

## The Epistle to the Ephesians

### 5. Ephesians Chapter 2:11-22 “Amazing Grace”



Do we really know how awesome and amazing our salvation is? For many of us, raised in the church and with Christian friends, it is easy to become complacent and desensitized to our salvation. We see ourselves as good people who go to church on Sunday, not realizing how we were rescued from the depths of depravity. God has taken us from a point of spiritual death, elevating us to “Sonship”, with all of Heaven as our inheritance. We will never really understand our amazing salvation until we see the reality of it in Heaven.

Sometimes we are even reluctant to understand God’s grace, because we limit who can receive salvation. We are willing to accept God’s mercy for sinners like us. We

question the fairness of allowing “bad” people into Heaven, people like a killer or rapist, a cannibal like Jeffery Dahmer or even a mass murderer like Hitler. Could God really extend Grace to someone like this?

The answer is yes, the “Blood of Christ” is an infinite sacrifice, covering the sins of the whole earth, every sinner past, present and future was covered. The gift of salvation through the blood of Christ is available to all under one condition. The one condition is we must receive it through faith, by trusting in the saving work of Jesus Christ. It’s God’s “Free Gift” to all sinners, the work of the church is to announce the gift of salvation to the world.

Romans 5:15-17

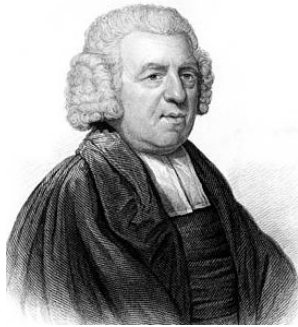
(15) But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

(16) And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

(17) For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

The Ephesians believers were an example of God’s Grace, Paul wanted them to remember from where they came, and where they are going. This is the point of the second part of Ephesians chapter 2, verses 11 to 22. John Newton, the author of the hymn known as *Amazing Grace* was a slave trader and blasphemer who almost died on several occasions before God intervened in his life. He knew of all people he did not deserve salvation; he was a man who made profits from trading in human souls, capturing men in Africa and shipping them to North America. How could God ever grant mercy and forgiveness to him? Well, it’s called Amazing Grace for a reason!

## The Life of John Newton and Amazing Grace



The words to the autobiographical hymn *Amazing Grace* written by John Newton is great picture of the power of Grace for every person. John Newton was a wicked and perverse man, not only by his own admission, but by all around him. Born in 1725, he was the son of a Mediterranean shipmaster, John Newton Sr. and Elizabeth Newton (Seatcliffe) a devout “Nonconformist Christian”<sup>1</sup>. She raised him to be a pastor, he memorized bible verses and hymns as a child, but she died when he was six-years old. His father remarried the next year, so young John was pushed aside

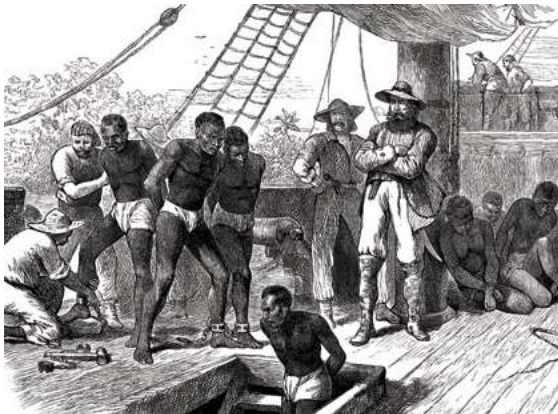
after his stepmother gave birth. John was sent to boarding school, and at the age of eleven he went to sea with his father and sailed on six voyages before his father retired in 1742. During this time Newton renounced his faith, with the influence of fellow shipmates, who were reading the secular philosophers of the day. He became the “great blasphemer”.

In 1743 Newton was pressed<sup>2</sup> into joining the Royal Navy, he was appointed midshipman (officer candidate), later he tried to desert. As a result, he was demoted and humiliated in front of the crew of 350 men. Newton thought about killing the captain and then committing suicide as revenge. But he healed and refrained from these actions.



Later Newton was transferred to slave trading ship, the *Pegasus*; he became a problem for that ship also, so they left him as slave on a Dutch Island off of Sierra Leone, in Africa. Later He was rescued in 1748 after his father asked another sea captain to look for him.

