

Series: Ephesians
Title: Fellowcitizens with the Saints
Text: Ephesians 2: 19
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Ephesians 2: 19: Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints,...

Proposition: Every redeemed, born-again believer, together with other every other saint, is a fellow citizen of heavenly Jerusalem.

The Ephesian believers were once dead in sins. at that time they were strangers and foreigners to God.

- Without Christ
- Aliens from God's elect in Israel
- Strangers to the gospel of Christ
- With no hope,
- Without God in the world.

Brethren, the same was true of you and I by our first birth from Adam. The same is true of every sinner not born of God and given faith in Christ—true of each person now that does not believe on Christ from a newly created heart.

But now, in Christ, that was no longer the case for these Ephesian believers, and it is no longer the case for you and I for whom Christ died.

Ephesians 2: 13: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Christ Jesus reconciled all God's elect to God by his blood on the cross. He made God's elect one with God, and one with our brethren, by fulfilling the law which divided us from God and from one another.

Yet, in order for us to partake of this free gift, Christ came and preached this good news through his preachers to the Ephesians, and he did the same for you and I. Christ preached peace to us—that He is our Peace—that is my message to you. He preached peace to his elect Jews which were near, in political Israel, and to his elect Gentiles which were far off, in Gentile nations, which includes us.

As the gospel was preached, Christ interceded with the Father and the Father sent forth the Holy Spirit who: regenerated each one of us to spiritual life, Christ gave each of us repentance. He changed our minds—taught us we are sinners, our works are vain, and Christ is All. And Christ gave each of us faith in Christ. Now, by this work of the triune God every believer has access to God our Father.

Ephesians 2: 18: For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. **19: Now THEREFORE ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints,.**

Through God's grace, every blood bought, born-again child of God, along with every other believing saint is, a citizen of heavenly Jerusalem.

I. SPIRITUALLY, SAINTS ARE NO LONGER IN THE BONDAGE OF EARTHLY JERUSALEM.

Paul said, Galatians 4: 25: Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

Jerusalem below, in earthly Mt. Zion, in political Israel, stands for all unregenerate, will workers, who reject the truth that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. Every sinner who insists that they are justified and made righteous or sanctified by the law are doing as those vain priests spoken of in Hebrews 10: 11:

Hebrews 10:11: And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

We were once in that bondage, once citizens of Jerusalem below. But now when men try to bring us under the rule of law, we say with Paul,

Galatians 6:14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. 16: And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

II. ALL GOD’S SAINTS ARE CITIZENS OF HEAVENLY JERUSALEM—no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints.

This is very important. We saw it Sunday when we saw that the three persons in the Godhead receive glory for giving us one access to God our Father. In the earthly temple, in that holy of holies, above the mercy seat, above the Ark, God’s presence was really there—the Shekinah glory. Therefore earthly Jerusalem, in earthly Mt. Zion, in earthly Israel, was a special city under the old covenant of works.

But when Christ fulfilled the law, that veil was rent in two there was no ark inside. God laid the ax to the roots of political Israel. Jerusalem was destroyed by God using Rome and that temple was torn down. Christ said, “Behold, your house is left to you desolate.” (Mt 23: 38) He will do the same thing when he returns the second time but next time it will be so for the whole world.

Forgetting The Old, Pressing Toward the New

Now Christ our Ark, our Mercy Seat, has redeemed us and entered into the true holiest of holies into God’s presence in heavenly Jerusalem with his own blood where he everlives to make intercession for us. So the Jerusalem of which every saint is a citizen is heavenly Jerusalem of which earthly Jerusalem was only a type.

Galatians 4: 26: But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Therefore, we do not look back to the old but we press forward to the new:

Philippians 3: 13: Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus....20: For our CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN; [our citizenship is in heaven] from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The City is God and His People

John was shown our holy city. We learn about our city in Revelation 21.

- Our city is great, it is holy and it shall descend out of heaven from God—Revelation 21:10: “And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” It is not of this earthy but shall descend from God out of heaven.

- The glory of our city is the glory of God—Revelations 21: 11: “Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” Brethren, everyone in heavenly Jerusalem will be made glorious by the glory of God. He has done that for us in spirit in the new birth. And as Paul said he shall raise our bodies like unto his glorious body.
- He describes the walls and the foundation as precious stones. Then says, Revelation 21: 22: “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” We will focus strictly on this at another time, but Ephesians 2 tells us that each saint is a living stone, the apostles and prophets are the foundation, Christ is the chief cornerstone, we grow into a holy temple in the Lord, and we are habitation of God through the Spirit. Brethren, this city and all the precious stones described is Christ and his saints who he has made glorious in himself and in whom he dwells. The city is made up of God and of Christ and his people!
- Therefore, the only ones who enter our city are those God elected unto salvation—which are made righteous by Christ’s blood and created anew in righteousness by the Holy Spirit in the new birth—here is why?—Revelation 21: 27: “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

All Things Dissolved, New Heaven and New Earth

This present heaven and earth, all unregenerate men and all the works thereof, are all cursed by Adam’s sin. Therefore, it all shall all be burned up in the day of judgment when Christ returns. But the new heaven and new earth, heavenly Jerusalem, comprised of every saint, will all be the work of Christ our Righteousness. Therefore all shall be perfectly righteous and all shall remain eternally.

2 Peter 3: 10: But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11: *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, 12: Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13: Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Hebrews 12: 18: For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched,...22: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23: To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24: And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel. 25: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven: 26: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27: And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28: Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29: For our God *is* a consuming fire.

So our citizenship is in heaven. Every saint made righteous by Christ’s blood, created in righteousness and true holiness by the Holy Spirit in regeneration, makes up this city. Since we are the work of Christ’s hands, heavenly Jerusalem shall be all righteous and shall remain forever.

