knowledge of the requirement is basic to Paul’s idea of sin, for in order to be dealt with an act of sin must be acknowledged as such. This is the meaning of 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins....” It is impossible to confess something about which one knows nothing! Without knowledge of sin, there is no solution.

Furthermore, Paul makes it clear that while *a kind of sin* was in the world from Adam to Moses, sin was not imputed. The reason was that no forensic law existed during the time between those two individuals. The first forensic law (a law with penalty attached) is the requirement to not eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge in the Garden. But no other forensic law exists in Scripture until the law given through Moses, which also had penalty attached. Note specifically Romans 5:13-14, “For until the law (Paul means the law of Moses) a kind of sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Even so death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam....”

Note specifically that Paul indicates that all the people who lived between Adam and Moses *had not sinned* in the same way that Adam sinned. Paul says Adam transgressed, a technical word⁹ which means the violation of a forensic law. But there was no forensic law from Adam to Moses. Indeed, God revealed no formal law at all during that period.

So the first thing needed to have committed a sin is a knowledge of right and wrong (righteousness vs. unrighteousness) by the revelation of a requirement. Adam sinned because God revealed to him that he was not to eat of a certain fruit. People under the Mosaic law sinned because God revealed laws by Moses. People today sin because God has revealed multiple moral requirements for believers today. Today, the requirements have no penalty attached, which was paid by Christ on the cross. But there are consequences to those known acts of unrighteousness because they are acts of sin when the individual Scripture teaches that a Christian should not perform them.

Another requirement exists in order for an unrighteous act to be a sin. Not only must it be known, it must be violated willfully. This truth is also found in 1 John. Unfortunately, 1 John 3:4 is often wrongly translated. The KJV translates it, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” However, the words “transgresseth” and “transgression” do not occur in the Greek, and this wrongly translated verse has confused many.

The New KJV translation is much better, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” Here we have a direct correspondence between sin and lawlessness. The Greek literally reads, “Every one who is doing the sin is doing the lawlessness, and the sin is the lawlessness.” Notice the four times *the* occurs in this sentence in the Greek text. This is John’s way of defining the word *sin* by the word *lawlessness*.

Lawlessness is the Greek word *anomia* (ἀνομία), and scholars are generally agreed that it means “acting as if there is no law.” It doesn’t simply mean “a violation of the law,” but means “knowing the law and willfully ignoring it.”

So now, we can define the word sin as it is used in the New Testament. An act of sin is a willful ignoring of and acting contrary to a known revealed requirement.¹⁰

The teaching of Ephesians 2:1 is that at the time that believers were dead because of trespasses and sins something was required, because a dead person cannot respond to a life situation. This will lead to the

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sovereign application of the solution beginning in vs. 4. However, Paul expands on the negative implication of the believer's condition in vss. 2-3.

2. ἐν αἷς ποτε περιπατήσατε (*en hais pote peripateōte*¹¹ – *in which you formerly walked*)

The word *which* is plural in Greek, referring to the trespass and sins. Paul relates the previously mentioned trespasses and sins to the earlier unbelieving actions of the Ephesian believers. They were no longer walking “in” them, no longer regularly performing those acts, because they were maturing believers who had learned Paul's grace message. This could be applied broadly to all believers who have so learned, but unfortunately many have not.

The word “walked” (from *peripateō*, to walk around) occurs in its literal sense in the gospels. It is the word Paul commonly uses metaphorically to mean “living a kind of lifestyle.” It implies active participation, not just “going along.”

However, at the time of writing this was no longer the reader's lifestyle, which is made clear by the temporal particle *pote*, which we've translated *formerly*. It carries the idea of a previous time, and is sometimes translatable “at that time.” These are maturing believers, no longer spiritual infants.

κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου (*kata ton aiōna tou kosmou touto* – *according to the age of this world*)

Paul uses two prepositional phrases governed by the preposition *kata*, meaning *according to*. It is a strong preposition that indicates authority over. Both uses of *kata* indicate the nature of the lifestyles of the Ephesians before they became maturing believers.

In this first phrase he indicates that they were under the authority of the “age of this world.” This is a pregnant phrase, that must be understood in the light of the words *age* and *world* as found in the NT documents.

The word *age* means simply a designated period of time. There are several different ages mentioned in the NT, including *the present evil age* (Galatians 4:1). The two ages that specifically relate to the Christian life are the *present evil age*, and the *age of the world*. It is clear that they are not the same age, as the *age of the world* extends back in time to the beginning of the world system, and could not be called “present” in the normal sense of the word.

The word *kosmos* (world) is used in a variety of ways in the New Testament:

1. The Earth (John 1:10; Acts 17:24). This is one way people use the English word *world* today.
2. The people of the world, especially the unsaved (John 3:16; Ephesians 1:4). See the discussion of Ephesians 1:4 above.
3. The World System (1 John 2:15-17). This is the way Paul uses the word in verses 2 and 12.

Paul uses *world*, then, in a negative way here, meaning the world system. The word *kosmos* can refer to any system that is arranged in an orderly manner. It is used in that precise sense in 1 Peter 3:3, where the KJV translates it *adorning*. This is the use of the word from which *cosmetics* comes.

Many conservative scholars relate the beginning of the world system to Genesis 4:17, “And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son – Enoch.” This seems reasonable, since the world system has to do with economic and cultural elements.

The structure of the world is detailed in the NT:

1. The world's ruler is Satan (John 14:30).

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2. The world lies in the lap of Satan (1 John 5:19).
3. The world is composed of 2/3 lust and 1/3 vainglory (1 John 2:16).
4. The world has its own kingdoms (Matthew 4:8; Revelation 11:15; cf. John 18:36). This was the general form of the governmental system at the time of the writing of the NT. Today, other forms of government exist in great abundance, but they are still part of the satanically controlled world system.
5. The world is passing away (1 John 2:17; 1 Corinthians 7:31).

As well as the structure being detailed, much is revealed in Scripture about the character of those associated with the world system. It is this character to which Paul refers in Ephesians 2:2. Note the following:

1. The works of the world are evil (John 7:7).
2. The world is corrupt (2 Peter 1:4).
3. The world is polluted (2 Peter 2:20).
4. The world loves its own (John 15:19).
5. The world hears its own (1 John 4:5).
6. The world has its own base teaching (Colossians 2:8; 2:20).

Without doubt, the world system is not a Christian system, and it cannot be reformed. It is broken beyond repair, and the Christian should be wary of it. The following summarizes the attitudes of those who are associated directly to the world as unbelievers:

1. The world hates believers (John 15:18; 17:14; 1 John 3:13).
2. The world is not worthy of believers (Hebrews 11:37-38).
3. The world will soil a Christian (James 1:27).
4. The world cannot know Christians in an understanding way (1 John 3:1).

Paul so describes the daily walk of the unbeliever in Ephesians 2:2. It was the foregoing characteristics of the world system that characterized their former lifestyle.

For a biblical presentation of defense against the attacks of the world system, see my work, “The Christian and the World.”

κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος (kata ton archonta tēs exousias tou aeros – according to the ruler of the authority of the air)

This prepositional phrase also characterizes the former daily walk of the Ephesian believers. This description extends through the rest of this verse. It is not a pretty picture.

The first element of this description is that their former lifestyle was according an individual stated to be “the ruler of the authority of the air.” Note carefully that this individual, who is to be identified as Satan, the devil, is not the ruler of the air. He is above such petty activity. He is the ruler of “the authority of the air.”

The word *authority* identifies an individual belonging to a class of spirits called “authorities.” The word “air” identifies the first heaven, the heaven of the atmosphere of this earth. This rank of spirit beings has already been presented briefly in Ephesians 1:21. See my chart, “The Ranks of Spirit Beings in the

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Greek New Testament” in the Appendix to this work. See also the notes on Ephesians 6:12 and following.

Spirit beings regularly inhabit the first and second heavens, as is also mentioned in Revelation 8:13:

And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!

The phrase “through the midst of heaven” is *en mesouranēmati*, literally “in midheaven.” Some scholars take this to mean “in midair” (Liddell-Scott; Louw-Nida, Barclay-Newman and Friberg, to name a few). James Moffett says “A messenger and herald of catastrophe...flies in the zenith, i.e. swooping exactly over the heads of men.”¹²

The “authority of the air” may not be an angel at all. The various ranks of spirit beings cannot be positively identified as angels, and we know that there are kinds of spirit beings other than angels who inhabit the heavenly realms, such as cherubim and seraphim. Satan is actually an “anointed cherub,” not an angel (Ezekiel 28:14).

Nevertheless, it is this spirit-being, subordinate to Satan’s rule, of whom Paul speaks in this sentence.

τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργούντος (*tou pneumatos tou nun energountos – the spirit who is now working*)

By apposition here Paul identifies “the authority” as a spirit-being being. This spirit-being is directly associated in Ephesians as one against whom the believer struggles (Ephesians 6:11-12). There is no indication of that struggle here, for through his minions, Satan indirectly controls those unbelieving human beings who are promoting his worldly program.

ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας (*en tois huios tēs apeitheias – among the sons of disobedience*)

Paul uses the phrase “sons of disobedience” to indicate the individuals who are being spiritually manipulated. The use of “sons of” was a common cultural idiom indicating the quality of individuals in some sense. Hence, the very nature of the unbeliever is characterized as “disobedience,” that is, disobedience to God’s program, not to Satan’s, on behalf of whom the authority operates.

3. ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἀνεστράφημέν ποτε (*en hois kai hēmas pantes anestrāphēmen pote – among whom we all also formerly lived*)

Vs. 3 begins with one of the most humbling statements in Paul’s writings. All who are now believers, indicated by the emphatic and inclusive use of *we*, were formerly¹³ characterized by living a life of disobedience. There is no room for taking credit for the change from death to life, from disobedience to obedience in the life of the believer. Paul is building a case for God’s sovereignly producing the state of salvation in those who were previously dead, the ones living a lifestyle of disobedience.

The Greek *anestrāphēmen*, meaning literally “to be turned around,” or “to be turned back,” which we have translated *we lived*, refers metaphorically to one’s conduct, one’s previous¹⁴ manner of living, rather than the fact of being alive.

Paul uses this word here to introduce a new set of parameters for the daily life of the unbeliever.

ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν (*en tais epithumiais tēs sarkos hēmōn – in the lusts of our flesh*)

Now Paul includes another source of wrong doing, the lusts of our flesh. He must mean here the enemy of the believer, the flesh, rather than John’s use of a similar phrase to refer to attacks of the world sys-

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tem (1 John 2:15). So Paul here, as in other writings, uses the term *flesh* to indicate the container of the principle of indwelling sin (Romans 7:17).

The human nature is controlled in its unsaved state by indwelling sin, which can only be overcome by a direct intervention by God. The old human nature is beyond repair, and must be countered by means other than by one's self. A new nature, a new quality of life, a life free of indwelling sin must be applied from without by God through regeneration (Titus 3:5).

ποιούντες τὰ θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν (*poiountes ta thelēmata tēs sarkos kai tōn dianoion* – **performing the desires of the flesh and thoughts**)

The present participle *poiountes* (performing) with its associated words refers to the verb *anestrophēmen*, *we live*. The idea is that when in unbelief we were conducting our life while performing the desires with their source in the flesh. See my discussion of the works of the flesh in my comments on Galatians 5:19-21.

Associated with the desires of the flesh, Paul includes the plural genitive noun *tōn dianoion*, (the thoughts). The word is a form of *dianoia*, generally translated *mind*, but this use is plural. It means the thoughts of the mind, that which comes from the *dianoia*. Several Greek words refer to the mind from different perspectives.

The word *dianoia* refers to the mind viewed as the organ of experience-based intellect, that which produces the ideas based on experienced-based thought processes which result in understanding one's life experience. The unbeliever's mind is limited to intellectual understanding based on his conduct through the life experiences of the flesh. Knowledge of the spiritual struggle through which believers go is beyond such people.

In Ephesians 1:18, it was the *dianoia* which needed to be illuminated. See Colossians 1:21 for a similar use of the word. See my comments on Ephesians 4:18 for more information on *dianoia*.

καὶ ἡμεν τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς (*kai ēmen tekna fusei orgēs* – **and we were by nature children of wrath**)
We, who are now believers, were then as unbelievers by nature children of wrath. This statement sums up Paul's discussion of the condition of the unbeliever.

The word translated *by nature* is the instrumental form of *fusis* (φύσις), a word that is very close in meaning to the English *nature*. It refers to the inherent elements of a thing, that which regulates its existence, and its function. The phrase *by nature* (instrumental) means the application of something because of its nature. Here the thing being applied is wrath.

It is significant that Paul uses *children* (*tekna*) here, rather than *sons* as previously. *Children* comes from the concept of birth (*tiktō*, *to give birth to*), and is more suited to the use of *nature* than *sons* would be. A *son* in the culture of the time is not a son born naturally, but by appointment in an act called *son placement*. But a child was so because he shared the nature of his parents.

