

WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US GENTILES  
EPHESIANS 2:11-22

**Introduction**

For us to really understand what Paul is talking about here we need to know a little background.

**Verse 11** makes it clear that Paul is addressing *Gentiles*, which is simply a term meaning *everyone who is not Jewish*. I believe that would refer to all of us who are here in attendance today. (Unless there is someone Jewish among us that I don't know about.)

We need to understand that there was an attitude of superiority of the Jewish people over the Gentiles. It was so much so that the Jewish people looked down their noses at people outside of the Jewish heritage because of their stature as God's special, chosen people. That is what the language that is here talking about *circumcision* is saying.

There was a great division between Jews and Gentiles. Because of the long history of persecution of the Jews by the Gentiles, this is somewhat understandable. But the end result was a very strong hostility by the Jews towards anything that was Gentile. Jews avoided them as much as possible, and in fact "*hated*" is not too strong a word to describe their feelings.

Some of this separation, is of a *theological nature* – the Jews were God's chosen people – the ones with whom God entered into covenant relationships with.

Of course God's intent, even in the Old Testament covenants, was that His blessings extend beyond Israel to the nations.

(e.g. Abraham was told by God in *Genesis 12:3*–“ . . .in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”)

God Himself had caused the Jewish nation to be born of Abraham. He had challenged the Jews to be the missionary force to the world, proclaiming that He and He alone was the only true and living God, and that He was going to send the Messiah to save the world!

WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US GENTILES  
EPHESIANS 2:11-22

But the Jews failed in their mission. They became exclusive, super-spiritual, prideful, and boastful in their religion and failed to reach out to the other people of the world. (Cf. Romans 2)

They took their own name, Jews, and called themselves by that name, but they classified everyone else in a package by the name of Gentile.

They took the major ritual of their religion, *circumcision*, and called themselves by that name, but they classified everyone else as "*the uncircumcised*."

The point is that we, as Gentiles, were barricaded from God by religion—a religion that had known the truth but had allowed itself to become corrupted!

But what we need to understand as background here is that there was immense hostility of the Jews towards the Gentiles, and the wall of separation between them was high and strong!

In verse 12, Paul makes five statements that apply to the condition of Gentiles prior to Christ. All of these statements make the point that before Christ, Gentiles were outside of God's kingdom!

**I. THE GENTILES' POSITION BEFORE CHRIST! (Vs. 12)**

**A. We Were Christless!**

*“That at that time ye were without Christ. . .”*

*“Christ”* is not a name, but rather a title – throughout the Old Testament, the Jews were waiting for the *“Messiah”* to come and save them. *“Christ”* is simply the New Testament translation of this title for *“Messiah.”*

So this phrase simply means that the Gentiles did not share in the Jewish hope of a Messiah who would come and save them!

**B. We Were Homeless! (Spiritually Speaking)**

*“. . .being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. . .”*

WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US GENTILES  
EPHESIANS 2:11-22

We were excluded from citizenship with God's people, Israel—God's chosen nation of people who were being built by God for Himself. We were foreigners and aliens who were outside of the blessings that were associated with the Jewish heritage!

C. **We Were Promiseless!**

*“ . . .strangers from the covenants of promise. . . ”*

The Gentiles were not the ones who were the recipients of the covenant promises of God. God did not approach the Gentiles directly with the covenant relationship.

The Abrahamic Covenant; The Mosaic Covenant; The Palestinian Covenant and The Davidic Covenant were all Jewish Covenants!

Before Christ, the Jews alone had these covenant relationships with God! But with Christ came the New Covenant!

D. **We Were Hopeless!**

*“ . . .having no hope. . . ”*

This means that we, as Gentiles, lived in all the fears and the anxieties of life and in constant expectancy of death! We had no hope of a life beyond this world, except the false hopes of gods who were not gods!

E. **We Were Godless!**

*“ . . .without God in the world. . . ”*

God is the one who gives meaning, hope, purpose, and direction in life. So without God we had none of that!

We had *"gods many, and lords many"* (1 Cor. 8:5), but we were alienated from the only living and true God!

That is a pretty grim picture! Don't you think?  
And that is why the next verse, which starts with **“but,”** is so important.

WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US GENTILES  
EPHESIANS 2:11-22

It says that even though that is the way it was, now it is different!

II. **THE GENTILES' POSITION AFTER CHRIST! (Vs. 13)**

Now, because of Jesus, all that is changed: we are no longer Christless, homeless, promiseless, hopeless, or godless!

It is a neat picture Paul uses to describe this – *“ . . .ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh (or “near”) by the blood of Christ. ”*

That is us! We are the Gentiles, who were formerly excluded but now, because of our faith in the Jesus' shed blood on the cross for us, we are now **near** to God!

I hope you find comfort in that truth – that God is not far off in space, He is **near**!

Christ brings us **near** to God. The words **“but now”** are a forceful contrast to our former position!

Christ Jesus has now come into the world. There was a time when He had not entered the world, but now Christ has come to bring all men, both Jew and Gentile, to God and into one body—the Church!

How does Christ bring us **near** to God? Note how clearly and unmistakably Scripture declares: *“By the blood.”* It is by the blood of Christ that men are brought **near** God!

But why blood? Why was it necessary for Christ to die in order to bring us **near** God?

Because man was estranged from God! He had rejected and rebelled against God, committing high treason against Him and was worthy of death! God alone could provide the perfect substitute for sin with His own precious Son!

**WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US GENTILES  
EPHESIANS 2:11-22**

Sin separates people from God and only Christ's atonement can remove that sin barrier!

Christ brings us peace! Note that Jesus Christ Himself is our peace!

