Ephesians 2:20-3:5

Ephesians 2:20 – “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.”

1. “Cornerstone”
   a. Akrogoniaiou – literally means the tip of the angle. It means “in the corner”. It means at the extreme angle or corner.
   b. It covered the right angle joining two walls
   c. Often the royal name could be found inscribed on this stone

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

1. Synarmologoumene – the verb “joined together”
   d. Meaning “fit together” or “compact”
   e. From:
      i. Syn – “joined closely with”
ii. Harmos – “reason”, “a joint”, “properly, interconnected”, “fit together to efficiently and effectively function”, “hinged together”, “fittingly framed together into a harmonious, synergistic whole.”

f. Also used in Ephesians 4:16 – “from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

g. It is the detailed process of masonry that fits the stones together. In masonry construction it meant the whole elaborate process of fitting stones together:
   i. Cutting stone blocks
   ii. Rubbing the surfaces
   iii. Testing the fittings
   iv. Preparation of the dowels and dowel holes
   v. Fitting the dowels into the stone with molten lead.

2. “whole building” is on Christ, the Cornerstone, not individual stones.
   a. Since the Greek says “pasa oikodome” or “whole building” the commentators indicate the article “the” is missing which makes the phrase actually say (as would be obvious) “whole building” which would mean the progress is still occurring in Paul’s day (and, yet in ours) so this means “all building that is being done”

3. “is increasing” – auxei – “grows”, “rises”, “increases”
   a. The present tense of this verb again indicates the process is continuing.
   b. The use of this verb which means “grows” indicates organic, natural growth as out of a seed.

4. “a temple” – naon – means the inner shrine or the Most Holy Place
   a. This is not the word hieron which would include the all the precincts surrounding the holy place shrine.
   b. Again, there were not church buildings or shrines for Christians in the first 300 years. This is talking about people coming to the faith and being built together in God’s spiritual kingdom on earth independent of buildings, location, borders, languages, culture, etc.

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

1. “in him” or “in whom” connects 2:22 with 2:21
2. “also you” or “you too” connects with 2:13
3. “being built together” – *sunoikodomeiste* – is in the present tense which emphasizes a continuation of building.

4. The purpose of the continuation of the process of “being built together” is to become “a habitation” (*katoiketerion*) for God. This word *katoiketerion* is only used here and in Revelation 18:2 – “And he called out with a mighty voice, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.’ ”

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**Ephesians 3:1** – “For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles”

1. “For this reason” – *tou* *tou charin* – begins a discourse that is quickly interrupted (3:1-13 when Paul begins to describe his own ministry and personal conditions as a Roman “prisoner of Christ”), but resumed in 3:14 where *tou* *tou charin* is repeated to regain the direction.
a. Actually, the verb that goes with the subject “I, Paul,...” is not found until 3:14 when he says, “I bow my knee before the Father…”

b. Paul does not consider himself a victim, but sees his oppression as part of his ministry in the kosmos.

c. Paul is a champion for the Gentiles. He was arrested because of his association with the Gentiles, particularly Trophimus of Ephesus in Acts 21:21, 28.

Ephesians 3:2 – “assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you,”

1. “Administration” – oikonomian –
   d. Oikonomian refers to “stewardship” or “a task”. It usually refers to the management of household affairs or the oversight by a steward of an administration. A classic example is Joseph as a steward over all the affairs of Potiphar’s household.

   e. Colossians 1:25 – “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflications for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known.”

2. “God’s grace that was given to me for you” is a reference to Paul being called and equipped as an apostle.
   a. Romans 12:3 – “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you...”
   b. 1 Peter 4:10 – “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace”
   c. Ephesians 4:7 – “Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”
Ephesians 3:3 – “how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly.”

1. “Mystery” – mysterion – “something hidden,” “a mystery”. This refers to information that is only accessible to those who have undergone initiation. It is a word used of ancient fraternities.
2. “made known” – egnoristhe – means “make known,” “declare,” “discover”. Here it is “made known” by way of direct revelation or spiritual enlightenment to an apostle.
3. “revelation” – apokalypsin – “an unveiling,” “uncovering,” “revealing”. This refers to something that was previously unknown because it was covered or concealed, but now it is revealed or made known.

Ephesians 3:4 – “When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ,”

1. Read this and understand the mystery
2. It was given to Paul for us to understand
Ephesians 3:5 – “which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

1. OT prophets did not understand because it was not revealed to them.
2. “apostles...prophets” here is clearly the New Testament prophets because it has just referred to the OT prophets not having it revealed to them.
3. Prophets of the OT longed to understand these undisclosed revelations:
   a. 1 Peter 1:10-12 – “Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”
   b. Matthew 13:17 (Luke 10:24) – “For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.”