

# The Epistle Of EPHESIANS

## PART 05 – THE GREAT RECONCILIATION *Ephesians 2:11-22*

### Our Spiritual Position In Christ

#### Chapter Structure

##### Our Position

<b>Ephesians 2:1-10</b>	Position Within The Head
<b>Ephesians 2:1-3</b>	Before Christ - Dead
<b>Ephesians 2:4-10</b>	After Christ - Raised

<b>Ephesians 2:11-22</b>	Position Within The Body
<b>Ephesians 2:11-12</b>	Before Christ - Alienated
<b>Ephesians 2:13-22</b>	After Christ - Reconciled

##### Our Salvation

###### **Ephesians 2:1-10**

We see God's work of salvation executed in the individual

- **Before Christ:** We were dead, disobedient, depraved and doomed
- **After Christ:** We are loved, quickened, exalted and kept

###### **Ephesians 2:11-22**

We see God's work of salvation executed in the body

- **Before Christ:** Separation
- **After Christ:** Reconciliation, Unification

### Before Christ

#### **Ephesians 2:11-12**

*Wherefore remember, that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 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.*

### Ephesus Church History

#### 52AD Sprouting

##### **Acts 18:19**

- Paul visited Ephesus (2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey)
- He left Aquila and Priscilla there

#### 54-56AD Weeding

##### **Acts 19:1-20**

- Paul visited Ephesus (3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey)
- He stayed there for over two years
- Taught at the school of Tyrannus

##### **Acts 19:1**

*Paul having passed through the upper coast came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,*

#### AD57 Nurturing

##### **Acts 20:17-38**

- Paul stopped at Miletus
- He calls for a meeting with the elders of Ephesus
- Say their farewells

## AD62 Watering

### **Letter to Ephesians**

- Paul writes to the Ephesians

## AD66 Producing

- The apostle John goes to Ephesus with Mary

## AD96 Wilting

### **Revelation 2:1-7**

- Jesus' letter to the church in Ephesus
- Whilst they resist false teaching
- They have lost their first love

## Lesser Separation: From Israel

### Former State

*Wherefore remember, that you being in time past Gentiles in the flesh*

The letter is addressed to *"the saints which are at Ephesus"* **Ephesus 1:1**

- This body of believers were largely Gentile in nature
- Paul casts their minds back 8-10 years earlier
- To their former state before Christ (before their salvation)

## Circumcision & Uncircumcision

*who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;*

### The Division

Paul marks the sharp division that existed between Jew and Gentile

- This is illustrated by the derogatory terms 'Uncircumcision' and 'Circumcision'

Circumcision was the sign of covenant

- Every male child was circumcised on the eighth day

This conferred on the Jew:

- Identification within the commonwealth of Israel
- Partakers of the covenants of God
- Inheritor of the kingdom of God

Uncircumcision conferred on the Gentile nothing

- They were aliens and strangers in relation to Israel
- They had no part in the covenants of God
- They had no inheritance in the kingdom of God

### The Distinction

The Lord set apart the Jewish people from Abraham onwards

They were to be distinct

- Nationally - Not to intermarry with non-Jew's, but to Jewish through and through
- Ritually - Not to follow pagan rites, but the sacrifices ordained by God
- Morally - Not to adopt the behaviour of other nations, but follow the laws of God
  
- Nationally - Failed (Samaritans)
- Ritually - Failed (Idolatry)
- Morally - Failed (Immorality)

However, the Jews maintained their separation from the Gentiles

- There was hostility and animosity between the two parties
- Jesus referred to the Gentiles as *"dogs"* in **Matthew 15:26**

# Greater Separation: From God

## Introduction

*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.*

### **John Stott**

*This, then was the terrible fivefold deprivation of the ancient Gentile world before Christ. They were cut off from the Messiah, from the theocracy and the covenants, from hope, and from God himself.*

### **William Hendriksen**

*Christless, stateless, friendless, hopeless and Godless.*

1. Without Christ
2. Without Citizenship
3. Without Covenants
4. Without Hope
5. Without God

## Without Christ

In pagan Ephesus

- Temple of Artemis (Diana)
- Knowing nothing of Christ
- *"dead in trespasses and sin"*

## Without Citizenship

The Lord called Abraham

- In fulfilment of His promise
- He made him into a nation

As a Jew you had a distinct advantage

- Being born into the commonwealth of Israel

As a Gentile you had no natural citizenship in Israel

- You could become a proselyte
- But who wants to undergo circumcision?

## Without Covenants

- God may have promised blessing to all nations through Abraham
- No covenant was made with the Gentile nations
- The Gentiles were *"aliens...and strangers"*
- And the Jews never let them forget it
- Pharisaic Prayer, "O God, I give thanks thank I am a Jew, not a Gentile."

