

No Longer Strangers

***Key Verse: “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”
—Ephesians 2:19***

***Selected Scripture:
Ephesians 2:11-19***

God, but are considered as his sons. (Rom. 8:14-16; I John 3:1,2) In harmony with this, Paul says elsewhere: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”—II Cor. 5:17

In Ephesians 2:8-10, the apostle says that it is only through faith and by the grace of God that this new status of sonship is obtained. There are no works we can do to achieve it. He says, “we are his workmanship.” Yet, once we attain this condition we have the ability, through Christ Jesus, to render acceptable works to God. This is a seeming paradox. On the one hand we could do no works to attain this new relationship, but once having entered into a covenant of sonship with God we can, indeed we must, render acceptable works to him. The Apostle James says, “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead.”—James 2:17

ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL results accruing to those who heartily accept the redemption supplied by the blood of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice is that such, upon giving themselves in unreserved consecration, enter a special covenant relationship with God. This arrangement means a new status for those thus entered, one in which they are no longer alienated from

Our works as a child of God are, most importantly, the development and outward manifestation of the character fruitage founded in Christ our Head. (John 15:8; Gal. 5:22,23) Acceptable works also include sacrifice and service on behalf of the Lord, his Truth, and our fellow brethren in Christ.—Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:14,15; Gal. 5:13

In our lesson, Paul says that Gentile believers had been “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God.” (Eph. 2:12) However, the time had now come for the blood of Christ to be efficacious to all who had a hearing ear and a heart of faith, whether Jew or Gentile. Each had the opportunity to claim their new status through the means provided, Christ Jesus.

For believing Jews, who had been under the “law of commandments” for many centuries, this meant coming out from that arrangement and into Christ. (vs. 15) It had been thoroughly proven that only a perfect man could keep these former ordinances and hence reap the earthly promises attached thereto. Only Jesus, who was sinless, was able to do this. He sacrificed these earthly privileges, however, to provide a way of escape for mankind, both Jew and Gentile, out of the bondage of sin and death. Thus, through Jesus, “we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”—vs. 18

In our Key Verse, Paul states that all such who have come into this new relationship, regardless of their former status, are now part of one group, “the household of God.” This symbolic “house” has as its foundation the “apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” (vs. 20) Once the building work is finished, with every member—every stone—formed and fitted into place, it will be not just a building, but a “holy temple,” a “habitation of God.” (vss. 21,22) It will be from this temple, located in the symbolic New Jerusalem, that blessings will flow to all the families of the earth in the Messianic kingdom.—Rev. 21:1-7,22-24 ■