

Ephesians

Chapter 2:11-22

March 6, 1994

Ephesians 2:11-22

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh-- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands--

12 that 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.

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

After laying out how Christians at Ephesus were saved, Paul appears to be addressing divisions within the church. He reminds them that at one time they were outside covenant that God had made with Israel. But note that he does not speak of being an Israelite in a positive manner ("...called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands"). Compare this to Romans 2:28. Circumcision was a sign given to Abraham who believed. Later people turned sought out the sign and not the belief.

The position of the Gentiles was that at one time they were far from God and His covenants and without hope. But this has been resolved in the death of Christ.

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

15 having 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,

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

17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

The fact that God intended all along to reconcile the world to Himself was probably one of the biggest sources of misunderstanding and disputes in the early church. Over and over we see examples of God testifying that the Gospel was intended for everyone, not just Jews (Pentecost; Peter's vision at Joppa; and the Judaizers).

True peace is found in Christ. This text does not say that Christ is peaceful but rather, that Christ is our peace. It also goes on to say that Christ preached peace, that is, He preached Himself.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

This is one of the clearest statements of the unified work of the Triune Godhead.

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

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

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

22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (NKJ)

Here Paul teaches that God is building a temple made with many different kinds of blocks being fitted closely together in an orderly manner for the purpose of God dwelling there. Our behavior should be indicative of a people who are fit for God to dwell among us.