

Ephesians 2:11-22

In chapter 2, Paul continues to describe the marvelous work of Christ in reconciling both Jews and Gentiles to God and bringing the two groups into complete unity as equal members of God's household.

As you look at some of the history of the Jewish nation and the separation that existed between these two groups of people, try to imagine the amazing impact that Paul's words must have had on them.

Ephesians 2:11-13 NAS

11 *Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands --*

12 *remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded 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 formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

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Day 1

Old Testament Background

1. For what purpose did God call out Abraham?

- Genesis 12:1-3

- Genesis 18:18

2. What ministry did the nation of Israel have? Exodus 19:5,6

The former condition of Gentiles

3. What would referring to Gentiles as "the uncircumcision" (2:11) say about them? Genesis 17:11,14

4. List the ways that the Gentiles were at a disadvantage. 2:12

Gentile NT:1484 *ethnos*; a race, i.e. a tribe; specially, a foreign (non-Jewish) one (usually by implication, pagan)

"Great civilizations arose and passed away, making their mark on human history, but not one of them could compare with the elect nation of Israel in divine privilege, and the only hope of cancelling this was to become a Jewish proselyte." [See Exodus 12:48] - Stuart Allen (49)

"This description of the Gentiles' status before they were reached by God's gracious purpose in Christ is, in a more general sense, a vivid and apt summary of the moral condition of the pagan rank and file in the first-century Graeco-Roman world." - F. F. Bruce

5. Underline the privileges the nation of Israel had.

- Deuteronomy 14:2 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. NASU
- Deuteronomy 28:1-2 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. 2 All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: NIV
- Psalm 147:19-20 He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel. 20 He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws. Praise the LORD. NIV
- Romans 3:1-2 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? 2 Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. NIV
- Romans 9:4,5 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. NIV

The present condition of Gentiles

6. How did Christ change the status of the Gentiles? 2:13 (Continue to mark "in Christ" and "through Christ".)

7. What does Scripture say about the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles? Romans 3:22,23,28-30

8. What is said about circumcision?

- Philippians 3:3
- Colossians 2:11

Applying the Word: Have you ever struggled with feeling "separated," "excluded" or "hopeless?" What does this passage teach you about your nearness to God and to fellow believers?

Ephesians 2:14-16

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,

15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity NAS

Day 2 Unity in Christ

9. Why do you think Paul calls Christ “our peace” instead of saying that He brought peace? 2:14 (See also Romans 5:1)

10. What did Christ *destroy/break down*? 2:14

- What did He *abolish*? (How did He do that?) 2:15a (See also Colossians 1:22)
- What was His purpose? 2:15b
- List the words that describe what Christ did to the “enmity.” 2:15,16

Digging Deeper

In Acts 21:26-31, what personal experience did Paul have with a “barrier” between Jews and Gentiles?

IT'S GREEK TO ME: Abolishing NT:2673 *katargeo*; to be (render) entirely idle (useless), literally or figuratively:

“The source of contention between Jew and Gentile was the fact that the Gentiles did not keep the law. But since Jesus fulfilled the law on our behalf, and since He bore the penalty for our failure to keep the law, we are reconciled through His work on the cross - putting to death the *source* of contention.” - David Guzik

11. What kind of relationship did Christ establish between man and man, and God and man? 2:16a

IT'S GREEK TO ME: “make/create” (2:15) – Strong’s #2936 NT:2936 *ktizo*; to fabricate, i.e. found (form originally)

“**reconcile**” *apokatallsso* NT:604, “to reconcile completely” “to change from one condition to another,” so as to remove all enmity and leave no impediment to unity and peace - Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

12. What phrases describe the unity that Christ brought?

- 2:15 “one _____”
- 2:16 “one _____”

FYI: “Jesus didn’t Christianize the Jews or Judaize the Gentiles. He didn’t create a half-breed. He made an entirely new man...We are God’s masterwork, a new race, in Christ Jesus! This must not be watered down. This is the answer to alienation, to racism, to prejudice, to hatred, to estrangement.” - R. Kent Hughes (93)

13. How complete was this *reconciliation* (1:16)?

- Colossians 1:20-22
- 2 Corinthians 5:19

14. Record what Christ accomplished and the phrases that describe how Christ accomplished these things for us .

What Christ accomplished	How this was accomplished <i>(note the phrases that begin “by” or “through.”)</i>
2:13a “ <i>brought near</i> ”	2:13b “ <i>by the blood of Christ</i> ”
2:14,15	2:15a
2:16	2:16

FYI: “When we are in contact with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, we have peace with all who are in contact with them. The peace and reconciliation is the peace of the Church, not the peace of the world. Peace between Jew and Gentile, the world’s races and ethnic groups, rich and poor, educated and uneducated comes only in Christ. This means that the Church has an immense responsibility to be a pocket of reconciliation and *shalom* in an alienated world.” - R. Kent Hughes (94)