A question arises about the meaning of the word *wrath*. Wrath (*orgēs*) is not to be confused with anger (*thumos*). Anger is a state of mind that produces an outburst, but not always physical. It is more often oral, and involves verbal recriminations. Wrath, on the other hand, means to strike out in a physical way, engaging in mild to severe violence. Of course anger can produce wrath, but wrath can occur without anger, as it does in this sentence.

The phrase *of wrath* is a genitive, which has several uses. Here it seems to be a qualitative use, indicating that which is deserved because of the nature of the unbeliever as a child.

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Paul is most likely referring to the future wrath of God. That specific wrath will not occur until the time of great tribulation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, sometimes incorrectly called “The Great Tribulation.” But not all unbelievers will go through that period of time. Most will die before it begins. This has led some to believe that Paul is referring to the future post resurrection judgment, the “Great White Throne” judgment, which is mentioned by John in The Revelation. Paul, of course, would not have called it that. But he did understand the future punishment of the unbeliever.

However, it is vital to remember that Paul is actually discussing the previous state of believers, not of unbelievers directly. Hence, the idea behind *children of wrath* seems to be that which is descriptive of what they *earned*, as opposed to what they will actually receive. Wrath could then be any kind of wrath, not a specific wrathful event.

Some have paraphrased “children of wrath” as “children deserving of wrath,” a very close analogy to what Paul is most likely referring here.

The fact that he is referring to the previous state of believers is emphasized by the next short comparative clause.

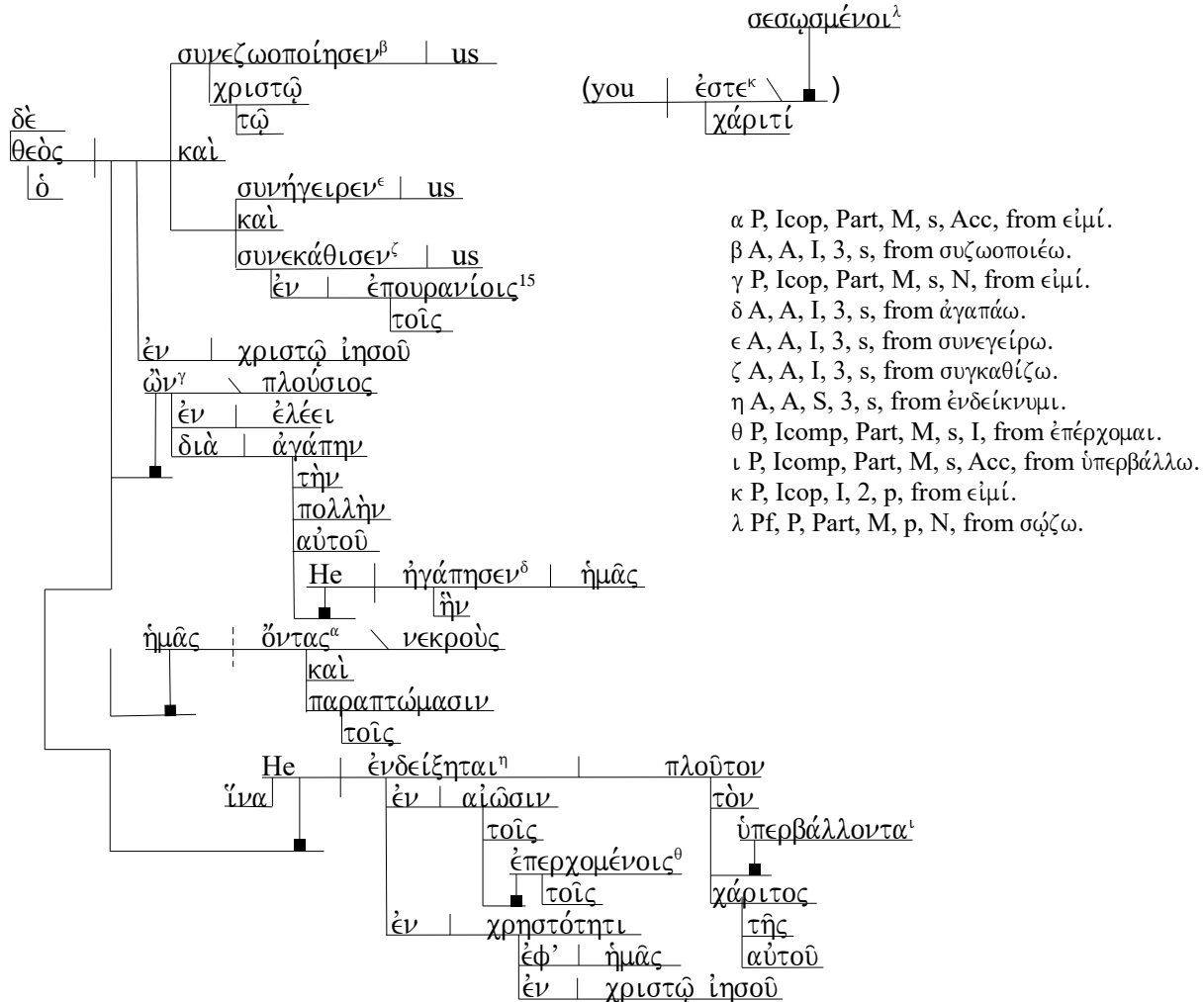
ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ (*hōs kai hoi loipoi* – *as also were the rest*)

Paul is always a very careful, precise writer. The comparative clause (*hōs, as*, is a comparative conjunction) makes a distinction between the references to the believer in his former condition, and with *the rest* (*hoi loipoi*), an undoubted reference directly to unbelievers, who are also children deserving of wrath. The application of God’s wrath upon unbelievers is related a number of times in Scripture, but, as stated, the specific wrath of God is yet future.

One note here. Individuals who are harmed or killed in natural events are not, today, receiving the judgment of God. Those who make such unfounded statements are seriously violating the Word of God. God’s specific wrath is reserved, and is not being applied today. Such events, either natural or accidental, are not to be taken as God’s judgments on wrong doing. Such judgment is left in the hands of men. Natural phenomena and accidents are providential, not judgmental.

2:4-7 ὁ δὲ θεὸς πλούσιος ὢν ἐν ἐλέει διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ ἣν ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς ⁵ καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ χριστῷ (χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι) ⁶ καὶ συνήγειρεν καὶ συνεκάθισεν ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ ⁷ ἵνα ἐνδείξηται ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσιν τοῖς ἐπερχομένοις τὸν ὑπερβάλλοντα πλοῦτον τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἐν χρηστότητι ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ.

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Translation: But God, being rich in mercy, because of His much love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – ⁶ and He raised us together and seated us together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that He might display in the coming ages the superabundant riches of His grace in kindness for us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:4-7 present “The Compassion of the Father” for the unbeliever from which flows the application of salvation from God.

Exegetical Considerations

4. ὁ δὲ θεός πλούσιος ὧν ἐν ἐλέει (ho de theos plousios ōn en eleēi – But God, being rich in mercy)

The previous paragraph begins, “And you being dead.” This paragraph begins, “But God.” This major contrast has often been pointed out by Bible teachers. And it is a strong distinction. The word *but* is *de*, a word designed to distinguish strongly between ideas. It is sometimes translated “on the other hand,” to emphasize this force.¹⁶

As it often occurs with Paul, the verb of the sentence is separated from its subject, God, by other ideas. It is not until the next two verses that the verbs of this sentence occur. The three intervening statements provide the context for the triple compound verbs in verses 5 and 6.

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The first intervening statement is that God is rich in mercy, referring to the great abundance of God's mercy. Mercy is not grace. Instead, it is the withholding of judgment, while grace is the provision of what is needed for accomplishing something. Without the wealth of God's mercy, judgment would come upon the unbelieving person, each time someone violates God's righteous requirements. But God withholds that judgment, and has done so for the entirety of man's existence on earth.

Here, however, the application of mercy is specifically applied to those who are no longer unbelievers, but believers, who were deserving, as unbelievers, of receiving God's wrath. This is confirmed by the rest of the sentence.

διὰ τὴν πολλὴν ἀγάπην αὐτοῦ ἣν ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς (*dia tēn pollēn agapēn autou hēn ēgapesen hēmas – because of his much love with which He loved us*)

The second intervening statement about God, which provides a basis for the triple compound verbs in verses 5-6 is His love. Here is love in its purest, righteous form.¹⁷ It is the considered constant benevolent attitude of God's love for the believer that is the ultimate cause of the actions of vs. 5. It is not arbitrary, nor is it capricious love. It is based on God's nature, which is perfect in all its aspects. Unlike man's love, which comes and goes, God always maintains His love to the objects He is loving.

5. καὶ ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν (*kai ontas hēmas nekrous tois paraptōmasin – even when we were dead in our trespasses*)

This third intervening statement does not deal with God, but with the previous condition of the believer. It is a time reference, beginning with the phrase "even while being." While still in unbelief, still being dead, not only did God save the sinner, but He simultaneously performed three acts.

Paul states that the unbeliever was dead in trespasses. He had already identified the dual nature of the problem as being "dead in trespasses and sins." But here, he simply uses the broader term, by which he includes the narrower term, *sins*.

συνεζωποίησεν τῷ χριστῷ (*sunezōpoiēsen tō christō – we were made alive with Christ*)

The first of the three acts of God that took place at salvation is that the Father made the unbeliever alive together with Christ. Now, this being made alive has been interpreted in two ways: 1) regeneration, or the reception of a new nature, identified by the phrase, "eternal life;" and 2) the reversal of spiritual death which consists of being separated from God, a reversal which makes a connection between God and the believer, that is, being alive to God, and having, therefore, a relationship with Him. It is sometimes called "resurrection life."

It seems to this writer that the second is the more viable option. While we agree that eternal life is also applied at the moment of faith through the act of regeneration, that does not seem to fit the context here for the following reasons:

1. The contrast is with spiritual death. As noted above, spiritual death is not physical death, nor does it lead to physical death. Eternal life, on the other hand, is an actual sharing a quality of God's life, a direct connection of the new nature to the nature of God, and is the basis for on-going physical life. That is not at issue in this passage.
2. The word for "making alive" carries the prefix preposition *συν*, meaning *together with*, as do the other two verbs in the parallel construction. The believer has been "made alive together with Christ." The believer is associated with Christ, both of whom have been *made alive*.

In what sense, was Christ "made alive," and how does that truth relate to the believer? The best answer is that which we find in Romans six, which seems to teach the same doctrine. There we

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find the truth that the believer, like Christ, is viewed as having died and been resurrected. The application of that truth is found in Romans 6:11, “So you also reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

As an unbeliever, a Christian was “dead in trespasses and sins.” As a believer, the individual is “dead indeed to sin.” An unbeliever is dead to God the Father, not being connected to Him in any way. But the believer is removed from that death state, and is alive to God, and should so reckon himself.

3. By being “made alive together with Christ,” Paul is affirming the first of three positional truths that are grammatically parallel. He is not simply referring to regeneration, but to a new relationship, a new connection to God the Father, which is closely associated with two other positional truths.

(χαριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι) (*chariti este sesōsmenoi – by grace you are saved*)

A parenthetical statement affirms the fact of the state of salvation. The grammar demands that one not see this simply as a reference to the act of salvation, but the means by which the individual entered the permanent salvation state. Note that this statement is repeated further along, but is expanded to include the intermediate means “through faith.” But not here! Here that means is not at issue. We will examine each element in turn.

1. Paul emphasizes the grace element by placing it first in the sentence. This is consistent with the overall context of God’s sovereignty, for Paul wants the Ephesian reader to keep in mind that the program of salvation is all of God, and none of the person’s. God provides all that is needed, and the human being adds nothing to it.
2. The second person plural verb “you are” introduces a technical grammatical structure called a periphrastic. The word periphrastic means simply, “to phrase around,” but it is not quite as simple as that. This grammatical structure is a way of emphasizing a truth, as it consists of the to be verb (*you are*), plus a perfect passive participle (*saved*).
3. The precise meaning of the participle is “having been saved.” It emphasizes the passive nature of the act of being saved from the perspective of the human recipient of salvation. Each person who enters this state of having been saved was passive, and performed no act at all to gain the end of salvation.

Furthermore, the fact that it is a *perfect tense participle* indicates that the act of being saved occurred at a point of time in the past of the Ephesian readers (the original “you” of the context), with an on-going result of being saved. As a result, it is accurate to state that the believer is in an on-going state of salvation, not one that is dependent on the whims of the individual Christian.

6. καὶ συνήγειρεν καὶ συνεκάθισεν ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ (*kai sunēgeiren kai sunekathisen en tois epouraniois en christō iēsou – and He raised us together and seated us together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*)

Verse 6 continues the sentence of verse 5. The two verbs here *sunēgeiren* and *sunekathisen* (He raised together and He seated together), are parallel to the verb *sunezōpoiēsen* (He made alive). Since each of these verbs carries the prefixed preposition *sun*, we may infer that Paul understood the phrase *with Christ* to occur with each verb, though it is stated only with the first verb.

