

GOD BRINGS TWO PEOPLES TOGETHER | EPHESIANS 2:11-22

- Verse 11 –
  - The Scriptures use the word ἔθνος [ethnos] carefully, always clarifying when the word signifies those who are not of Israel by referring to them as the **uncircumcision** or otherwise contrasting them to the Jewish people.
    - While the word is often a reference to uncircumcision, one should question that assumption each time the word *gentile* is used.
    - The word *ethnos* is *not* inherently *non-Jewish* and requires interpretation.
    - The word *gentile* is a modern, exclusively non-Jewish word that is not a direct equivalent to *ethnos*.
  - Notice that the pronoun **ye** is given definition here (that confirms our previous conclusion) as being **gentiles**.
    - Notice also that the recipients were **gentiles in the flesh** both before and after the work of God in their lives.
    - The reference to **in times past** has to do with their spiritual reality of being **strangers**, etc., as shown in v. 12.
- Verse 12 –
  - This verse is fundamental to understanding the work of God, and is fundamentally dispensational.
  - There was a time (disregarding the common teaching) in which Gentiles were **aliens** and **strangers** and were therefore **having no hope, and without God in the world**. It is totally impossible to hold to covenant theology (or sloppy dispensationalism) and affirm this verse at the same time.
  - The verse does not say:
    - They did not know where hope was to be found
    - They had very little hope
    - They were living without hope (though hope was available to them)
  - Rather, it clearly says that they were totally without hope and without God.
    - It cannot be said of lost people today that they are **having no hope or without God in the world**, for the *hope of God* has been provided for *all* in Christ Jesus.
    - The lost today may not have recognized or heard of their hope, but their is hope for them!
  - Why were the gentiles previously without hope and without God? Because to have such, they had to be in the **commonwealth of Israel** (the political entity) and within the **covenants of promise** (that were limited to those within the **commonwealth**).
- Verse 13 –
  - The word **sometimes** is the same Greek word translated **in times past** in v. 11. The Gentiles were, *in times past*, **far off** but are now **made nigh** to God, all through **the blood of Christ**.
  - Several things are of note:
    - This is said of all Gentiles, not just of select "chosen" Gentiles.
    - The **blood of Christ** was shed in order that Jesus might become **Lord both of the dead and the living** (Rom. 14:9). An added benefit was that this activity made Jesus

the **propitiation...for the sins of the whole world** (1 Jn. 2:2), and therefore the Gentiles were **made nigh**.

- To be **made nigh** is not to receive salvation, but rather to be given *hope* and the access to God which was once denied to all who were outside of the nation and covenants of Israel.
- Verse 14 –
  - Sadly, this verse is often used to speak about racial conciliation. This misses the point. While the Bible does speak to racial reconciliation, this verse is not such a passage.
  - The Jews and Gentiles were separated by a **middle wall of partition**, and the only real reference to this is the barrier to the Gentiles in the temple.
  - Without the blood of Christ, the blood of a sacrifice would be the only provision for the atonement of sin. A Gentile was prohibited from making such a sacrifice by **the middle wall of partition**. By this, he was **without hope** and **without God**.
- Verse 15 –
  - The word **abolished** is the strongest word available for *removing all energy* - καταργέω [katargeo].
  - It is the **law of commandments contained in ordinances** that was **abolished in his flesh**, which removed **the enmity** between man and God.
    - The Law is the Mosaic Law, the Torah.
    - Those who try to retain the Law as a rule for Christian living are *legalists* and are teaching that which is unbiblical.
  - With the enmity removed, we are now *reconciled* to God (2 Corinthians 5:19) and thus can enter into a relationship with Him **by grace...through faith** (v. 8).
  - Now, those who receive the gift of salvation are **one new man** that is **in himself**. That is, we are *in Christ* and are therefore *the body of Christ* and His body is both Jew and Gentile, redeemed by the blood!
- Verse 16 –
  - When Paul teaches that **both** Jew and Gentile are reconciled **into God in one body** he is making reference to the physical, corporeal body of Christ, not the church.
  - In the physical body of Christ we have been reconciled unto God. The church does not reconcile, it is a gathering of the reconciled.
  - The **enmity** was **slain** by the physical body of Christ (the **enmity** being the same as in v. 15, **the law of commandments** which kept Jew and Gentile separated and kept the Gentile in a position of being without hope).
- Verses 17-18 - The work of the physical body of Christ on the cross enabled a proclamation of **peace** to the **afar off** and the **nigh**.
  - Note: do not let the pronouns **you** and **them** confuse you. In Greek, it says, "to the far off and to the near," using no pronouns.
  - The end result is that now (unlike the previous dispensation) **we both have access...unto the Father**.
- Verses 19-22 – *stay tuned!*