

Ephesians 2: 11-22

Author: Paul

Recipients: Church in Ephesus

Location: Western shore of modern day Turkey; Aegean Sea

Key Theme: "The Body of Christ is Blessed"

### v. 11-12

#### Remember

- Paul begins this passage with the word "therefore".
- He is referring back to the fact that they were saved by the grace of God.
- They were ostracized by the Jews. (Circumcised vs uncircumcised)
- Judaism went beyond a simple religious organization.
- It was an all-encompassing faith tradition that included economic, social, and political spheres.

#### Circumcision

- The concept of circumcision was God's idea.
- It was a mark of those who were His chosen people.
- God was more concerned with the spiritual circumcision than He was the physical.
- The spiritual mark of circumcision was the true indicator of who God's people were/are.
- Israel was hung up on the physical mark of circumcision but God made it very clear that just because they were of the physical household of Abraham that they were not necessarily part of God's adopted family.

## Separated

- At that time they were separated from Israel and therefore were not a part of God's covenant people.
- It isn't so much that God was separated from them as it was that they were not a part of the nation with whom God had made His covenant people.
- Romans 1 tells us that God has revealed Himself to all nations through the very creation but Gentiles had suppressed that knowledge and had gone after idols.
- The prior generations would have had no one there to teach them who God was.

## Gentile Disadvantages

- 1) Separated from Christ
- 2) Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
- 3) Strangers to the covenant of promise
- 4) Having no hope
- 5) Without God in the world

## v. 13-18

### But now...

- But now those who were once far off, Gentiles, are brought near to God through Christ.
- His blood purchased our redemption in the same way that it purchased the redemption of believing Jews.
- We now have peace with God in and through Christ, but not only do we have peace with God, we also have peace with Jews.
- Believing Jews and Gentiles are now known collectively as the church

- No more division between us as believers from all corners of the world are adopted into the family of God.

#### Dividing wall of hostility

- A common misconception is that Gentiles were not allowed into the temple.
- This isn't entirely accurate.
- The temple had different levels to it and Gentiles had access to much of it except the inner courts.
- They would have a wall dividing the areas in which Jews and Gentiles could go.
- That was from the old law and Christ has abolished the old law therefore tearing down that dividing wall of hostility.
- The inner courts are where the sacrifices were performed. Gentiles had no access to that.
- Now through Christ the permanent sacrifice has been offered and there's no need for the sacrificial system any longer.

#### Matthew 27:50-51

- When Jesus gave up His spirit into the hands of the Father the veil of the temple was torn in two pieces.
- Not only was the dividing wall of hostility between Jews and Gentiles torn down but the veil separating God from His people was now gone too.
- We are now completely one cohesive unit with Christ at the center.

#### The Church

- The old covenant people of God were made up of members of the nation of Israel.
- Now through the new covenant that group is made up of Jews and Gentiles alike.
- Isaiah foretells of this in Isaiah 57:19

v. 19-22

Fellow Citizens

- Before Christ they were outsiders and now they are fellow citizens.
- Before Christ they were strangers but now are known as members of the family of God.
- The new testament church was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone. He is the One who holds the structure in place.
- Now we Gentiles are being built into this beautiful temple that the Lord Himself is building and the Holy Spirit will dwell in and among its members.
- All of the disadvantages of the Gentiles have been reversed in Christ.

## Small Group Questions

- 1) What are the two groups of people that Paul is talking about here? What was the major difference between the two?
  - Jews and Gentiles. They were also known as circumcised vs uncircumcised. The biggest difference is that one group was a part of God's covenant promise and the other was not.
- 2) What is the difference between physical circumcision and spiritual circumcision? Which one is God more concerned with?
  - Physical circumcision was the act of circumcising all Jewish males on their 8th day after birth. Physical circumcision involves the act of removing a male's foreskin. Spiritual circumcision is that of the heart. Not our physical heart but our innermost being. Our spiritual circumcision displays a new heart toward the things of God. He is way more concerned with the spiritual circumcision than he is the physical. We are part of the spiritual circumcision.
- 3) What were the 5 disadvantages of being a Gentile?
  - Separated from Christ
  - Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
  - Strangers to the covenant of promise
  - Having no hope
  - Without God in the world
- 4) In which part of the temple courts were the sacrifices conducted? Is there any need for that anymore?
  - It was in the inner courts and only Jews were allowed into that area of the temple. There is no need for that anymore because Jesus has paid the final sacrifice and there is no more work required to satisfy God's wrath.
- 5) The covenant people of God has a name; what is it? Who is it made up of?
  - The Church! It is made up of every believer who is a Jew or a Gentile. Even the old testament believers are incorporated into this new body. As of now the Jews are still in rebellion against God but the Bible says that it will not always be this way. There will be a mass repentance that sweeps native Jews and they will be added to the kingdom of God through the Church by faith in Christ.