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So Paul means “He raised us with Christ,” and “He seated us with Christ.” Two more positional truths indicate the current view that God the Father has of the believer. The Christian life must be lived from the perspective of God the Father.

The positional “He raised us” is the counter to the positional “dead in trespasses and sins.” No physical resurrection is in view, but a truth of the spiritual connection that the believer has with the Father. No longer should a believer consider himself in an unconnected state with God, but actually view himself as being in the continual state of being alive to God.

Likewise, the position of the believer is no longer earth-bound. The Christian is, from God’s point of view, seated in heavenly places where God the Father and God the Son now reside. This is where the Christian’s thoughts should take him. He no longer stands apart from God on the earth. For this reason, Paul in Colossians 3:1 & 2 says, “Therefore, since you were raised together with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right side of God. Think about things above, not about the things on the earth.”

All three of the positions mentioned in verses 5 and 6 are said to be “in Christ Jesus” (see diagram). The Ephesians would undoubtedly have understood the phrase “in Christ Jesus” to mean that God has identified the Christian with Christ through Spirit baptism. The baptism by the Holy Spirit is not specifically for power in the Christian life, but for identification with Christ as He died, rose, ascended and was seated at God’s right. Since these things are true of Christ, the mature believer, in order to see himself accurately in God’s program, should reckon himself to be a participant with Christ Jesus in these facts. This is essential to a correct view of the salvation state, and provides understanding of future benefits that the believer will enjoy.

7. ἵνα ἐνδείξηται ἐν τοῖς αἰώσιν τοῖς ἐπέρχομένοις (*hina endeixētai en tois aiōsin tois eperschomenois* – *that He might display in the coming ages*)

The three parallel verbs, *sunezōpoiēsen*, *sunēgeiren*, and *sunekathisen* have a specific purpose, which is stated in this clause. This long clause begins by stating that God’s purpose is to “display,” a verb which indicates showing of something specific.

The *time element* of this act of displaying is “in the coming ages,” a reference to identifiable future periods of time. That God has a future age-related program for the believer cannot be denied. The specific element that will be displayed by God in the future ages is expressed in the rest of this sentence.

τὸν ὑπερβάλλοντα πλοῦτον τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ (*ton hyperballonta plouton tēs charitos autou* – *the superabundant riches of His grace*)

Here we have a superlative statement concerning the future display of God’s grace. Exactly how this grace will be applied in those ages is not revealed, but the fact of the amount of grace is. It is said to be rich in the sense of having a large amount. God will not be stinting in the future application of His grace provision. Moreover, this richness, this wealth is “superabundant,” a word which indicates that the riches of His grace are unfathomable. God will never run out of grace.

Today, in this age, God provides grace not only for salvation, but for daily living. In other words, God supplies all that the unbeliever needs to be saved, and all that the believer needs to live a life pleasing to Him. Such is grace, a word that always carries the idea of provision of that which God requires.

As noted, the need for the application of that future grace is not revealed. God will provide all that is required of the believer throughout the rest of time, apart from any personal effort on the human being’s

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part. The future of the saint is truly glorious, and filled with unrevealed activity for which God provides all that is necessary.

ἐν χρηστότητι ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ (en chrēstotēti eph hēmas en christō iēsou – in kindness for us in Christ Jesus)

One characteristic of God that is sometimes overlooked is His kindness. God is kind in that He is not harsh, but mellow in the application of His virtues. In this case, it is the application of God's future grace that is "in kindness for us." It is from God's kindness that this grace comes forth, and brings about the blessings throughout future time for "us," a term that Paul used to include himself with his readers.

The implication is clear. No future judgment awaits the believer in the ages to come. Nothing will go wrong, since it is the God of kindness who provides the superabundant grace of that future.

Once again, we see the association of the believer with Christ in the phrase "in Christ Jesus." That association is permanent, and will continue beyond the current age, and into all future ages.

2:8-9 τῇ γὰρ χάριτι ἔστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ τῆς πίστεως, καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον ἢ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἵνα μή τις καυχῆσθαι.

Here we have one of the most misunderstood (yet frequently quoted) sentences in the New Testament. It, along with the explanatory sentence in vs. 10, bring to a culmination Paul's discussion of God's sovereignty.

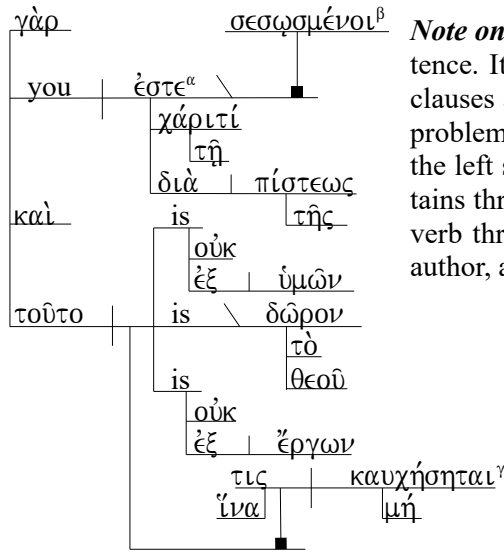
By structure, it is a compound-complex sentence. The first part of the compound is a repeat of the previous periphrastic statement, "You are saved by grace." It has, however, three additions not found in the previous statement. 1) It begins with the introductory word "for" (*gar*), 2) it includes the article "the" with grace, and 3) it adds the prepositional phrase "through (the) faith" (*dia tes pisteos*). It is these three additions that have often caused some misunderstanding of Paul's intention.

Furthermore, the doctrinal meaning of this sentence and the following one have brought about much debate. Simply stated, the question is does this passage teach that unbelieving man has the responsibility to believe in order to be saved, or does it teach that saving faith is the gift of God?

The student must be careful to not "read into" this passage a previously arrived at doctrinal position, a position which drives his understanding of this sentence apart from sound interpretation. This happens with those who hold to both interpretations mentioned above.

*Translation: For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you, this is the gift of God, this is not by works, lest anyone should boast.*¹⁸

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Note on the sentence structure: The sentence is a compound-complex sentence. It has two main clauses, and one subordinate clause. The two main clauses are connected by *and* (*kai*). It is the second clause that causes most problems, because it has no stated verb. An examination of the diagram to the left shows that the triple compound predicate of the second clause contains three supplied verbs, all the same word, *is*. The supplying of the same verb three times is necessary both to understand the intent of the original author, and to express accurate grammar.

α P, Icop, I, 2, p, from εἰμί.
β Pf, Icomp, Part, M, p, N, from σώζω.
γ A, Icomp, S, 3, s, from καυχάομαι.

Exegetical Considerations

8. τῆ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ τῆς πίστεως (*tē gar chariti este sesōsmenoi dia tēs pisteōs – for by the grace you are having been saved through the faith*)

As noted, three differences exist between the original statement in vs. 5, and the one here. We will dispose of them first.

1) The word *for* (*gar*) begins this statement.¹⁹ In this case it is explanatory, referring back to the previous sentence, which contains the earlier parenthetical statement. Paul's intention is to explain in more detail what he was teaching earlier.

2) The word *the* (*tē*) is an article of previous reference. The word *grace* was used in the original parenthetical statement, and here Paul indicates that he is referring to “the previously mentioned” grace.²⁰

The question of why Paul uses “by grace” here is of great interest. The grammatical form is called “impersonal agency,” that is some *thing*, rather than a person being the agent of salvation.²¹ Sadly, such a grammatical statement can be misleading. Grace must be defined in reference to the person who is being gracious, in this case God Himself. Titus 3:11 specifically mentions “the saving grace of God (ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος), and it is God's grace, provided by Him that is in view here. So, it is correct doctrine to teach that God applies His grace for salvation to the unbeliever.

3) Paul uses the prepositional phrase (*through [the] faith*) to indicate the intermediate means through which the salvation was applied.²² Throughout the New Testament, the only means indicated for salvation is faith, a noun that is perfectly synonymous with belief.²³

It is beyond the scope of this work to do a complete doctrinal discussion of this most important doctrinal word. However, the basic meaning is the same in English as it was in Greek. Paul is referring to faith in the death and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-5) for the purpose of entering into a state of salvation.

Many false statements have been substituted for Paul's simple explanation of the means for salvation. Such phrases as “ask Jesus into your heart,” “receive Christ as your personal savior,” “make a decision for Christ,” and “pray to receive Christ,”²⁴ are not biblical statements. They change the means of salvation from simple belief to a work performed by the human being.

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It is the addition of the prepositional phrase “through faith” that has generated much controversy, not so much because of its inclusion, but by the rest of the sentence, that makes it the second part of the compound expression “by grace through faith.” Some prefer “through faith” to be first so that “faith” is not the antecedent of the word “this” in the statement “this is not of you, this is the gift of God, this is not of works.”²⁵

καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν (*kai touto ouk ex humōn – and this not of you*)

Very simply, Paul indicates that something applied to the Ephesians did not have its source in them. The word not (*ouk*) is an adverb which goes with the understood verb *is*, as does the prepositional phrase *of you*. The preposition itself is a reference to source. Whatever the word *this* refers to, that thing did not have its source in the Ephesians.

The great doctrinal question, then, is “to what does the word *this* refer?” It is clear that the Anglican translators of the King James Version had a viewpoint, for they wrongly translated the word *this* as *that*. The distinction is profound, as the word *this* refers to something near in the context, while the word *that* refers to something farther away. The nearest noun, of course, is the word *faith*, but since the translators did not believe that faith was a gift of God, they purposely translated the *touto* word incorrectly. We know this, because they regularly translated it correctly in other places.

Another argument that is raised is that the word *this* (*touto*) is neuter, and cannot refer back to the word *faith* (*pisteōs*), which is feminine. The problem worsens, however. In the previous sentence, there is no neuter noun to which *touto* can refer. Some have tried to say that *grace* is God’s gift here, but they have the same problem, since the word *grace* (*chariti*) is feminine also.

A very popular view is that the word *this* refers to the idea of salvation represented by the participle *having been saved* (*sesōsmenoi*). As a logical argument, this may have some merit, since salvation is a gift of God in the sense that only God provides salvation, which is represented by the word *grace*. But grammatically, it has no foundation, since the participle is not a noun, but a verbal adjective used as part of a verb phrase called a periphrastic. To make the idea of salvation the gift of God is a desperate stretch to avoid making faith a gift of God.²⁶

What then, is the grammatical answer? It is found in the structure of the sentence.

θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον (*theou to dōron – the gift of God*)

In the Greek diagram above, we have inserted “this is” a second and third times, which is required by the grammar. Note that the word *this* (τοῦτο) occurs only once, but it clearly governs three distinct verbs, all understood.

This second predicate “is the gift of God” answers the question concerning the neuter form of the demonstrative pronoun *this*. Paul did not choose the word to be neuter (it has also a masculine and feminine spelling) without cause. He did it because the grammar demanded it. The word *gift* (*dōron*) is neuter, and the grammatical principle²⁷ is that when the demonstrative acts as a subject of a verb that has a complement, the demonstrative must be in the same gender as that complement.

The neuter form *touto* has nothing to do with what it points back to, but what it points forward to, the neuter noun *dōron*.

The regular grammatical principle requires that the near demonstrative *touto* points back to the first thing in the context that it can, and that is the noun *faith* (*pisteōs*). It upsets many people who have a negative reaction to this truth. They accuse those of us who hold it as being “Calvinists,” evidently the

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worst thing one can be. But this author is no Calvinist, for Calvinists believe many things other than that faith is a gift of God, a number of which have no sound biblical basis.²⁸ Some (not all) who call themselves Calvinists define the word faith itself in an unacceptable way, in order to maintain their theological system, by making faith a result of regeneration rather than the means to it.

Those who desire to make the word faith refer to some inherent ability of the unbeliever need to ask themselves, this question. If Paul had wanted to say that faith is a gift of God, how would he have otherwise stated it? What wording in the Greek text will one allow Paul to use to express that meaning, if not the one before us. If one says, “There is no wording that I would so allow,” then that person *may* be making themselves the authority for spiritual truth, rather than the written word of God.²⁹

The fact of the matter is, there is no view that is consistent with the grammatical structure of this sentence other than the concept that faith is God’s gift. This view is consistent with the fact that God does the saving, and that the unbeliever, including we who are believers now, bring nothing to the table. Salvation, including faith, is all of God, and none of us.

We hold that faith does not have its source in the unbeliever, but that it is God’s gift based on His sovereign act of salvation. Paul makes another statement concerning faith in the next predicate phrase.

9. οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων (*ouk ex ergōn – not of works*)

Faith is not of works, that is, not by means of works of the individual.³⁰ This is by way of defining biblical faith. While it appears to be an act of the mind of the individual, it is not classified as a work. The unbeliever does nothing to be saved, and the faith that he expresses does not have its source in him, it is God’s gift, it is not classified as having its source in works.