After returning to England, he joined the crew of slave trading ship, the *Greyhound*, while on this ship Newton became known as one of the most profane men the captain had ever met. Newton rejoiced at creating new profane words to shock his listeners.



On March 1748, his life almost ended, the ship was in a violent storm in the North Atlantic, Newton witnessed a man swept overboard right before his eyes as he climbed to the deck. The ship started taking on water, the ship was on the verge of capsizing, Newton cried out to the Lord in desperation. The crew below worked to plug holes as Newton was on deck steering the ship. For eleven hours he cried out to God, the ship was saved. This day was celebrated by Newton for the rest of his life. He began to wonder how God, who he called a myth, could have mercy on someone like him.

Newton continued to engage in the slave trading, trying to reform his ways, he worked hard to stop his cussing and swearing. He even married Mary Catlett in 1750, his childhood sweetheart despite her parent’s reluctance for his ways. Newton was made captain of a slave-trading ship headed for Africa, even on this trip, after a severe illness he again tried to reform his ways. As captain, he

<sup>1</sup> Nonconformist did not conform to the governance of the established Church of England, such as Puritans and others.

<sup>2</sup> Pressed into service: The British Royal navy had the right to force anyone from 18-45 into service for the sake of the nation.

sailed up African rivers looking for slaves offered at larger ports. Returning with his cargo of slaves to North America, he inwardly felt convicted by his work, yet he headed three slave trading voyages. John Newton desire was to leave his work, he was promised a ship not involved in slave trading. He never had the chance, at the age of 29, in 1755; Newton had a stroke and never sailed again. In 1756, he was hired as a customs agent in Liverpool, where he began to teach himself Latin, Greek, Hebrew and theology. He devoted himself to Bible study and became friends with the revivalists, John and Charles Wesley along with George Whitefield. People began to hear about his wretched life, he was invited to speak in churches in England.

The Newton's, John and Mary, became an integral part of the church community in England. At the urging of others, he sought to be a priest with the church of England. He was rejected, but the story of his conversion so impressed the Earl of Dartmouth, he urged the Bishop of Lincoln to sponsor John Newton. So Newton was offered him the curacy of Olney, Buckinghamshire in 1764 and he accepted it.

The 2,500 residents were drawn to his preaching style, Newton related stories of his sinful life and his conversion, this at a time when people were not used to hearing about the priest's sinful life. It was during this time, late 1772, at Olney church that John Newton penned the words to *Amazing Grace*, first known as "*1 Chronicles 17:16-17, Faith's Review and Expectation*".

John Newton understood Grace, He knew he did not deserve the forgiveness and love of God for all he did, in his eyes he was truly a blind lost wretch. He would later encourage Wilberforce to stay in politics to stop the horrors of slavery. John Newton's words did not become well known until, fifty years after his death at the age of 82. John Newton is an example of the power of God's amazing grace, available to all sinners.

1. *Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch; like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.*
2. *'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!*
3. *The Lord hath promised good to me,  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures.*
4. *When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we first begun.*



#### **Ephesians 2:11-22**

(11) Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands--

(12) remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

(13) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

(14) For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

(15) by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,

(16) and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

(17) And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

- (18) For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.
- (19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
- (20) built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,
- (21) in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
- (22) In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

(11) Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— Ephesians 2:11

**(11) Therefore remember**, we as Christians like the Ephesians Church should never forget our roots, we were outside of God's promise on the way to Hell. Did the Ephesians remember their former position? **You Gentiles**; the word in Hebrew is *Goy*, meaning nations. The Greek word is *ethnos*, means tribes, specifically a non-Jewish tribe. Gentiles were outside of the covenant promises, since the promises were made to the ethnic descendants of Abraham. Therefore, in the physical realms or **in the flesh** the promises made to Abraham did not belong to them. God ordained the act of **Circumcision** as a sign of the covenant promise to the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 17:1-27).

Genesis 17:1-2

- (1) When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,
- (2) that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly."

Genesis 17:10-11

- (10) This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.
- (11) You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.

Everybody outside of these promises was the "**uncircumcision**", these were the *goy* or nations. As David viewed the Philistines, Jews viewed these Gentile believers.

<sup>1</sup> Samuel 17:26

- (26) And David said to the men who stood by him, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

The act of circumcision is still done in the **flesh by human hands**. This contrasts with the circumcision of the heart empowered by the Spirit of God.