Applying the Word: *What barriers among believers today do you think God would address in a letter to us? What barriers have you personally seen brought down when God’s love came into the picture?*

Eph 2:17-19

17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;

18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

Day 3

Christ's peace

15. To whom was Christ's peace given? 2:17

- Why do we have peace? Romans 4:25

16. What did Jesus say about the peace He gives? John 14:27; 16:33

17. In the following verses, underline how we can find God's peace.

- Psalm 34:4 I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears. NASU
- Isaiah 26:3 "The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You. NASU
- Romans 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, NASU
- Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. NIV

18. What amazing privilege did Christ's death give us? 2:18

- What does the phrase "through Him" (2:18a) indicate about how this was accomplished? (See Hebrews 10:19.20)
- What did Jesus say about this? John 14:6

19. In the following, underline words that describe our access to God (2:18) through Christ.

- Ephesians 3:12 In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. NIV
- Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. NKJV

20. From Leviticus 16:2, 17 and Hebrews 9:7, describe the access that Israel had to God's presence before Christ came.

- What happened when Christ died? Mark 15:37-38

FYI: "Free access to the presence of God was practically unknown during the time covered by the Old Testament. God deliberately hedged Himself round with all sorts of barriers to impress upon His earthly people the inestimable privilege of approaching Him and coming into His holy presence, lest this should become cheap and undervalued."
- Stuart Allen (53)

Applying the Word: What things in your life are you struggling with right now that take away your sense of peace? Which of the above verses can help you with this struggle?

Eph 2:19-22

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone,

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. NAS

Day 4

A citizen

21. What does the description of going from being a "stranger/foreigner and alien" to "fellow citizen" convey to you about your identity, responsibility, rights, allegiance...? 2:19

22. How is our citizenship described in Philippians 3:20?

A family

23. Since we all belong to God's "household" (2:19), what do you think that says about the kind of relationship we should have with other believers?

- What kind of barriers have been removed between members of this household? Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11

24. What do the following verses say about how we should treat each other?

- Romans 14:19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. NASU
- Romans 15:1-2 Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. NASU
- Galatians 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. NASU
- Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. NIV
- Hebrews 10:24-25 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. NASU

25. List the things that are contrasted in Ephesians 2. (Mark the word “*but*” in 2:4,13,19.)

<i>Formerly</i>	<i>But now</i>
2:1 <i>dead</i>	2:5
2:2 <i>walked according to the world and Satan</i>	2:6
2:3 <i>objects of wrath</i>	2:8-10 (See also 1:3-5,18)
2:12,13 <i>separate, excluded, far off</i>	2:13b
2:19 <i>foreigners and aliens</i>	2:19b

“Built together”

26. On what wonderful foundation are we building? 2:20

- What do you learn about the “*corner stone*” (2:20) in Acts 4:11-12?

FYI: Cornerstone “The word *akrogoniaios* (“cornerstone”) literally means “at the tip of the angle.” It refers to the capstone or binding stone that holds the whole structure together... It covered a right angle joining two walls...Often the royal name was inscribed on it. In the East it was considered to be even more important than the foundation.”
- Expositor’s Bible Commentary

“The cornerstone is cut out before hand, and not only bonds the structure together when at last it is dropped into place, but serves as a ‘stone of testing’ to show whether the building has been carried out to the architect’s specifications.”
- F. F. Bruce

A dwelling of God

27. Of what building project are we a part? 2:21

- What purpose does this building serve? 2:22

28. Fill in the following blanks from Ephesians 2. (The words “together,” “with,” and “fellow” all contain the preposition *sun* which “denotes union; with or together.”)

- 2:5 *even when we were dead in transgressions, made us _____ together with Christ*
- 2:6a *and _____ with Him*
- 2:6b *and _____ with Him in the heavenly places*
- 2:19 *but you are fellow _____ with the saints*
- 2:21 *being _____ together,*
- 2:22 *being _____ together*

FYI: “Paul coins [three verbs] to describe exactly what happens to us when we are ‘in Christ.’ Paul created those new words by adding the Greek prefix *syn* (‘together with’) to three normal verbs. We were made alive together, raised up together and seated together with Christ. - Mastering the Basics (27)

Sun NT:4862 “together with, implying a nearer and closer connection than the conj. *meta* (3326)...To illustrate, the criminals punished with Jesus were crucified with (*meta*) Him...but not together with (*sun*) him, i.e., bound up or in union with Him.” - The Complete Word Study Dictionary (1332)

29. What does the picture of the pieces of a “building being fitted together” (2:21) convey to you about the way God works in the lives of believers?

30. In conclusion, list the terms in 2:19-22 that describe our identity.

- 2:19b “*fellow citizens*”
- 2:19c
- 2:21
- 2:22
- Compare the above terms of belonging to the Gentiles’ former condition in 2:12. How do you feel about this amazing grace?

Applying the Word: What impressed you the most from this chapter about the closeness of God or the fellowship of believers? When have you seen the fellowship of believers be a powerful testimony?