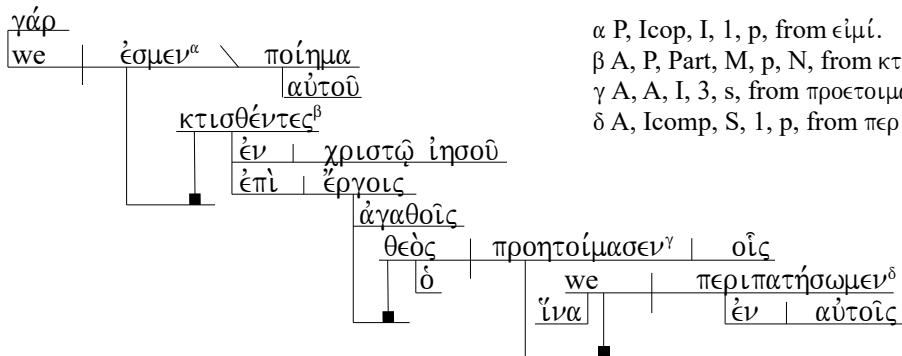
There is a reason for these three statements about faith, which Paul presents in the next clause.

ἵνα μή τις καυχῆσεται (*hina mē tis kauchēsētai – lest anyone should boast*)

Clauses which begin with *lest* (*hina mē*) regularly give the reason for the foregoing verbal ideas. They are negative purpose clauses. It is the three understood predicates that are being modified.

Regarding one’s salvation, there is no room for boasting. Boasting is a kind of bragging, in which an individual claims credit for something that he has done, when in fact he has not done it, and in some situations, cannot have done it. One cannot take any credit for one’s salvation. This includes not only the gift of salvation by grace, but also the gift of faith by which to apply the grace provision. They work together, and the individual can take absolutely no credit for any aspect of God’s saving work in his life.

2:10 αὐτοῦ γάρ ἔσμεν ποίημα κτισθέντες ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς οἷς προητοιμάσεν ὁ θεὸς ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν.



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Translation: For we are His product, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God previously prepared, in order that we should walk in them.

Exegetical Considerations

10 αὐτοῦ γάρ ἐσμεν ποίημα – (*autou gar esmen poiēma – For we are His product*)

The *for (gar)* here is inferential, indicating that the reader can infer the truth of this statement from a correct understanding of the previous sentence, The salvation state is not an end in itself.

With “we are” Paul includes himself with his readers. Christians who have entered into a state of salvation is the correct application.

His product is a better translation than “His workmanship.” The word *poiēma* means that which has been produced directly by the work of the craftsman. The word is consistent with the fact that the salvation state of the believer was God’s alone, and that the result of that state is that God, the craftsman, produced the believer. This is confirmed by the next descriptive participle, which relates to the word “we.”

κτισθέντες ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ – (*ktisthentes en christo iēsou – having been created in Christ Jesus*)

As noted, this participle is descriptive of the word “we,” referring to the believer as a product of God. The way in which this product came into being was by God’s act of creation.

The implication of this act of creation is profound. Something new is created by God every time an individual believes the gospel for salvation. It is not simply a make-over. The new believer is created, which probably refers to the new nature which the believer receives as a basic element of his salvation state.

ἐπὶ ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς – (*epi ergois agathois – for good works*)

This prepositional phrase means “for the purpose of performing good works.”³¹ But these are not good works from a worldly perspective. While it is true that an unbeliever can perform the same “good works” as the believer, they are considered a different kind of good works, not because of the nature of the works themselves, but because of the nature of the one performing them.

οἷς προητοίμασεν ὁ θεὸς – (*hois proētoimasen ho theos – which God previously prepared*)

This is a relative clause referring to ἔργοις. The relative οἷς is attracted to the form of its antecedent *ergois*, but is not dative like *ergois*, but accusative in function.

One of the elements that makes the good works of the believer distinct from those of the unbeliever is that they were prepared by God before the believer performs them. It is not necessary for a Christian to go about looking for good works to perform.

Assuming one is spiritual rather than carnal, and is not under satanic delusion, the good works will find him. God has previously prepared them, and they will occur in God’s due time, for it is God who is actually doing the work (Philippians 2:13).

ἵνα ἐν αὐτοῖς περιπατήσωμεν – (*hina en autois peripatēsōmen*)

This clause indicates the ultimate purpose for God’s previously preparing the good works for the believer.

It is God’s purpose that the believer should walk in the sphere of good works. The idea is a broad one, including those acts that the spiritual believer performs unthinkingly. For the one who is living a spiri-

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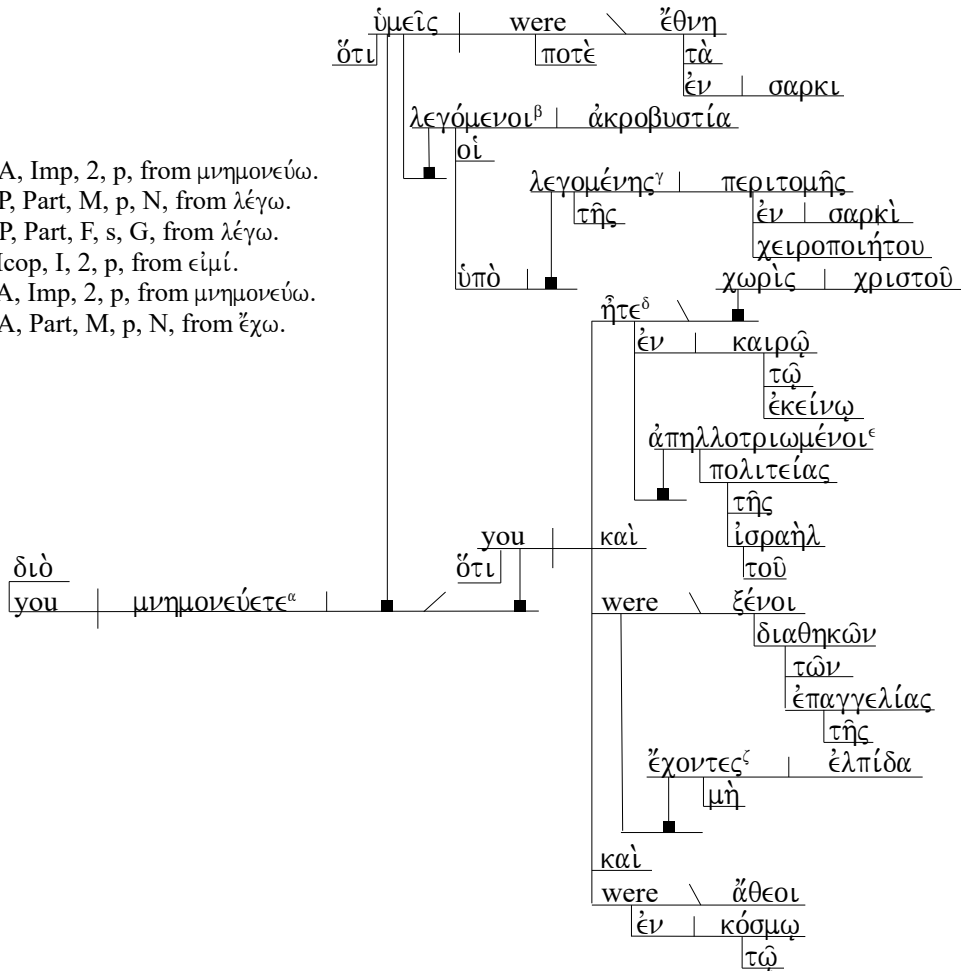
tual lifestyle, every positive spiritual act must be considered a good work in the sense that Paul means here.

The very act of honoring God while going through life produces such a lifestyle. It should be the normal approach to Christian living, not something that occupies the attention of the believer. It is not God's intention that Christians should cast about looking for good works to do. One's very lifestyle, identified by the verb walk, will consist of good works without even considering them. The spiritual believer's consideration, his focus, is to be on God, not on his own attempts to do good things.

Note: Verse 10 ends the section in Ephesians on the sovereignty of God the Father. Beginning with 2:11, and continuing through 4:16, Paul discusses *The Unity of the Church of Jesus Christ*. This is the longest doctrinal presentation of the church in the New Testament writings.

2:11-12 διὸ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ὑμεῖς ποτὲ τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκὶ οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου ¹² ὅτι ἦτε ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς χριστοῦ ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

- α P, A, Imp, 2, p, from μνημονεύω.
- β P, P, Part, M, p, N, from λέγω.
- γ P, P, Part, F, s, G, from λέγω.
- δ I, Icop, I, 2, p, from εἰμί.
- ε P, A, Imp, 2, p, from μνημονεύω.
- ζ P, A, Part, M, p, N, from ἔχω.



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Chapter Two

Translation: Therefore, remember that you were formerly Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by what is called circumcision handmade in the flesh, — that you were at that season without Christ, having been estranged from the citizenship of Israel, and strangers concerning the covenants of promise, having no hope, and godless in the world.

Note: Ephesians 2:11-4:16 deal with the topic *The Unity of the Church of Jesus Christ*. This section of the epistle consists of five sub-topics: 1) *Unity Produced by the Blood of Christ*, 2:11-22; 2) *Unity Proclaimed through the Mystery of Christ*, 3:1-12; 3) *Unity Preserved by the Indwelling of Christ*, 3:13-21; 4) *Unity Promoted through the Bond of Peace*, 4:1-6; and 5) *Unity Provided by the Gifts of the Spirit*, 4:7-16.

Exegetical Considerations

11. διὸ (*dio* - *therefore*)

With the word *dio* Paul makes a strong logical connection to the previous paragraph detailing the sovereign act of God by which He brought the Ephesians into a state of salvation. Everything, therefore, begins with the sovereign God. Now he continues with their new position as believers.

μνημονεύετε ὅτι ὑμεῖς ποτὲ τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί (*mnēmoneuete hoti humeis pote ta ethnē en sarki* – *remember that you were formerly Gentiles in the flesh*)

Once again Paul takes the believers in Ephesus back to their previous situation. “Remember” he says, not to cause them to have an emotional reaction to their state, but to bring them to an acceptance of the continued sovereign activity of God. Remember how it was then, for your former (*pote*) situation has changed. Paul is working up to the fact that the former fleshly state of being a Gentile is no longer relevant. It can be ignored, as the Gentile status has been eliminated in the new program.

In this case, God’s sovereign activity consists of not primarily a change of salvation state, but a change in the very program of which they are a part. By this single sentence the apostle introduces new relationships that were impossible under the old program.

As we continue, we will find that God has changed the program, so that the old fleshly distinctions no longer matter. But at that former time, prior to induction into the new program, they mattered greatly. It was not that Gentiles could not enter into a relationship with God through justification by faith, but that in so doing, they remained Gentiles, unless through a difficult process they entered into the household of Israel.

οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία (*hoi legomenoi akrobusitia* – *who are called uncircumcision*)

As Gentiles, whether believers or unbelievers, they were called uncircumcision. This designation was used divisively by the Israelites under the Mosaic system, and continued even to the present time. One of the great controversies at the time of writing was whether Gentiles, as Gentiles, could even be part of God’s household program. Did they not have to “convert” and get circumcised to enter into blessing?

For, it is as partakers of God’s program of blessing that is at issue. The use of the word *uncircumcision* strongly expresses that issue, because it was through physical circumcision that an individual became associated with the household of Israel.

ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκί χειροποιήτου (*hupo tēs legomenēs peritomēs en sarki cheiropoiētou* – *by what is called circumcision handmade in the flesh*)

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The ones emphasizing the disassociation of Gentiles as uncircumcised from the household of Israel were themselves called circumcision, a term which emphasized their association with God's household program. The great divide is therefore established. The word *called* here is feminine singular, viewing Israel collectively and universally. In other words, he is referring to the household of Israel.

But, there comes from Paul a strange discordant statement. By the phrase "handmade in the flesh" a new idea is being introduced, one with which the Ephesians were probably already familiar. The relationship of Israel with God was more of a physical one than a spiritual one. A metaphorical spiritual circumcision would not do. It must be physical!

This is not to say that individual Israelites could have no spiritual relationship to God, but that being part of the household itself *did not provide that association*. Indeed, there were unbelievers in the household of Israel. Therefore, the collective household of Israel was not a spiritual household, and belonging to it was the result of a human act of physical, handmade circumcision.

That Paul is leading up to something is clear, and it is significant that he does so in such precise detail. One must recognize how much information the Christian Gentiles in Ephesus had at this point. He began by telling them to *remember*. The information that Paul provided was not unknown to the maturing Gentile believers in Ephesus. Both this clause and the one following in vs. 12 are the objects of the verb *remember*. There can be no doubt that when he was writing, Paul was leading the Ephesians to some information that needed to be repeated. It had been some time since Paul had been in Ephesus. Perhaps there had been new Gentile believers who had not heard this message, and this epistle seems to have been designed to reignite the discussion of this vital doctrine.

12. ὅτι ἦτε ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκέλευω χωρὶς χριστοῦ (*hoti ēte en tō kairō ekeinō chōris christou – that you were at that season without Christ*)

The structure of this sentence comes into play here. This *hoti* clause continues the discussion of the previous one. It stands as a double accusative of the same verb, *remember*. See the diagram.