Romans 2:28-29

- (28) For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.
- (29) But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

The Holy Spirit gives us a desire to change our ways, our outward acts proceed from the Spirit of God dwelling inside the believer.

- (12) remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Ephesians 2:12

**(12) Remember**, the period before you were saved! At that time, you gentiles in flesh were dead in dead in sins. Before our salvation, we are spiritually dead, without hope. We believers in **Christ** need to remember our destiny before salvation not taking for granted salvation and the work of Christ. Today when there is abundance and little struggle it's easy to become apathetic. This is a risk for all believers. Before Christ's salvation we were locked out of the promises to House of Israel and Judah, the **commonwealth of Israel**. The word in the Greek is *politea*, the administration of civil affairs, where the word politics comes from. The nation of Israel is ethnic group, separated from the nations of world, descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Clearly in scripture God made **covenant promises** to the physical nation of Israel, these promises include:

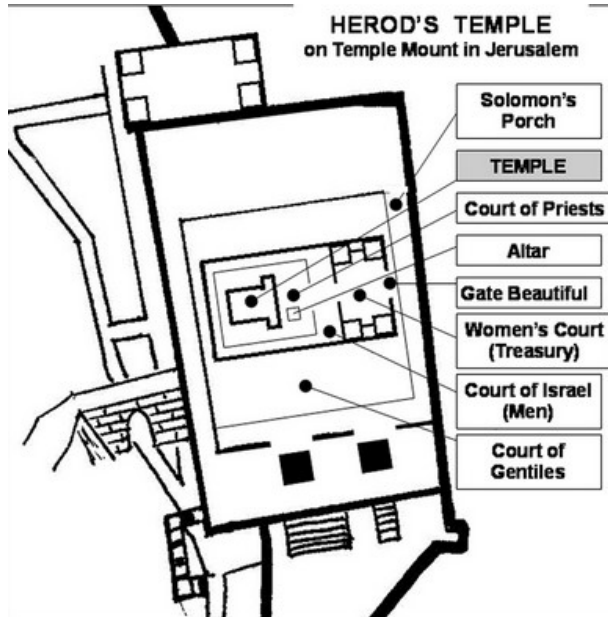
Covenants of Promise	Verses	Provisions of the Covenant
<b>Abrahamic Covenant</b>	Genesis 15:18, 17:1-24	Through Abraham the nations will be blessed. Abraham would be father of many nations. Abraham and his descendants were to be holy.
<b>Israel Land Covenant</b>	Deuteronomy 28, 30	If Israel is obedient they will stay in the land and be blessed, the head and not the tail. (Deut. 28:1-2) If Israel disobeys they will be rejected from the land and suffer at the hands of Gentiles (Deut. 28:64) Israel will be restored to the land and be blessed despite their failures (Deut. 30:1-4)
<b>Davidic Covenant</b>	2 Samuel 7:12-14	Through the line of Jacob, Judah, David the Messiah would rule over the nations for eternity through the line of King David.
<b>New Covenant</b>	Jeremiah 31:31-37	A New Covenant would be made with Israel and Judah, laws established on the hearts, sins would be forgiven, sins would not be remembered, Israel would not cease to be a nation.

Once the Gentile accepts Christ as Savior, the promises made to the commonwealth of Israel then applies to the gentile. Through the Blood of Christ, they are grafted into the promises of Israel. This inclusion of the Gentiles is covered in detail in Romans Chapter 11.

Romans 11:24-25

(24) For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

(25) Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.



**Without God;** The Greek word is *atheos*, meaning atheist. For those without Christ, are without God, "atheist". The idea of being without Christ, as being without God for many run counter what our culture teaches, but the biblical fact outside of Christ there is no hope for anybody both Atheist and Theist. Believing in God is not the end of it, we must have a personal relationship through the work of Christ. We must be "Born Again". (John 3:3)

(13) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:13

**(13) But now in Christ,** the believer who has Christ is now in the promises of Israel, we have entered the ark of God, just as Noah entered the ark in the days of flood, we enter



God's Ark, Jesus Christ. In Christ we receive all the promises made to Israel. The **Blood of Christ** justifies us with God. Through the blood of Christ, we are declared righteous in the eyes of God. The Greek word for "Justified" is *Dikaioo*, meaning to be declared righteous

Romans 5:8-9

(8) but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(9) Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

We are now "Kin" (Hebrew Ga'al) of God, adopted as his children, through the blood of Christ, we are now **near**, as opposed to being dead in our sins.

