

The Household of God

Ephesians 2:11-22

Gentiles outside the Household of God

2:11-12

2:11-12 ¹¹Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹²that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

A. The **theme** of Ephesians 2:11-22 is “The Household of God”

B. Ephesians 2:11-12 tell us that **Non-Christian Gentiles** are outside the Household of God

C. “You”

1. Christians in Ephesus

2. Paul’s description of them:

a. “Gentiles in the flesh” (11)

b. “Who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands” (11)

The “Circumcision” is a reference to the Jewish people

D. Ephesians 2:11-12 describes the spiritual condition of the Gentile Christians in Ephesus **before** they became Christians—“once”

E. **Five** descriptions of life **outside Christ**:

1. First, **without Christ**

a. In other words, they were “outside of Christ”

b. Outside of Christ, the Ephesians worshipped and served the Greek Goddess Artemis rather than Jesus Christ

2. Second, **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel**

a. “**commonwealth**” means “citizenship”

b. God called the Jews and built them into a nation—

i. He gave them laws and His blessings

ii. Israel was God’s nation, in a way that was not true of any Gentile nation

c. Though some Gentiles were admitted into Judaism as proselytes, Gentiles as a whole were excluded; they were thus alienated

3. Third, **strangers from the covenants of promise**

While the blessings of the Gentiles is included in God’s covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, God did not make any covenants with the Gentile nations

4. Fourth, **having no hope**

a. Historians tell us that a great cloud of hopelessness covered the ancient world:

i. Philosophies were empty

ii. Traditions were disappearing

iii. Religions were powerless to help men face either life or death

b. Unlike Israel, Gentiles existed without the expectation of a personal Messiah who would deliver them from sin and lead them into His Messianic Kingdom

5. Fifth, **without God in the world**

a. The Ephesians worshipped many false, pagan gods

b. But they did not worship the one, true, and living God

Christians inside the Household of God

2:13-22

The two key words of Ephesians 2:13-18 are “**enmity**” and “**reconciliation**”

1. First, “**enmity**”

a. “**Enmity**” means “the state or feeling of being actively opposed or hostile to someone or something”

b. Speaking to the Ephesians about their lost condition outside of Christ, Paul, first, referred to the enmity that existed between **Jews and Gentiles** in Ephesians 2:13-15

c. Next, Paul referred to the enmity that existed between **sinners and God** in Ephesians 2:16-18

2. Second, “reconciliation”

a. “Reconciliation” means “to bring together again”

b. In Ephesians 2:13-15, Paul emphasized Christ’s work of reconciling **Jews and Gentiles**

c. In Ephesians 2:16-18, Paul emphasized Christ’s work of reconciling **sinners and God**

I. Jews and Gentiles (2:13-15)

2:13¹³But now in Christ Jesus...

A. Here, Paul moves from **past to present**

B. This phrase reminds us of Ephesians 2:4—“**But God**”

These words point our attention to the gracious intervention of God on behalf of lost sinners

2:13 ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

A. Through the finished work of Christ on the cross, the Ephesians that were trusting in Him as Savior, were brought near to **God and God's people**

B. The “**blood of Christ**” removed the sin barrier

2:14 ¹⁴For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation...

A. He Himself is our **peace**

1. This means that Jesus Christ is the means of “reconciliation”

2. Only Christ could end the enmity that existed between Jews and Gentiles—and He did it through His death on the cross

B. [He] has made both **one**

Jesus Christ reconciled two enemies, and formed them into one family

C. [He] has **broken down** the middle wall of separation

1. This “middle wall of separation” alludes to the wall in the Jewish Temple that separated the court of the Gentiles from the Temple proper, which only Jews could enter

2. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote that on this wall was an inscription in Greek and Latin:

“No foreigner may enter within the barricade that surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone who is caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death”

3. This “breaking down” refers symbolically to Christ’s reconciliation

2:15 ¹⁵having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace...

A. The cause of the enmity between Jews and Gentiles was **the Law**, because the Law made a **definite distinction between Jews and Gentiles**

For example, the *dietary laws* reminded both Jews and Gentiles that there was a clear distinction between these two groups

B. Through His death on the cross, Christ rendered the Law “inoperative” in the lives of Christians, and as a result, the Jewish-Gentile hostility is gone

The Law was the cause of the enmity, and Christ destroyed the barrier (hostility) by making the Law inoperative in the lives of Believers

2:15 ...so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace

A. “New” means “new or fresh in character or quality”

B. The “one new man” is referring to the “one body”—the Church

C. In the Church, Gentiles do not become Jews, nor do Jews become Gentiles; instead, believing Jews and believing Gentiles become Christians—a whole new single entity

II. Sinners and God (2:16-18)

2:16¹⁶...and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

A. “Both”—Both Jews and Gentiles needed to be reconciled to God

B. Peter made this point during the Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15:

Acts 15:9 and 15:11

“He made no distinction between us (Jews) and them (Gentiles), cleansing their hearts by faith...we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”

C. Sinners are reconciled to God through the death of Christ on the cross

2:17¹⁷And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

A. Jesus Christ is “our peace” (2:14)

B. Jesus Christ “made peace” (2:15)

C. Jesus Christ “preached peace” (2:17)

1. Jesus proclaimed peace to Gentiles through the preaching of the Gospel

2. The Ephesian Christians responded to Christ’s Gospel of peace by trusting in Him as their Savior and Lord

2:18¹⁸For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

- A. Being reconciled to God, we have direct access to God by the Holy Spirit
- B. This statement reminds of the veil that was torn in the Temple at Christ's death

III. What Jews and Gentiles are in Christ (2:19-22)

First, One Nation (2:19)

2:19¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints...

Second, One Family (2:19)

2:19¹⁹ You are...members of the household of God

Third, One Temple (2:20-22)

2:20²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*...

- A. The New Testament “*apostles and prophets*” laid the foundation of the Church
- B. The Church's foundation is Jesus Christ and the truth about Him (see 1 Corinthians 3:11 and Matthew 16:15-18)
- C. Jesus Christ is also the “*Cornerstone*” of the New Testament Church
 1. The “*cornerstone*” binds the structure together
 2. Jesus Christ has united Jews and Gentiles in the New Testament Church

2:21²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord...

This verse indicates that the Church is a **living and growing organism**, as new believers are included in this temple's superstructure

[2:22](#)²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Being God's temple, God dwells in us by His Holy Spirit—

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹...do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.