Again, hearkening back to their previous situation, Paul reminds them that they were at that season without Christ. He uses the word season (*kairō*) here to emphasize the fact that the designated time period has come and gone, as seasons do. The verb *were* (*ēte*) is imperfect tense, stating an on-going existence during that season. It's similar in emphasis to the English phrase "used to be."

What is the meaning of "without Christ?" Several ideas have been put forward:

1. That Paul uses Christ in the messianic sense;
2. That Paul uses Christ in the "savior" sense;
3. That Paul uses Christ in the "head of the body" sense, and
4. That Paul uses Christ as the provider of a new, heavenly relationship.

Of the four, the fourth seems most likely, given the next participial clause. The Gentiles in Ephesus would not have considered number one, and numbers two and three may be comprehended under number four.

The issue before the Ephesians was one of program change, not simply a new relationship with Christ's person as savior. That had been settled earlier (2:8-9). But what Paul is leading up to is that a new program for the believer has been established by Christ, and that program has eliminated the negatives of the old program.

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ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας³² τοῦ ἰσραὴλ (*apēllotriōmenoi tēs politeias tou israēl – having been estranged from the citizenship of Israel*)

One of the negatives of the old program was that the association of Israel was national and political. Old Testament Israel was truly a “citizenship,” as Israel was a physical nation among nations, each independent and distinguished from one another. No Gentile, as a Gentile, could belong to the nation of Israel. They are viewed by Paul as “having been estranged” from such citizenship.

The participle *apēllotriōmenoi* is used here in the political sense. Some translate it *alienated*, but it only means that in a purely political way. The Gentiles were not necessarily “alienated” from the person of God, as we have already noted and will see again, that a Gentile could stand justified by faith, just as could an Israelite. We must recognize that Israelites were not automatically justified by faith just because they were citizens of the nation of Israel. Such citizenship was not spiritual, but political, and the benefits (and negatives) of that political association accrued to both believing and unbelieving Israelites.

Again, we must emphasize that no confusion should exist between this citizenship issue and the one of personal justification. An individual Gentile could be justified before God, and still maintain his citizenship outside Israel. Such was the case with Naaman (2 Kings 5). He was a citizen of Syria, but became a believer in the God of Israel, signified by his carrying dirt from Israel back to Damascus. He was undoubtedly justified by faith, but was not about to change his physical citizenship.

Some Ephesian Gentiles, who could have been, but were not justified in the Old Testament sense as was Naaman, also had their citizenship apart from Israel, and were still under Gentile rule.

However, it is likely that some of the Gentiles were “God Fearers,” and were justified believers before they received the gospel of salvation. But unless they became true proselytes, they remained “alienated” from the citizenship of Israel. Likewise, there were Israelites who were justified believers, as well as many who were not, but under the Mosaic system, all were citizens of Israel.

καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας (*kai zenoi tōn diathēkōn tēs epaggelias – and strangers concerning the covenants of promise*)

Not only were Gentiles not citizens, they were *strangers concerning the covenants of promise*. The covenants under consideration are undoubtedly those given to Abraham. Note the plural covenants, for there is, contrary to popular conception, several different Abrahamic covenants. But they are covenants “of the promise,” for the word *promise* is articular. There is only one specific promise in view, out of which flowed several covenants, which covenants applied to the descendants of Abraham.

But the promise, that which was given to Abram in Genesis 12, was not a covenant as is usually taught. It was a personal promise to Abraham, and would not have been extended beyond him. But the covenants, which came from that “promise relationship” established by God, did apply forward to the sons of Israel.

To these covenants, there was no Gentile relationship, and therefore no promised benefits. For more information on the Abrahamic covenants see “The Abrahamic Covenants” by this author.

ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες (*elpida mē echontes – having no hope*)

As a consequence of the lack of relationship to the Abrahamic covenants, the Gentiles, as Gentiles, had no *hope*. The word *hope* here refers to a future expectation in the physical sense, looking forward to a guaranteed land inheritance, of which Old Testament salvation ultimately consists. As one studies the

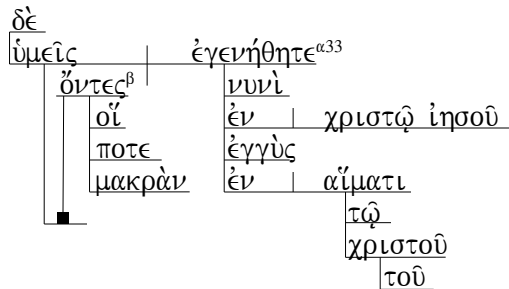
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Hebrew prophets, it becomes clear that the land promises were specific to the tribes of Israel, and are ultimately delineated by Ezekiel. No Gentile, being genetically unrelated to Abraham, will participate in the realization of the land covenants, with the possible exception of justified proselytes.

καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ (*kai atheoi en tō kosmō – and Godless in the world*)

Again, with the exception of proselytes, Gentiles were Godless. Of course, Paul means this in the actual sense of having the genuine God, not the false gods which were numerous throughout the world.

2:13 νυνὶ δὲ ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγγύς ἐγενήθητε ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ χριστοῦ



α A, Icomp, 2, p, from γίνομαι.

β P, Icomp, Part, M, p, N, from εἰμί.

Translation: But now in Christ Jesus, you who were formerly far away have become near by the blood of Christ.

Exegetical Considerations

13. νυνὶ δὲ ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ – (*nuni de en christō iēsou – but now in Christ Jesus*)

The word order is important here, as the contrast “But now” forcefully takes our thoughts back to the previous statement (q. v.).³⁴ The conjunction is *de*, a weak adversative, but still distinguishing the statements preceding. However, the importance of the distinction is found in *nuni*, *now*. It refers to the fact the before, when they were gentile unbelievers, unlike now, when they have entered into an “in Christ” relationship.

For the fourth and final time in this chapter Paul uses the term formerly (*pote*). No longer are Gentiles far off. The “in Christ” relationship that is enjoyed by all believers today, whether formerly Gentile or Jew, has been eliminated. In Pauline terminology, the “in Christ” relationship between believing Gentiles and believing Jews caused those distinctions to disappear in the spiritual sense. That both are one in Christ will be made clear in verses 12-14 below.

ὑμεῖς οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν – (*humeis hoi pote ontes makran – you who were formerly far away*)

Paul means that prior to their salvation they were far away from God, not that they were far away from Israel, a mistake to which some adhere. The concept of nearness was built into the Mosaic system. The law, while effectively separating the everyday Israelite from God through the priesthood system, nevertheless, allowed each Israelite to approach God intermediately. But the Gentiles were far away.

One of the great doctrines of the New Testament is that believers today have been brought near to God, and that, when fully understood, each may personally enter into His presence, which is accomplished through the residency of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Paul indicates the means by which this was accomplished in the next expression.

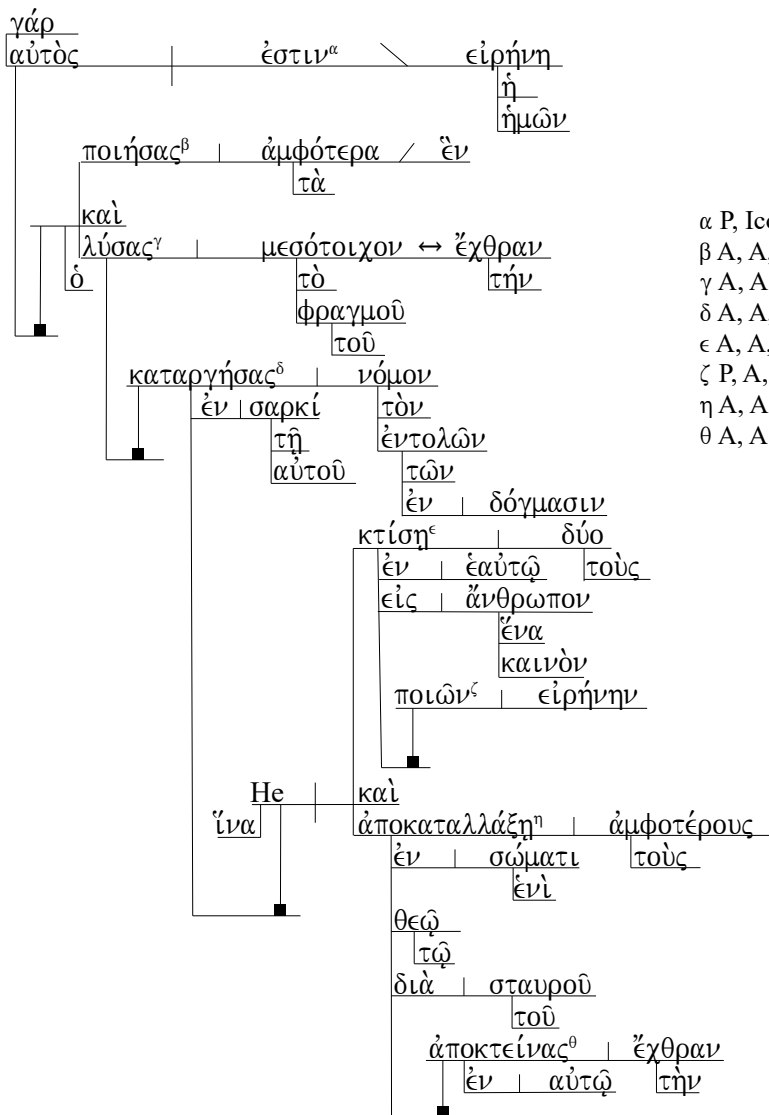
ἐγγύς ἐγενήθητε ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ χριστοῦ – (*eggus egenēthēte en tō haimati tou christou – have become near by the blood of Christ*)

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The blood of Christ refers to His violent death on the cross, which provided not only redemption, but for each Holy Spirit indwelt believer brought about nearness to God the Father. This truth is central to a correct understanding of New Testament doctrines of access to God through the High Priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in such passages as Hebrews 4:16, “Therefore let us approach with confidence the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.”

The specific act which Paul is here introducing is reconciliation to God. The great doctrine of reconciliation is basic to the bringing about the new relationship which all believers have in Christ.

2:14-16 αὐτός γάρ ἐστιν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν ὃ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφότερα ἐν καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας ¹⁵ τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκί αὐτοῦ τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν ἑαυτῷ εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην ¹⁶ καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ



- α P, Icor, I, 3, s, εἰμί.
- β A, A, Part, M, s, N, from ποιέω.
- γ A, A, Part M, s, N, from λύω.
- δ A, A, Part, M, s, N, from καταργέω.
- ε A, A, S, 3, s, from κτίζω.
- ζ P, A, Part, M, s, N, from ποιέω.
- η A, A, S, 3, s, from ἀποκαταλλάσσω.
- θ A, A, Part, M, s, N, from ἀποκτείνω.

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Translation: For He Himself is our peace, the one who made both the things one thing, and destroyed the dividing wall of the fence,¹⁵ the enmity, having eliminated in His flesh the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, in order that in Himself He might create the two into one new man, making peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, having killed the enmity in Himself.

Note: Here Paul introduces the doctrine of reconciliation of man to God. In this passage, Paul directly associates that act of reconciliation to the unity that believers have, whether Jew or Gentile, because of shedding of Christ's blood.

Exegetical Considerations

14 αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν (*autos gar estin hē eirēnē hēmōn – For He is our peace*)

The *gar* indicates that this is a continuation of the teaching of the previous section. Specifically, the pronoun *autos* refers back to Christ, the one by whom believers “have become near by His blood.” Christ, who is described by the next two participial clauses, is figuratively described in this statement. He is “our peace” personified.³⁵

The word *our* is significant, as it identifies the group to which both Paul and his readers belong, that is believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation at the time of writing. The statement is purely transitional, for the issue is one that could only be valid during the transition period. Paul's stated purpose is to teach a new relationship between those justified before Christ's death and resurrection, and those who are justified after those events, specifically, those who were the first generation of believers, both Jews and Gentiles. By definition, then, *our* cannot include others, presumably Jews, who may have been justified as Old Testament believers, but had not received, as yet, the truth of Christ's gospel.

ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφότερα ἓν (*ho poiēsas ta amphotera hen – the one who made both the things one thing*)

Here we have the first of two participial clauses which describe the person of Christ. The neuter translation above is accurate. The idea seems to be a collective one, looking at the Jew and Gentiles as groups. Paul will expand on this description of Christ in the final clause in this verse.

καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας¹⁵ τὴν ἔχθραν (*kai to mesotoichon tou phragmou lusas, tēn echthran – and destroyed the dividing wall of the fence, the enmity*)

Here we have the second of two parallel participial clauses describing Christ. The *kai* is a coordinate conjunction, combining two clauses of equal weight. Christ is described as the one who destroyed “the dividing wall of the fence.” The “of the fence” phrase is a genitive of apposition, showing that this dividing wall was an absolute barrier. But this dividing wall that consists of a fence did not keep only Jew and Gentile apart; it also kept the Jew, while near to God, away from God. How do we know this? The next word, which is actually the first word of vs. 15, stands in apposition to the word wall, and identifies it specifically. It is the *enmity* between God and man, which was brought about by the establishment of the law.