(14) For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility  
Ephesians 2:14

**(14)** Conflict, animosity, wrath and anxiety, these terms are the opposite of **peace**. We were at conflict with God and men before Christ. Under God's wrath, being enemies of God, lost. Before Christ, our bond with others was that we were made in the image of God; we are fallen and destined for hell. Christ changed everything, His blood gave us peace with God, and His blood gave us peace with humanity.

Though God made the covenants with the physical descendants of Abraham, Jesus a descendent of Abraham, through the line of David, has grafted us into the covenants with His blood. In the Temple there was a partition which separated Jews from Gentile, women from men. For example, Paul was accused of bringing Timothy into the Jewish area of the Temple, Jews were hostile to Gentiles.

Acts 21:27-28

(27) When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him,

(28) crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."

These walls were **the dividing walls of hostility**, we are now one with Jews in Christ, and we are of the same family, the family of God and the family of Abraham in Christ. Even the curtain in the Temple was torn in two, demonstrating our peace with God through Christ (Mat. 27:51, Hebrews 10:20)

(15) by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, Ephesians 2:15

**(15)** The law was completed in Christ; Christ is the fulfillment of the law (Matthew 5:17-18), the written law has been transferred to the heart of humanity as promised in the book of Jeremiah. Therefore, Jesus was **abolishing the law of commandments** expressed in written **ordinances** as promised.

Jeremiah 31:31-33

(31) "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

(32) not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.

(33) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**One new man, in the place of two:** Jew and Gentile are united in Christ, there is no longer a separation from God's perspective, Jesus has completed the law. We are at peace; ethnic Jews do not have a higher status with God because of their bloodline. This is one of mysteries revealed here in Ephesians, both Jews and Gentiles partake equally in Christ.

Ephesians 3:6

(6) This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

(16) and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. Ephesians 2:16

**(16)** Both Jew and Gentile are **reconciled to God**, through the work of Christ on **the cross**. To this day, Jews make a distinction between themselves and Gentiles (nations), saying the nations are only required to satisfy the Seven Noahide laws<sup>3</sup>, while Jews have a higher status and are required to obey the 10 Commandments of Moses. We see this hostility between Jew and Gentile played out in Galatians when Peter was conflicted by his relationship with Gentiles around "Believing" Jews. Peter wanted to separate himself from Gentiles, he was afraid of the crowd.

Galatians 2:11-16

(11) But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

(12) For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

(13) And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

(14) But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

(15) We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners;

(16) yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

(17) And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. Ephesians 2:17

**(17)** The Gospel was **preached** to both Jew and Gentile; Gentiles were **far off**, away from Israel, while the Jews were **near** the Gospel. The Jews being near the Gospel, many were still lost in their sins.

(18) For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. Ephesians 2:18

**(18)** **Through him**, Christ, there is no separation; both Jews and Gentiles have access to the throne of God. Through the blood of Jesus, the Holy **Spirit** dwells in both Jew and Gentile. The curtain in the Temple was not ripped from top to bottom, the ways to God was opened for Jews and Gentiles, now we both have access to **the Father**. The message in Hebrews applies to both Jew and Gentile.



(17) then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

(18) Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

(19) Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,

(20) by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

(21) and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

(22) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:17-22

(19) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Ephesians 2:19

**(19)** **Strangers and aliens** was our status before Jesus Christ, but the Blood of Christ is so amazing, so rich, that it takes our alien status, and makes us **fellow citizens** of Heaven. We are now **fellow citizens** of Heaven,

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article\\_cdo/aid/62221/jewish/Universal-Morality.htm](http://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/62221/jewish/Universal-Morality.htm)

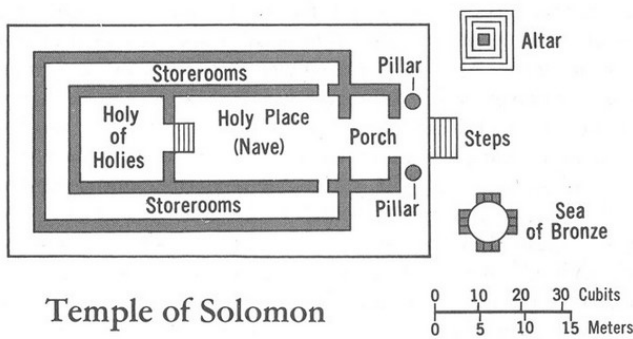
we who were once dead, separated from God; we now have citizenship in Heaven. The angels, Michael and Gabriel, along with Daniel, David and Abraham, we are now all of the same family. We are part of **God's household**, the angel who is with John in Revelation warns John not to bow to him, he says I am a fellow servant. Both John and the angel are part of the same family.

