

## **WE ARE THE CHURCH, pt 2 by Carl McMurray**

In part 1 we noted that God has chosen (Eph. 1:4) everyone who comes to Christ to be adopted (Eph. 1:5), redeemed (Eph. 1:7), forgiven, and blessed with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3) in the heavens. And he made that choice to predestine penitent believers into a blessed, forgiven, worldwide congregation or church, before he ever laid the foundations for the world (Eph. 1:4-5). What privilege, what power, what blessing is ours. The apostle Paul is saying in Eph 1:18-23, never hang your head Christian. We are not a church, WE ARE THE CHURCH!!!

The church or assembly of God is more than just a mob of blessed people however. I Peter 2:4-5 says, *4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

Peter calls Jesus a living stone that we are coming to, or identifying with, or replicating. He was 1)rejected by men, 2) but chosen (specific to his task) by God, and 3)precious, i.e., of great value in the Father's sight. The apostle then goes on to say that we are like living stones, i.e., Christians are like Jesus. We too will be rejected by men. In fact, Peter was writing to a group that had already experienced this in persecutions and threats. At the same time though Christians are chosen by God and precious in the Father's sight.

In verse 5 Peter could be referring to two different ideas. He says we being built into a spiritual house which may present the idea of a spiritual building built of all these Christian "stones". The reason for the house however, makes me lean toward a second picture. In this view the "house" is a family. He says we are being built into a "family" to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices. Just as the holy priesthood of the Old Covenant was one family, Levi, so we too are one family, God's household, Gal 6:10. The building allegory works well with the foundation stone of verses 6-8, but the family allegory surfaces again in verses 9-10.

Either way, the message of unity is the same. We are a spiritual building built upon the apostles and prophets unified and built upon our cornerstone, Jesus Christ. Or, we are a spiritual family of royal priests set apart from the world to offer spiritual sacrifices to God under our High Priest, Jesus Christ. We are unified with Jesus, built upon Jesus; set apart, sanctified, cleansed, and made holy by Jesus. We are God's special building, God's chosen family, God's chosen nation. No matter what the world thinks the apostle states that Christians are picked for a specific task and of great value in God's sight. Again I say, we are not a church, WE ARE THE CHURCH!!!!