The English word *enmity* is rarely used today. If we were to interpret this passage strictly from the English translation, we would be led astray, for enmity means “positive, active, and typically mutual hatred or ill will.”³⁶ But the Greek word carries the idea of being an enemy of someone, with or without the emotional element included, and whether it is mutual or not. It is the feminine form of *echthros*, indicating an on-going state of enmity. Not only were Jew and Gentile enemies, but Israel, under the law,

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was in a state of enmity with God. God himself did not hold Himself an enemy of man; the enmity was totally on man's part.

ἐν τῇ σαρκί αὐτοῦ τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας (*en tē sarki autou ton nomon tōn entolōn en dogmasin katargēsas – having eliminated in His flesh the law of commandments expressed in ordinances*)

This enmity Christ eliminated in His flesh, undoubtedly a reference to the spilling of His blood. One of the results of Christ's crucifixion was the elimination of "the law of commandments, expressed in ordinances."

The phrase "law of commandments" identifies the nature of the problem. The Mosaic law is identified by the word commandments (genitive of apposition). A commandment is simply a requirement, but in the case of the Mosaic law, it was a requirement with penalty attached for disobedience. In other words, it was a forensic requirement, because it was "expressed in ordinances," specific requirements of the law that indicated the penalty. It is this that brought about the enmity of man with God. But this enmity was abolished because the law itself was abolished.

It is required at this time to identify the nature and purpose of the Mosaic system.

1. It was a household requirement, limited to Israel, and in no way applicable to Gentiles while it was in force.
2. Consequently, the law governed Israel as a nation, a people over whom God reigned.
3. It had no relationship to initial justification, which was by faith, even while Israel lived under the law of Moses. It dealt solely with the daily living requirement for Israelites.
4. As a household requirement, it corresponded with grace, which deals with the household requirement of the Christian today. This grace provision is for daily living, and must be distinguished from the grace for salvation.

The final clause of this verse indicates the purpose for this abolition of enmity.

ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν ἑαυτῷ εἰς ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην (*hina tous duo kitsē en heautō eis hena kainon anthrōpon pōion eirēnē – in order that in Himself He might create the two into one new man, making peace*)

This purpose clause has a compound predicate, the first of which we see here, and the second of which is in vs. 16 below.

The application of the elimination of the law of commandments was "to create one new man." The phrase "new man" is a metaphor for a collective people who are new in kind³⁷ from the old household man that consisted of Israelites alone.

The clarity of this statement is without question. God created from two peoples a new kind of man, a man that consisted of two factions, the Jew and the Gentile, and in so doing, made peace between them. But He did so in a limited fashion, as one finds later that this new man consists only of believers in Christ's gospel, not the Gentiles and Jews as a whole.

16 καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ (*kai apokatallaxē tous amphoterous en heni sōmati tō theō – and might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross*)

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The second predicate of this purpose clause puts forth a new thought that has doctrinal significance. Paul must have dealt with the doctrine of reconciliation while in Ephesus, but it needed to be re-emphasized, since he had been apart from them for some time.

The doctrine of reconciliation deals not with reconciling Jew to Gentile, but of reconciling both *to God*. Paul expands on this doctrine when writing to the Colossians whom he had not visited (Colossians 1:20-22).

Note that it is man who is the object of this reconciliation, not God, who was never at enmity with man. This enmity was reinforced by the Mosaic law, and such a law could not, by its nature, unify two diverse groups into one. The national, political distinctions between Israel and the Gentiles could only be abolished by a change in the nature of their relationship. As long as the Jew considered himself part of the old Hebrew nation with its attendant laws, he could have no ultimate peace with the Gentile. As long as the Gentile considered himself a citizen of an earthly nation, he could have no peace with the Jew. So God established a new kind of man, a man that consisted neither of Israel nor the Gentiles, but a man in which those relationships were eliminated altogether, thereby *making peace* (vs. 15).

For the second time (see Ephesians 1:23), we have the word *body* used in the metaphorical sense. It is to be associated with the concept of the new man, here called *one* body for the first time (see Ephesians 4:4). It is this phrase that establishes the unity of all believers in one body, whether Jew or Gentile.

διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ (*dia tou staurou – through the cross*)

Again we see that this reconciliation of man to God was through the cross, a metaphorical (metonymy, cause for effect) statement for Christ's death. Without the death of Christ on the cross, such reconciliation could not have occurred.

ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ (*apokteinas tēn echthran en autō – having killed the enmity in Himself*)

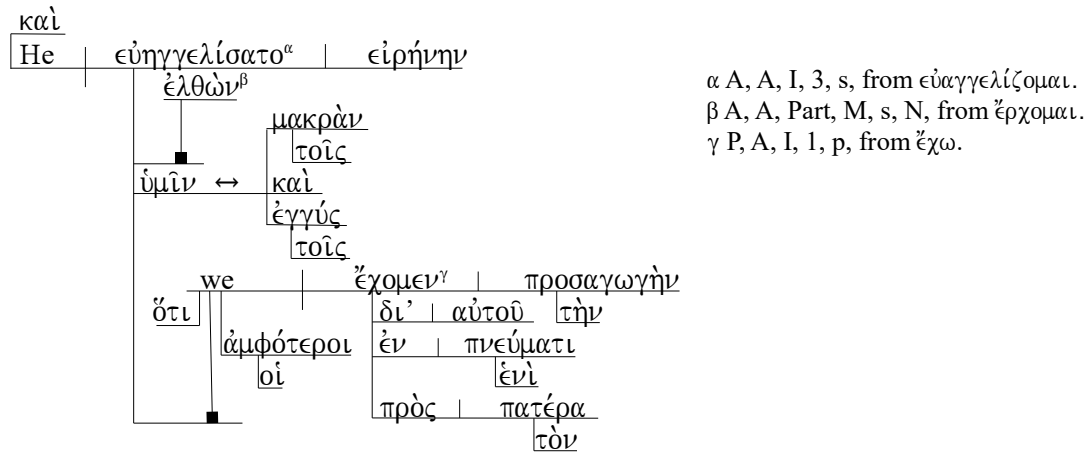
The participle *having killed* (*apokteinas*) indicates the means by which reconciliation was achieved. It could be translated "by means of having killed the enmity." Here it is the actual state of being an enemy of God that Christ did away with. It is associated with Christ by the prepositional phrase "in Himself" (*en autō*). When Christ died on the cross, the enmity died with Him, since in His death He eliminated the relationship to the law of Moses under which man was laboring in order to maintain a daily relationship with God. That enmity was killed, put to death, and no longer exists.

Here is another example of Paul's stating a positional fact, and expecting a change in attitude of the believer. The adversarial relationship between man and God no longer exists from the believer's perspective, and so the Christian should see himself at peace with God. Here is an attitude of faith that produces a peace of mind in the believing person.

In the next sentence, Paul sums up the new relationship between the believer and God which was produced and proclaimed by Christ.

2:17-18 καὶ ἔλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ τοῖς ἐγγύς ¹⁸ ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφοτέροι ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.

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Translation: And when He came,³⁸ He proclaimed peace to you who were far and to the ones who were near,¹⁸ because through Him we both have the way of approach to the Father by one Spirit.

Exegetical Considerations

17. καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ τοῖς ἐγγύς (*kai elthōn euēggelisato eirēnē humin tois makran kai tois eggus, And when He came, He proclaimed peace to you who were far and to the ones who were near*)

The very act of Christ's incarnation, His coming to earth,³⁹ was a proclamation of peace between the two groups of individuals recognized in the transition. This proclamation was an act of proclaiming a good message (εὐαγγελίζομαι), which was produced as an effect of Christ's incarnation. There is now peace to the ones far away (Gentiles) and the ones near (Jews). But, the peace was not between the two groups, but between both groups and God, shown by the next clause.

18. ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφότεροι ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα (*hoti di autou echomen tēn prosagōgēn hoi amphoteroi en heni pneumati pros ton patera, ¹⁸because through Him we both have the way of approach to the Father by one Spirit*)

The peace with God was caused by the act of Christ by which He made the way open to the Father. This was constricted, even with the Old Testament believer, as it was necessary to go through the ceremonial processes of the law.

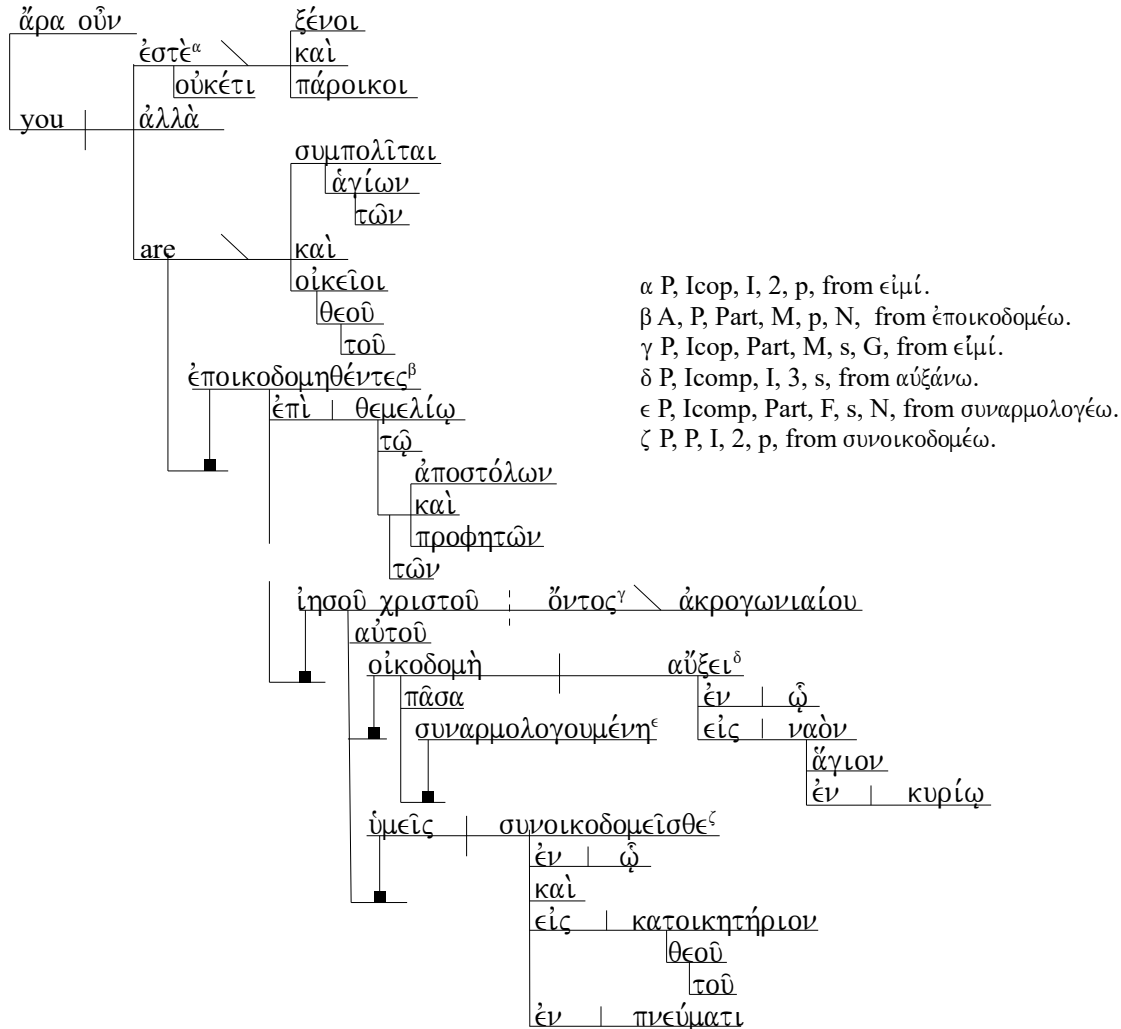
An act of reconciliation which must not be overlooked is this act of the priestly ministry of Christ, whereby he made the way open directly into the presence of the Father. Though the believing Jew was nearer to God than the believing Gentile under the old system, he had no direct access to the Father, but was required to go through human priests. That process was eliminated by death and resurrection of Christ.

It is for this reason that to believing Israelites in this age Peter proclaimed that they were a royal priesthood, able to offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5). Peter is not restricting this fact to the believing Israelite, but is specifically applying to them the universal truth of the priesthood of the believer for all who are in Christ.

Paul expands on this truth in the next sentence in Ephesians 2:19-22.

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2:19-22 ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι ἀλλὰ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ ²⁰ ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν ὄντος ἄκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ ²¹ ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὖξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ ²² ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι.



Translation: So then, you are no longer foreigners and non-citizens, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the family of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom also you are being built together for a dwelling place of God by the Spirit.

Three distinct metaphors present the believers of the current age collectively. Each of the three metaphors are convenient ways of presenting doctrinal truth concerning the unity of the saints, and should be considered carefully. As noted in vs. 16 above, reference of the saints to a body occurs often. It is perhaps the most common metaphor used of the collective saints, and is identified with the word *ekklesia*, translated “church.” It is such a convenient metaphor, the others have taken a secondary roll,

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and in one case, virtually ignored by serious students of Scripture, that of the family. Paul will expand on this concept in chapter three.