III. HAVING THIS GOOD NEWS THAT WE ARE NOW FELLOWCITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS OF HEAVENLY JERUSALEM, THAT ALL THIS WORLD AND ALL VAIN WORKS SHALL BE BURNED UP, HOW SHOULD WE LIVE IN THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD?

First, brethren, stand fast in the Lord. (Php 4: 1)

We are to live like our first father, Abraham.

Hebrews 11: 9: By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

- We are to sojourn through this world as foreigners in a strange country.
- We are to dwell in tabernacles—that is, holding on loosely to everything in this world.
- We are to dwell with those who are heirs with us of the same promise—with saints who are fellowcitizens
- We are to do so looking for our heavenly city **which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**

To do so means we will have to be separate from this world rather than conformed to it.

Hebrews 13: 12: Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13: Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14: For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

We are not to give ourselves to serve this world, nor to be flattered by its honors or bribed by its favors. Instead, be willing to be sneered at more than to be approved. As Moses did, suffer affliction with the people of God, “esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” (Heb 11: 26) So, brethren, stand fast in the Lord.

Secondly, be of the same mind in the Lord. (Php 4: 2-3)

As true yoke fellows—yoked together by Christ our Master, as citizens of the same heavenly Jerusalem under the government of our Prince, as members one with another, whose names are in the book of life, let us labor together in the gospel of Christ.

When we were lost and dead in sins, Christ came and preached peace to each of us through his preacher and saved us by his grace. To do that, Christ assembled a body of believers, who he blessed, who supported that work for the gospel to come to us. Now, Christ has called us and fit us together to do the same for others. Therefore, let each of us be of one mind to make this work of spreading this gospel our chief business in this world. So stand fast in the Lord and be of one mind in the work of the Lord.

Thirdly, rejoice in the Lord always. (Php 4: 4)

Be glad in the Lord in every way all the time; be filled with joy in Him because of Him and for Him. Live your life rejoicing in the Lord always. Believers should be the happiest folks on earth.

In our flesh dwells no good thing, but the new man joined to Christ is complete in Christ: in Christ we are righteous as God, in Christ we are holy as God, in Christ we are inseparably accepted of God. Grace chose us, grace redeemed us, grace regenerated us, grace shall keep us and grace shall bring us home. Whatever we may suffer in this world, that is cause to rejoice in the Lord always. Stand fast in the Lord, be of one mind in the work of the gospel and rejoice always.

Fourthly, let your moderation be known unto all men. (Php 4: 5)

The only place the word “moderation” is used in the Bible is in Php 4: 5. It does NOT have to do with temperance in food and drink. It has to do with our attitude and conduct. The meaning is be “mild, gentle, and patient, kind,

tenderhearted, non-judgmental”, as opposed to harsh and demanding and judgmental. We are to be so toward all people: in the church and in the world. (Eph. 4:32)

Brethren, we never know all the facts. But we have come to God who is the Judge of all, who is able to make his servant stand. Therefore, in all our dealings with men remember, “The Lord is at hand.” (Romans 14:4) So be patient, kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.

Fifthly, be careful for nothing. (Php 4: 6)

Do not be overly anxious and worrisome over things in this life.

In a few weeks I will be going to Mexico. I am a citizen of this country. I will be an alien in that country. Yet, while I am in that country, I will have to obey the laws of Mexico. Likewise, though we are aliens in this world, though we are citizens of heavenly Jerusalem, we still have to obey the laws of this country. Do so in quietness—not protesting our rulers and getting anxious over how they are governing things.

While I am in Mexico I will see the product of much corruption. But I will not protest in the street because that is not my country. The same goes for each believer in this one—our citizenship is in heaven. So let’s not be overly careful for the politics of this world. Instead,

Romans 11: 1: Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2: Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Also, we shall suffer in this world just like everyone else. If you were living overseas as an alien, though you are citizen of this country, when their economy fluctuates it would affect you like those who are citizens of that country. So it is for us in this world. When God scatters abroad, believers increase as do others in this world; when God withholds his hand, saints decrease as do others in this world. Christ promised us, that believers shall have tribulation in this world just like every unbeliever in this world. We shall suffer from our flesh just like everyone else. “But be of good cheer” Christ said, “I have overcome the world.” So when times get tight let us not become careful, then harsh and demanding. As our master has forgiven us all our debt, likewise, “from your hearts forgive everyone his brother their trespasses.” (Mt 18: 29-35)

The Lord gives us a good word of instruction. When he allowed Israel to be carried captive into foreign lands, he said this:

Jeremiah 29:7: And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

So “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” (Rom 12: 18) “To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” (Heb 13: 16) Christ said, “Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” (Lu 6: 35)

Again, do so remembering “the Lord is at hand.” Therefore, “in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known UNTO GOD. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Php 4: 6-7)

Finally, brethren, occupy your minds with things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. (Php 4: 8)

In other words, set your affection on things above where Christ sits at God’s right hand. (Col 3: 1-4) Give your mind to Christ and the study of him and the eternal blessing we have in him. Be assured, “the God of peace shall

be with you.” Do so knowing, “my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Php 4: 19)

When I am in Mexico I will enjoy my time there. I will fellowship with my brethren around the gospel of Christ. But by Friday, I will be eager to be back in my own country. So it is with us. Enjoy the things God has given you in this world fellowshipping with brethren around the gospel of Christ. But do so with a constant eye to our eternal, heavenly city. In a little while this week will be up and we will be going to our eternal home!

May God give us grace to live as aliens and strangers to this world and as fellowcitizens with the saints of heavenly Jerusalem.

Amen!