Revelation 19:10

(10) Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

(20) built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, Ephesians 2:11

(20) The Temple built by Solomon had two main rooms, first the *Holy Place* then the *Holy of Holies*. In the second room the Arc of the Covenant was located, the mercy seat of God. The High Priest was only allowed to enter this room on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:5-24, 23:27). This room was covered in gold and was in the shape of Cube, this was dwelling of God. This room was only a foreshadow of the greater reality of Heaven. The house of God in Heaven is a cube, equally long, high and wide (1400 miles), with walls of gold. **The foundation** stones are named after the 12-tribes of Israel, and the 12 gates after the 12 disciples. We are the Temple of God, our home is in the presence of God. The Cornerstone is the first stone laid when a new building is constructed. It sets the pattern and location of the other stones. Jesus is the cornerstone of God's Temple; he sets our pattern and direction. Jesus is also the capstone, the last stone laid (Zechariah 3:9, 4:7)



Temple of Solomon

Revelation 21:12-14

(12) It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed--

(13) on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates.

(14) And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

(21) in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. Ephesians 2:21

(21) In the New Jerusalem there is no temple. Why would God not have Temple in center of His house? The answer is because the house of God is the Temple of God. The same house we belong to too, we are part of the very **Holy Temple of the Lord**.

Revelation 21:22-23

(22) And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

(23) And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

(22) In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Ephesians 2:22

(22) In Ephesians 1:13-14, our salvation was sealed and guaranteed by God, with the Holy Spirit. The Holy **Spirit** is guiding and directing our walk, we are **being built** to be like Christ. We are not perfect yet, but one day we will be. How amazing is the Grace of God, that he would take us from such a state of separation and death to such a place of exaltation, allowing us to be part of His household in Heaven, a our bodies are become a **dwelling for God**. This is why John Newton penned amazing Grace, because it is so amazing a point, it's beyond our understanding. The Love of God is manifested in Jesus shedding his blood for our salvation, and raising us up to be in His dwelling.

Romans 8:26-27



- (26) Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.
- (27) And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

#### **G4174 “Common Wealth”**

πολιτεία

politeia

##### **Thayer Definition:**

- 1) the administration of civil affairs
- 2) a state or commonwealth
- 3) citizenship, the rights of a citizen

**Part of Speech:** noun feminine

**A Related Word by Thayer’s/Strong’s Number:** from [G4177](#) (“polity”)

**Citing in TDNT:** 6:516, 906

#### **G112 “Without God”**

ἄθεος

atheos

##### **Thayer Definition:**

- 1) without God, knowing and worshipping no God
- 2) denying the gods, especially the recognised gods of the state
- 3) godless, ungodly
- 4) abandoned by the gods

**Part of Speech:** adjective

**A Related Word by Thayer’s/Strong’s Number:** from [G1](#) (as a negative particle) and [G2316](#)

**Citing in TDNT:** 3:120, 322

#### **G2097 “Preached”**

εὐαγγελίζω

euangelizō

##### **Thayer Definition:**

- 1) to bring good news, to announce glad tidings
  - 1a) used in the OT of any kind of good news
    - 1a1) of the joyful tidings of God’s kindness, in particular, of the Messianic blessings
  - 1b) in the NT used especially of the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God, and of the salvation to be obtained in it through Christ, and of what relates to this salvation
  - 1c) glad tidings are brought to one, one has glad tidings proclaimed to him
  - 1d) to proclaim glad tidings
    - 1d1) instruct (men) concerning the things that pertain to Christian salvation

**Part of Speech:** verb

**A Related Word by Thayer's/Strong's Number:** from [G2095](#) and [G32](#)  
**Citing in TDNT:** 2:707,\*