Two other metaphors of the collective saints of this age occur in this sentence, that of the family, and that of a building. They are distinct, and must be considered as separate comparisons, each for its own reason.

Exegetical Considerations

19. ἄρα οὖν (*ara oun – So then*)

This short two word phrase is of vital importance. It links the truth of the previous sentence with this one. The first of the two words (*ara*) indicates that the next statement brings to conclusion the previous discussion, and indicates that the previous statements imply the ones following. The second word (*then*) strengthens the statement and includes the idea that this sentence cannot be separated in thought from the previous one. Both are necessary to understand the force of Paul's teaching. Together, the two words could be paraphrased, "Therefore, the logical conclusions follow."

οὐκέτι ἐστέ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι (*ouketi este zenoi kai paroikoi – you are no longer foreigners and non-citizens*)

Because of Christ's proclamation of peace through His coming, and as a result His establishing reconciliation of man with God, the ethnic Gentile believers are now included positively and negatively in the program of equality with the ethnic Jewish believers. Negatively, the Gentiles are no longer foreigners and non-citizens. The two words, *zenoi* and *paroikoi*,⁴⁰ taken together emphasize the complete exclusion of Gentiles from Israel's national polity.

ἀλλὰ συμπολιταὶ τῶν ἁγίων (*alla sumpolitai tōn hagiōn – but fellow citizens with the saints*)

Positively speaking, the Gentiles are now "fellow citizens with the saints," the saints being the believing Israelites of the old program.⁴¹ This is a new benefit which was not previously available for those believers who were not Israelites. These words introduce the doctrine of the new kind of citizenship that believers in God's current family have. Paul does not detail these truths here, as it was not necessary when writing to those in Ephesus to whom he had previously ministered. Furthermore, he has already in this epistle established the heavenly relationship of the believer today, and it is in heaven where the Christian's citizenship now resides (Philippians 3:20).

By saints, does Paul mean that Gentiles have been incorporated into the household of Israel, as some have taken it? Certainly not, since the context deals with the "new kind of man" which only exists as the body of Christ.

What he means here is that with reference to that one new man there is only one kind of citizenship for saints, as opposed to the program of the Old Testament. In that program, believers who were part of Israel participated in a citizenship program in which other believers, who were Gentiles, could not participate. There was, as it were, a dual citizenship, one for Israel associated strictly with the theocracy of Israel, and one for Gentiles associated with the world of nations.

The new program incorporates all believers equally together in a new polity. All are fellow citizens, and stand in an equal relationship before God.

καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ (*kai oikeioi tou theou – and members of the family of God*)

The second new benefit which Paul mentions is that Gentile believers are now members of the family of God. This is a "household" statement, which is intimately tied up with the elimination of the distinc-

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tions between Jews and Gentiles in the new kind of man. Again, this was not available in the Old Testament program, where a Gentile believer, unless he went through the circumcision process, could not be part of the household of Israel. Otherwise, as Gentiles, they were barred from that relationship.

But those distinctions no longer hold. A new household has been formed, one in which there are no such distinctions, one through which the unity of all saints today is emphasized in a different way than the metaphors of either the body of the building.

20. ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν (*epikodomēthentes epi tō themeliō tōn apostolōn kai prophētōn – having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets*)

Here Paul begins the metaphor of the act of constructing a building, changing it from the concept of family, to the idea of building a structure with its attendant parts. The idea of constructing as an activity is being emphasized here. The participle, *epikodomēthentes*, refers to the believers as having been built on an already existing foundation, which is, of course part of the overall building. There is an implied time distinction, since the *foundation* must be laid before the rest of the building can be constructed.

The first part of the building, the foundation, *consists* of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament.⁴² It is important to note the strong distinction between the foundation and the other parts of the building. It is clear that Paul does not include the entire body of Christ as the foundation, but only those who are basic to the structure.

Today, there are no longer apostles and prophets in the sense that Paul means here. The rest of the building rises from this structure. For a full discussion of apostles and prophets, see this author's discussion of the spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4:11.

ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ (*ontos akrogōniāiou autou iesou christou – Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone*)

The foundation itself consists of two parts. The distinction within the foundation is between the gifted apostles and prophets, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is identified as the cornerstone. In ancient times, when stone building materials were used for large structures, the foundation consisted of huge stones. The temple in Jerusalem had such stones in its construction. The main, or chief cornerstone, which was generally laid first, had to be done so accurately, else the building could be out of plumb.⁴³ It was from this cornerstone that the rest of the foundation stones lined up. Some scholars believe this to be a capstone, since ἀκρογωνιαῖος can refer to such, especially with peaked roofs and arches. But others, such as Louw and Nida, correctly point out that, "in the New Testament ἀκρογωνιαῖος would probably refer to the type of stone which would have been used in the Temple in Jerusalem, and therefore it is far more likely to understand ἀκρογωνιαῖος as a cornerstone than a capstone of a peaked roof."⁴⁴ Given that Paul uses the word ἀκρογωνιαῖος as part of a foundation, Louw and Nida are undoubtedly correct.

Paul's point seems clear. As a cornerstone is the most significant and important part of a building, the Lord Jesus Christ is the most important part of the metaphorical building which consists of the believers of this age.

(See 1 Peter 2:6 for a somewhat different application of Christ as cornerstone.)

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The fact that the statement, “Jesus Christ himself being *the* cornerstone” is in a genitive absolute construction, distinguishes the person of Christ very strongly, further indicating, as the metaphor indicates, He is the most important part of the building.

21. ἐν ᾧ πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμολογουμένη αὖξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ (*en hō pasa oikodomē, sunarmologoumenē auxei, eis naon hagion en kuriō – in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord*)

The point to this statement, emphasized by the present tense of the verb grow (*auxei, grows or is growing*), is the continuing growth of the building through the construction process. This is because, in Christ, the building is not yet completed, even from God’s perspective. In this sense, it is similar to the metaphor of the human body, with Christ as its head, though here the emphasis seems to be on continuity of growth through time, whereas the growth of the body seems to be emphasizing the improvement of the spirituality of the individual believer which makes up its members.

22. ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι (*en hō kai humeis sunoikodomeisthe eis kataoikētērion tou theou en pneumati – in whom also you are being built together for a dwelling place of God by the Spirit*)

Note the strong emphasis on the pronoun “you.” Paul is clearly distinguishing his readers from himself and others who are part of the metaphorical foundation. By interpretation, “you” referred originally to the Ephesians. The Ephesians are not part of the foundation, but of the superstructure.

By application, then, the “you” refers to all believers through the current age who consist of the superstructure of the building.

Here we have the unity of the body expressed for a specific purpose, the purpose being for a dwelling place of God, which must refer to God the Father, as the Son is already presented as being part of the building. The agent of being built is the Holy Spirit, the one who brings the collective building material into closer unity.

The implication of this overall building metaphor is profound. The collective body of the saints, including the foundation, with Christ as the cornerstone, is viewed apart from its distinctions. There is absolutely no place here for denominations in the Scriptural view of the building in which the Father dwells. Clearly, this is not a hierarchic structure. The attempt to make the foundation continue through some kind of authoritative succession has no basis in Scripture. Those who hold that view are deluded as to their own importance.

Endnotes

- 1 Because it is without the article, the participle phrase should not be translated “who were dead.” It does not modify the pronoun *you*, which is actually its subject.
If the participle carries any time relationship to the understood verb, it possibly is a temporal, emphasizing “when,” or “while,” the entire participial clause standing as the object the understood verb. Here is a clear instance of an accusative absolute. See Brooks and Winbery, pg. 58.
- 2 Physical death is clearly not meant here. This is a positional state of death, true of all Christians before faith. It is not an actual physical condition, nor does does the positional death produce physical death. The unbeliever’s position is one of being separated from God, having no relationship to God or things pertaining to God. His positional state is such that he has no ability in spiritual areas. He is dead to God.
- 3 Nor any other New Testament writer, for that matter. Modern evangelism is often devoid of the very information needed for one to be saved. It has devolved into nothing more than appeal to the old man to come to Christ in some undetermined way. Many false means of salvation are being spread today, most of which include some action on the part of the unbeliever. Works righteousness is actually being taught when someone says, “Pray to receive Christ,” or “Ask God to save you,” or “Ask Jesus into your heart.” None of this phraseology occurs in Scripture. The only means to salvation is simple faith, that is, belief in the death and resurrection of Christ for the purpose of being saved.
- 4 A locative of sphere. As noted, this is not causal. Paul does not mean that the death of this context was caused by trespasses and sins. Rather, he means that these are consequences of that condition.
- 5 The noun παράπτωμα (*paraptōma*), translated *trespass*, may also refer to simple mistakes or errors. See Galatians 6:1 and James 5:16. Moulton and Milligan, in their work *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* on page 489, make the following observation concerning παράπτωμα, “A ‘slip’ or ‘lapse’ rather than a wilful (*sic*) ‘sin’ is the connotation suggested and the same weakened sense may be found in P Lond 1917¹⁴ (c. A. D. 330-340) where the writer speaks of a παράπτωμα διαβολική (*sic*) into which he had fallen, but which, as Bell suggests, may not mean more than that he had stayed too long in the κηπολάχανον (‘vegetable garden’) mentioned just before.” Moulton and Milligan go on to say that they would not apply this meaning to the New Testament uses. The implication of such a disclaimer is that the normal way in which παράπτωμα was used at the time of the quote above was of error and not moral wrong-doing. In the New Testament, normally the word does refer to wrong-doing, while it still had the idea of error in at least two instances. Hence we say that the term is broader than the word ἁμαρτία when it is used of acts of sin (rather than indwelling sin or sin guilt), where it refers to wrong-doing, perhaps in ignorance, but still unrighteous, whereas a sin act is a wrong-doing that is a willful act of known unrighteousness.
- 6 This translation is found not only in the KJV, but also the NKJV, the New American Standard Version, the older American Standard Version, and even Darby’s New translation, which substitutes “every” for “all.” The NIV and the RSV substitute “wrong doing” for unrighteousness.
- 7 The phraseology in Greek is πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν. The fact that both ἀδικία (unrighteousness) and ἁμαρτία (sin) are without the article indicates that no *direct* correspondence between the two words exist. The lack of the article indicates that these nouns are used qualitatively.
The most that one can say is that both nouns share a quality. Both words refer to wrongful conduct in some sense. But unrighteousness carries a much broader meaning than sin. Correctly understood, sins are a kind of unrighteousness, but unrighteousness also includes many acts that are not sins.
- 8 Clearly, there is sin both *unto death* and *not unto death*. Some translate this clause “There is sin not *leading* to death.” This is actually more of a paraphrase, but it is probably accurate from a doctrinal perspective. We know that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), but under the law, death did not have to be applied to the person sinning. The law allowed the death of a substitute, a sacrifice, by which one acknowledged that the death penalty was deserved. But the merciful God provided a substitute for some acts of sin.
What John means here is that there are different kinds of unrighteousness, just as there are different kinds of sin. And some kinds of sin, at the time of the writing, did not lead to the death penalty. John is being very practical here. In the Roman Empire many sins did lead to the death penalty. Capital punishment was the verdict against murder, treason, etc. But many acts of sin, violations of sexual behavior, for instance, did not always require death in the Roman system. Indeed, sexual immorality was institutionalized in the pagan acts of temple prostitution.