1. Christ brings us peace when we realize that He died for us and offers us deliverance from the penalty of sin and gives us a life of eternity with God.
2. Christ brings a deeper sense of peace when we realize that He releases us from sin's bondage and gives us the daily power to overcome sin and its power in our lives.
3. Christ brings a still deeper sense of peace when we realize that He has made both Jew and Gentile one in Christ.

**Christ is our peace because He does four things for us!**

1. **Christ brings peace by bringing us together as "one"!  
(Ephesians 2:14)**

Note that He has made "*both one*," that is, Jew and Gentile.

**There are two ways that Christ makes mankind as one:**

- a. **First, both Jew and Gentile now approach God on the same basis, on an equal footing—by the blood of Jesus Christ!**

There is no other way! When a man comes to the cross, he comes with everyone else who is standing at the feet of Jesus!

He stands as one with them all—all on an equal basis: sinners who need a Savior!

Standing there, he is not accepted by God because he is better, healthier, wealthier, more intelligent, more capable, or more religious than anyone else!

**WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US GENTILES  
EPHESIANS 2:11-22**

He is only acceptable to God because He acknowledges his unworthiness and nothingness and his desperate need to be saved by the blood of Christ!

He is acceptable to God because he acknowledges that he is just as all other men are—lost and needful—and he comes as one with all others who confess Christ as his Savior!

- b. **Secondly, all men who come to Christ for salvation receive a common love and purpose and work.**

- 1) **There is the common love.**

Every believer who comes to Jesus Christ loves Him, and that common love among believers stirs a common love between believers. Love for Jesus Christ stirs love for all those whom Christ loves—which is everyone. Christ leads men to love one another!

- 2) **There is the common purpose and work!**

That of living righteously and bearing testimony to the glorious message of salvation and to life eternal!

*Romans 12:5—"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."*

*Galatians 3:28—"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."*

2. **Christ brings peace by breaking down all barriers.  
(Ephesians 2:14)**

This is a picture taken from the temple. The temple was surrounded by a series of courts.

**WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US GENTILES**  
**EPHESIANS 2:11-22**

Each court had a high wall separating it from the preceding court.

*As one approached the temple, he entered first of all the outer Court of the Gentiles.* This is where the buying and selling of animals and the exchanging of money for foreign worshippers took place.

*Then there was the Court of the Women.* A Jewish woman was limited to this court unless she had come to make a sacrifice.

*The next court was the Court of the Israelites.* This is where the whole congregation gathered on the great feast days and where sacrifices were handed over to the priests.

*The Court of the Priests was next.* This court was in the temple proper where the temple itself stood. This area was considered sacred and was accessible only to the services of the priests.

*Finally, within the very heart of the temple stood the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place where the very presence of God was to dwell.* Only the High Priest could enter the Holy Place and he could enter only once a year—on the Day of Atonement.

Partition after partition separated people from the presence of God. Tablets hung around the wall of the Gentile Court announcing that if any Gentile walked into any other court, he was to be put to death!

But, Jesus Christ broke down all those barriers and walls that separated man from God! All men can now approach God equally through the death of Jesus Christ!

We know today that men still build all kinds of barriers and prejudices against other men! Society is plagued with barriers and prejudices built around all sorts of things!

**WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US GENTILES**  
**EPHESIANS 2:11-22**

But there are no barriers and prejudices with Christ except one. The only barrier between God and man is *unbelief!*

Christ has broken them all down by the blood of His cross! All men can approach God and become worthy on the same basis—by bowing before the cross and surrendering their lives to God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Romans 10:12—"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."*

*Christ brings peace by bringing us together as "one"!  
Christ brings peace by breaking down all barriers.*

**3. Christ brings peace by wiping out the enmity of the law against us! (Vs 15)**

Before Christ, man had to approach God through law. However, man discovered something: the law did not make him acceptable to God—it condemned him and showed him how far away from God he really was—he was totally depraved!

Every time he broke the law, the law cried out "*guilty*" and pronounced the penalty of being imperfect and unworthy and unacceptable to God. Man discovered that the law was against him—at enmity with him. But now, Christ has done away with the enmity and condemnation of the law!

Christ lived a sinless life, fulfilling the law perfectly; and thereby He has secured the Perfect and Ideal Righteousness.

*Matthew 5:17—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."*

He has also paid the penalty for man's breaking of the law, as only the Ideal and Perfect Man He could do! When He died on the cross, He bore our condemnation and punishment for us!

## WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US GENTILES EPHESIANS 2:11-22

*Romans 8:3—"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."*

*Galatians 3:13—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."*

The point is this—when Christ fulfilled the law, He became the embodiment of the law! That is why He is the Way! A man is to approach God through Him, not through the law!

Therefore, there are no laws, no rules, and no decrees to keep men from God! There is only one thing that keeps a man away from God—refusing to come to God through His Son Jesus Christ!

4. **Christ brings peace by creating a "new man." (Vs 15)**  
God planned and promised a "*new creation*"—the creation of a new man in whom Jesus Christ dwells!

When a person turns to Christ, Christ causes that person to be born again! He recreates them—creates them all over again!  
The person who is born again has a new life!  
He begins life all over again!  
He has a new beginning, and this new beginning brings peace—peace of heart and mind!

### Conclusion

Have you had your new beginning in Christ? It's not about "*turning over a new leaf*" whatever that's supposed to mean! It's more than just a tingly or some other kind of feeling! (If you're looking for a feeling, stick a piece of metal in a light socket, you'll get a feeling, but it won't give you life!) It's more than just a new experience you've never had before! It's new life! Its real life! It's spiritual life in Christ!