

Citizens

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A study in the book of Ephesians
Chapter 2:19-22

Walk Like an Ephesian:Part 5

By Mary Kane

I am so glad you came back for another day of Bible study. God has much to say to us today through the book of Ephesians! Before we begin our study time, please take a few minutes to pray and ask God to open the truth of His word to your heart in a fresh new way. Ask Him to show you how to apply the truths you are learning to your life. After you have prayed, please sign your initials in the blank:

_____.

Now please read Ephesians 2:19-22 out loud.

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

Please go to Blue Letter Bible (BLB) and read our text in two other versions. After you have finished reading please highlight in the text above any important verses and make notes concerning questions (please research questions at BLB study resources) or significant insights in the space below:

According to verse 19, what did we used to be before we came to Christ?

What are we now?

Please go to BLB and do word searches for the following terms and write your findings in the space provided:

strangers:

foreigners:

What do we become we after we accept Christ as our Savior (verse 19)?

Please go back to BLB and do words searches for the following terms and write your findings in the space below:

saints:

citizens:

members:

When we accept Christ as our Savior, God delivers us from the kingdom of darkness and we become citizens of the household of God. Many years ago, my grandparents left their homeland and came to America in search of a better life. Like my grandparents, I also left my homeland, the kingdom of darkness, in search of a better life—abundant life. When I entered this new kingdom through the “Ellis Island” of the Cross of Christ, I became a new creature. I no longer had to obey the laws and customs of the old land. As a citizen of the Kingdom of God, I’ve learned new customs, and traditions and discovered a new way of thinking. Like my grandparents, I began a new life as a citizen of a new land.

The following is a statement from *the Official Website of the Department of Homeland Security* concerning the value of citizenship:

The Value of Citizenship

The United States has a long history of welcoming immigrants from all parts of the world. America values the contributions of immigrants who continue to enrich this country and preserve its legacy as a land of freedom and opportunity.

Deciding to become a U.S. citizen is one of the most important decisions in an individual’s life. If you decide to apply to become a U.S. citizen, you will be showing your commitment to the United States and your loyalty to its Constitution. In return, you are rewarded with all the rights and privileges that are part of U.S. citizenship.

Let’s take this official statement from the DHS and change the title to: *The Value of Citizenship of the Kingdom of God*. Now, let’s rework the statement as it would apply to *heavenly citizenship* by filling in the blanks with substitute concepts. I’ll get us started by filling in the first blanks:

The Value of Citizenship of the Kingdom of Heaven

God has a long history of welcoming people from all parts of the world. _____ values the contributions of _____ who continue to enrich this country and preserve its legacy as a land of freedom and opportunity.

Deciding to become a _____ is one of the most important decisions in an individual's life. If you decide to become a _____, you will be showing your commitment to _____ and your loyalty to the _____. In return, you are rewarded with all the rights and privileges that are part of _____.

What are some of the rights and privileges of belonging to the kingdom of God (See Psalm 103)?

What amazing blessings God bestows upon those who seek Him.

Now please go back and read our verses again. According to verse 19, a Christian is a member of what?

We are part of the household of God. The word *household* in the original Greek is *oikeios*, which means belonging to a house or family, kindred, *related by blood* (emphasis mine).

By who's blood are we related?

By the blood of Christ. *Oikeios* is derived from the root word *oikos*, which means a home, a palace, the house of God, the *descendants of one* (emphasis mine). Descendants of *One* ... descendants of the *Only One*. When we become citizens of the household of God, we are brothers and sisters in the Lord, united by the blood of Christ to the Holy Father.

What have we been built upon?

We have been built upon the teachings of the apostles and the prophets. The chief teaching is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He is the cornerstone of our faith, our life, and our walk. Thayer's lexicon states, "...as the cornerstone holds together two walls, so Christ joins together as Christians, into one body dedicated to God." Jews and Gentiles are joined by the Cornerstone—the Rock and are united as one in Christ Jesus.

Through Christ Jesus, as we mature in our knowledge and faith of Him, we grow into a temple of the Lord. God is our forever Emmanuel, our God With Us and in us. Since the desert wanderings of Moses and the Hebrew people, the temple/tabernacle has been God's design and plan by which He manifests His Presence on a sinful earth. We are part of His temple as the body of Christ (verse 21) and we are His temple as born-again believers in Christ (verse 22).

What are temples used for?

Temples are used for worship, communication between God and man, and ministry.

How should we conduct ourselves since *we are* the temple of God?

As the temple of God, is there any activity you need to refrain from in honor of His presence?

What can you do to grow your temple?

In closing, please reread our text for today.

What is the church, the Bible, and the reason for our being based upon?

Jesus. He is the very foundation. Perhaps right now your feel (as I have felt in the past) your life is on the rocks. Please take hope. With Jesus a life that is on the rocks can be rebuilt upon the Rock. Jesus is our cornerstone.

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