Endnotes

- 9 The Greek word here is *παράβασις*, correctly translated *transgression*. Transgression is possible only if people are *under* a forensic law. Adam was under one such law, and Moses provided multiple forensic laws under which Israel operated. Both legal systems produced the death penalty. However, no such law existed from Adam to Moses. (The point to this passage is that people still died from Adam to Moses, even though they were not guilty of personal acts of sin. Why? Because they sinned in Adam. Adam's sin was imputed to people between Adam and Moses, but it no personal imputation of wrong doing was imputed legally to anyone during that period because they had no law of any kind.)
- What about today? For the believer today, again no such forensic law exists. Paul says specifically, "you are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). But unlike the period from Adam to Moses, today the believer "has law" without being "under law." That law, in the general sense of requirement apart from penalty, we find in the writings of the New Testament. But a Christian today *cannot transgress* God's law. A violation of God's law is either a sin, if done willfully and knowingly, or else it is a trespass if done unwittingly. The reason no penalty is attached to God's requirements today is because the penalty has already been paid by Christ.
- 10 Realize that Christians, and all people, are under some law today, though it is not God's law, but man's law. In the United States there are local city and county laws, as well as state and federal laws, each with penalty attached. These are indeed forensic laws. Sometimes these laws are contradictory, and in keeping one, a person violates another. Such is the nonsense associated with human legal systems, when laws are added not to maintain righteousness in a population, but to attempt to control it beyond the righteous function of government. This goes along with the biblical teaching that the world system is broken, and is passing away.
- I have sometimes been asked, should Christians attempt then to keep man's laws. My answer is invariably, Yes we should, unless in so keeping we are required to violate God's revealed word. That is, in my view, the best general principle under which all believers should operate.
- But, I've been asked, what about unjust laws? Should we keep them?
- The question is vague, for there are at least two kinds of unjust laws. The first, that which requires a believer to violate the tenants of Scripture, we are required to oppose, and not keep. But those unjust laws that impose injustice upon us carry no such requirement. We are to keep those laws, and allow the government to act unjustly toward us, even given the fact that they violate us in some way.
- 11 It is the general word for walk, the word *stoicheō* being the more specific word for taking individual steps. *Stoicheō* occurs in the NT only five times, whereas *peripateō* occurs some 96 times. Paul uses both, but *stoicheō* only four times.
- 12 James Moffett, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, "Revelation," pg. 406.
- 13 *Pote* again. See the discussion of vs. 2.
- 14 The form is aorist passive, but the verb clearly is not passive in function. It means "to conduct one's life," and is closer to a reflexive than a passive in function. Grammatically, it is an intransitive complete verb.
- 15 The two prepositional phrases, ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις and ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ, cannot go back to συνεζωοποίησεν, but related to the two subsequent verbs only, συνήγειρεν and συνεκάθισεν. So, while all three verbs are parallel, the two final verbs are directly connected to the sense of the two following prepositional phrases. Hence the strange diagram.
- 16 Strangely, Dana and Mantey identify this as an *explanatory* use of δέ (pg. 244). This seems highly unlikely given the overall context in which it occurs.
- 17 The aorist verb ἡγάπησεν is constative. This is the purest function of the aorist tense, as it views the entire act apart from any modification, without reference to its beginning, end, progress or result. Burton calls this an historical aorist, but both Dana and Mantey, and Books and Winbery use the more precise designation of constative aorist.
- 18 **Note:** The translation of this verse may seem unwarranted to many because of the two word subject/predicate "this is" repetitions. The word *this* occurs only one time in the Greek text, and the word *is* occurs not at all! Yet they are both necessary to an English understanding of the sentence.
- That no actual verb exists is not an uncommon idiom in inflected languages. The "to be" verb is often understood to be included, even though not written, nor even mentioned orally in every day conversation. It is, however, awkward for English speakers.

Endnotes

The common translations, such as the one in the NKJV, “and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast,” are not adequate. Indeed, they are downright misleading. The word translated *that* is not *that* in Greek, but *this*! The correct translation is of prime importance, because *that* refers to something remote, while *this* refers to something near.

Also, the “that not of yourselves” has no verb, but one would have been understood by the original readers. The correct translation for English readers must include a verb, otherwise the translation makes little sense. It should be translated as I have done it, “and this *is* not of you.” Note that the verb *is* is complete. It has no complement, only two adverbial modifiers.

Also, the word *this* goes not only with “not of you,” but also with the next two required “to be” verbs. That these are required is indicated by the fact that each grammatical structure requires its own verb.

For instance “and this not of you” requires the verb *is*, since both *not* and *of you* are adverbial. It is a different *is* than the next *is* because that is a positive *is*, and this is a negative *is*, modified by *not*.

As noted the next *is* is positive, “this *is* the gift of God.” Here the positive *is* has a predicate complement, the noun *gift*.

But the final *is* is negative again, “this *is* not of works.” Once again, the word *is* is negative, and has no complement, but does have two adverbial modifiers, *not*, and *of works*.

- 19 It occurs second, after the article *tē* because it is an idiom of Greek that the word *gar* can never begin a clause. Grammarians call such a construction a postpositive.
- 20 One expects to see abstract nouns without the article, and so we do in vs. 5. But here in vs. 8, Paul is referring back, and specifically identifying the previous abstract noun *grace* in a theological sense. In other words, the grace here is specifically the same previously mentioned quality of God’s grace that produces the provisions for personal salvation. In vs. 5 the personal emphasis is missing. But vs. 8 continues with the phrase “through faith” and thus identifies the abstract grace with a specific and personal application of God’s provision. Knowing Christians should thank God for His choice of the Greek language to reveal New Testament truth!
- 21 Dana and Mantey, pg. 162.
- 22 Brooks and Winbery, pg. 26-27, call this function an ablative of means.
- 23 The other part of the sentence “you are having been saved,” is identical to that which occurs in vs. 5 above. See those comments for a presentation of that verb and participle. The word “saved” is not a noun, but a verbal. It is not the noun *salvation*, though many attempt to use it as such. The word *this*, as we shall see, cannot refer back to salvation, as such a noun does not occur in this context. It must refer back to a singular noun.
- 24 At this point I am sometimes challenged because some think that believing the gospel and receiving Christ are the same thing. They generally quote John 1:18, which is not teaching a means of salvation at all. For a careful discussion of this passage, see my work on “The Gospel of Salvation.”
- 25 For teaching purposes, I repeat the word *this* three times, though it occurs in the Greek text only one time. But *this* is the subject of the clause in which the three understood verbs *is* occur. See the Greek diagram.
- 26 It has become popular in certain circles to by-pass the grammatical issues of this passage, and to come to a general theological conclusion. The abandonment of grammatical interpretation is a dangerous precedent, however, as it opens the door to continued poor interpretation. If one abandons normal interpretive procedure to substitute a previously arrived at view, or a more acceptable theological construct, nothing can then be discussed. When such occurs, the result is that no matter what Scripture says, it will be reinterpreted what some human being wants it to say. I’ve sometimes asked the question, “If God wanted to say that faith is a gift of God, just how will you allow Him to do so? What propositional statement will you accept to mean what this sentence clearly states?”
- 27 I used the word *principle* rather than *rule* for a reason. It is always dangerous to refer to grammatical use in terms of rules, as one can almost always find an exception. Rather, generally accepted grammatical usage must be observed. If there is an exception to normal use of a grammatical principle, it must be determined *apart from any theological desire on the part of the exegete*. To declare something an exception to normal usage because of a doctrinal desire is dishonest. One must allow the historical, grammatical, normal (literal) use of the meaning of words and grammatical structures to stand, unless there is a clear reason *apart from doctrinal preference* for making deciding against the norm.

Endnotes

- 28 I have commented at length elsewhere on the fallacies of many views held by Calvinists that I do not share. Such things as the lapsarian views, which have no basis in Scripture, are held by many Calvinists. A misunderstanding of faith itself, is often held by those who view the doctrine of saving faith as presented in the lapsarian views. And there are several other doctrines some Calvinists proclaim with which we disagree. But faith as a gift of God is not one of them, since it is the clear meaning of Ephesians 2:8-9.
- 29 Some who recognize the problem they are facing have delved into very complicated arguments to hold their view. I have had students who came from a semi-Pelagian background who have spent literally hours investigating ways to make the faith something other than God's gift. As their complications arise, their terminology becomes convoluted and even more complicated, and in some cases verging on the mystical. The ultimate question one must ask is this. How would the Ephesians have understood the statements in Ephesians 2:8-9. To what understanding would they arrive? The principle of Occam's Razor should be invoked here. That principle states that the simplest explanation is most likely the correct one. Given Paul's normal grammar, which was in line with regular Greek usage of his day, what is the easiest thing to believe from the perspective of the statements of the grammar? I submit that Paul meant what the simplest use of the grammar indicates: saving faith is a gift from God.
- 30 Technically, this prepositional phrase is an ablative of source. Faith does not have its source in works. Clearly, this encroaches on the idea of means, since faith is a noun of action. So, to say that faith does not have its source in works is close to saying that the person who exercises faith is not working.
- 31 The preposition *epi* is not used in its spacial sense here. The form following it, *ergois agathois*, is a dative of purpose, which is reinforced by the preposition, which is used in the sense *for the purpose*.
- 32 Ablative of separation. See D & M pgs. 81 & 82.
- 33 If you look up ἐγενήθητε (*egenēthēte*) in a parsing guide, it will tell you that it is aorist passive. This is nonsense, since the verb is a state-of-being verb, and cannot have voice, neither active nor passive. This is another example of the knee-jerk reaction to a particular form that traditional Greek grammarians display. Yes, often the ending -θητε will be with an aorist passive verb, but not always, and with state-of-being verbs, never. The reason that it is in this form is because verbs in the *-omai* conjugation are often *intransitive by nature*, and cannot be either active or passive voice. Any form can occur with them.
- 34 Technically, *nuni* modifies the state-of-being verb *egenēthēte*, though it is not near it. The word order is for emphasis, otherwise Paul would have had *nuni* closer to the verb, so as to emphasize the adverb *eggs*, *near*.
- 35 The use of the predicate nominative with a state-of-being verb in the present tense is effectively an appositional phraseology. It is a way of more specifically identifying the subject. The power of this statement is often overlooked, but it the strongest affirmation possible in the Greek language.
- 36 *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition*, under the word.
- 37 Generally speaking, *kainos* (καίνος) refers to something new in kind, while *neos* (νέος) refers to something new in time. While this distinction cannot be stretched beyond a certain point, it clearly fits in many passages, such as the one before us, especially given that the word man (*anthropos*) is without the article.
- 38 A note for the Greek language student: the phrase "And when He came" is a translation of just one Greek participle, *elthōn* (ἐλθών), an adverbial temporal participle. Since it is aorist, it indicates action simultaneous to or prior to the main verb, also an aorist. Because it is nominative, agreeing with the understood subject of the main verb, *euēggelisato*, (εὐηγγέλισατο), we have added the pronoun *He*.
- 39 That Christ proclaimed peace is difficult for many. Where did He do so, they ask? One typical answer is that which the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* provides, "Certainly this refers to the preaching of peace by the apostles rather than Christ Himself because Christ preached almost entirely to Jews.... Also the peace that was preached was on the basis of Christ's death rather than during His life on earth." Another approach is to refer to Luke 2:14 where the heavenly host says "Peace on earth." But the passage before us is not referring to peace on earth, but peace between man and God. The best approach to this statement is to view it as the figure of speech metonymy, which uses cause for effect. One effect of Christ's coming is to provide reconciliation between man and God which was figuratively proclaimed by Christ by His incarnation, for without the incarnation, which brought about His death and resurrection, there could have been no reconciliation.

Endnotes

- 40 The Greek word *zenos* seems always to refer to strangers or foreigners, but the word *paroikos* had changed meaning by the time of the NT writings. Originally it simply meant *neighbor*, but in later Greek it added the meaning *alien*, a *temporary resident*, and carries that meaning in each of its four uses in the New Testament. See also Acts 7:6, 7:29, and 1 Peter 2:11. Peter associates it with the adjective *parepidēmos* (παρεπίδημος), “one who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives...” (Thayer)
- 41 A common view is that the word *saints* here refers to all believers of all the previous ages. Again, the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* takes that view with the words, “Believing Gentiles become fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household. They become a part of the company of the redeemed of all ages beginning with Adam.”
- However, the context will not allow such an approach. The contrast in Ephesians 2:11-21 is between believing Israel and believing Gentiles. Undoubtedly the idea of extending the term *saints* to all believers of all ages stems from the fact that reconciliation is not limited to Jews and Gentiles of Paul’s time. But, in fact, reconciliation is being applied by Paul in a limited fashion in Ephesians, not to the universality of reconciliation. For that we must go to Colossians 1:20-21.
- 42 In the phrase “the foundation of the apostles and prophets” the key word is “of.” Actually, it is a genitive construction which has been interpreted variously, depending on one’s doctrinal position.
1. Some hold that the foundation was built *by* the apostles and prophets. This makes the word foundation a noun of action (a highly unlikely proposition), and the genitive to be a subjective genitive. This cannot hold for one primary reason. The foundation has two elements related to it, a) the apostles and prophets, and b) the Lord Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, which is clearly part of the foundation. The metaphor loses meaning if one assumes that somehow the apostles and prophets built the foundation, including the cornerstone.
 2. Some hold that the foundation has its source in the apostles and prophets. This actually makes the “of” construction an ablative, meaning “from.” This strange view cannot stand, for the same reasons as the previous view.
 3. Some hold that the foundation belongs to the apostles and prophets. That is, they own it. This makes the genitive one of possession. Certainly the cornerstone is not owned by the apostles and prophets. If anything, it’s the other way around.
 4. Some hold, as I do, that the foundation consists of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as also part of the foundation, which is the clear meaning of the phrase “Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone.” This makes the genitive a genitive of apposition. This view makes more sense, given the nature of the ensuing metaphor, since Paul went on to describe various parts of the building and of what it consists. (Brooks and Winbery use this construction as an example of a genitive of apposition.)
- 43 ATR in quotes W. W. Lloyd, “The *akrogōniaios* here is the primary foundation-stone at the angle of the structure by which the architect fixes a standard for the bearings of the walls and cross-walls throughout.” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, under the verse.)
- 44 See Louw and Nida’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Electronic edition, under the word. The phraseology here is not identical to that in either Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10 or Luke 20:17. These passages are quoting Psalm 118:22, where the wording in the LXX is identical (εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας). There the expression appears to refer to the capstone of a building, the last stone laid at the top, rather than to the foundation as in Ephesians 2:20.