## Without Hope

Philosophical darkness and hopeless filled the Gentile world

### **William Barclay**

*In face of death the pagan world stood in despair. They met it with grim resignation and bleak hopelessness. Aeschylus wrote, "Once a man dies there is no resurrection." Theocritus wrote, "There is hope for those who are alive, but those who have died are without hope." Catullus wrote, "When once our brief light sets, there is one perpetual night through which we must sleep." On their tombstones grim epitaphs were carved. "I was not; I became; I am not; I care not."*

## Without God

- Paganism with its many God's was rife in Ephesus (and the Gentile world)
- But they lacked the one true God
- Contrast the God of Israel with Pagan deities **Psalm 115**

Religious history is not

- Beginning with many God's
- Then slowly discovering the true God

Religious history is

- Beginning with the true God
- Then rejecting that truth
- Declining into many God's (or no God)
- This decline is evident in Genesis 1-11

Thus the Lord separated the Jew's from the world

- To preserve a people
- To preserve His name
- To preserve a witness (a light) to the world

The Jew's failed to be a witness

- The Gentiles failed to know the true God
- The Gentiles were "without God"

## After Christ Reconciliation (With God)

**Ephesians 2:13-18**

### Power of His Blood

**Ephesians 2:13**

*But now in Christ Jesus you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ.*

### God's Intervention

*But now in Christ Jesus*

Now we see the intervention of God

- The "But now" (**Vs 13**)
- Parallels "But God" (**Vs 4**)

Everything changes once Christ Jesus arrives

- At the death of Lazarus, all hope had gone
- Then arrives Jesus
- Martha said to her sister Mary, "The Master is come, and calls for you." **John 11:28**

All hope had gone for the Gentiles

- Then arrives Jesus

### Bridging The Distance

*you who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ.*

Paul acknowledges

- The distance that existed between God and Gentile
- That it has been bridged in Christ
- All that you were, has been overturned in Christ
- Christ is the big game-changer

The Jew thought that they were near God via circumcision

- It's not the blood of circumcision that brings you near God
- It's the blood of Jesus that brings you near God

In Christ, what is done in the flesh confers on you nothing at all

- In Christ, the playing field is levelled (between Jew and Gentile)
- What was once of profit (circumcision) is now worthless
- What was once worthless (the uncircumcised) has hope

**Galatians 5:6**

*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

A new way has been forged

- It doesn't call for circumcision of the flesh
- It calls for circumcision of the heart
- It calls for faith

## Power of His Peace

### **Ephesians 2:14-15**

*For He is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two one new man, so making peace;*

### The Peace

*For He is our peace,*

- Peace was not found in a treaty or trade deal
- Peace was not found in the laying down of arms
- Peace was not found in a political institution
- Peace was found in a man – Christ Jesus

All other forms of peace are superficial and temporal

- They will not endure
- They will not last

### The Partition

*and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

The “middle wall of partition” speaks of the tearing of the veil in the temple (**Matthew 27:51**)

- Gentiles were not allowed beyond the court of the gentiles
- There were warning stones that stated “No foreigner may enter within the balustrade around the sanctuary and the enclosure. Whoever is caught, on himself shall he put blame for the death which will ensue.”
- They could not approach the Holy of Holies
- Yet in the renting of the veil the way to God was laid open for all who would come

### The Partiality

*having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of two one new man, so making peace;*

### The Enmity

The ‘enmity’ existed between

- Gentile and God
- Gentile and Jew

Was due to:

- The Commandments           Laws of conduct
- The Ordinances               Laws of sacrifices

These put the Gentiles at odds with both God and the Jew's

### **Adam Clarke**

*The enmity of which the apostle speaks was reciprocal among the Jews and Gentiles. The former detested the Gentiles, and could hardly allow them the denomination of men; the latter had the Jews in the most sovereign contempt, because of the peculiarity of their religious rites and ceremonies, which were different from those of all the other nations of the earth.”*

*the law of commandments contained in ordinances*

- Was the grounds of the unique relation between Israel and the Lord
- It bound the Jew to the God
- It barred the Gentile from the Lord

## The Abolition

There is an abolition of this enmity

- In the death of Jesus Christ

In tearing the veil, the Lord

- Brought an end to the need for the temple
- He was saying the temple is no longer necessary to meet and worship the Lord

In tearing his flesh, the Lord

- Brought an end to the need of the commandments
- He was saying the law is no longer necessary to define a relationship with Me

All that bound the Jew was brought to an end

All that barred the Gentile was removed

- A new way was forged
- A new man was formed
- One new man

How hard it must have been for the Jew

- Almost 1500 years of tradition
- You don't let go of that easily

Yet God was more interested in peace than posterity

- You need to relinquish your religion
- If you are to gain relationship

## Power of Reconciliation

### **Ephesians 2:16**

*And that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were near.*

## History Of Hostility

The Lord wants to remove the hostility and animosity:

- Between Jew and Gentile
- Between God and men

Hostility and animosity began in the garden of Eden:

### **Genesis 3:12**

*And the man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.'*

Adam's hostility

- 1<sup>st</sup> blames God: for giving him the woman
- 2<sup>nd</sup> blames His wife: for the trouble he is in

The source of hostility is sin

- Before reconciliation can occur
- Sin has to be removed

## Removing Hostility

*that He might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross,*

- Sin was dealt with at 'the cross'
- In the 'one body' of Jesus Christ

*having slain the enmity thereby:*

He substituted Himself in the place of all mankind

- He carried the burden (and penalty) of all mankind's sin
- He paid the price of mankind's sin (which was death)
- Then in resurrection He proved Himself a victor over sin
- And destroyed the source of all hostility (i.e. sin)
- And in so doing destroyed "the enmity thereby"

## Path of Reconciliation

Reconciliation cannot be achieved

- Through careful negotiations
- Round table mediation
- Kissing and making-up

*and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were near.*

- Gentile *to you which were afar off*
- Jews *to them that were near*

The cross made both parties equidistant in a sense

- Now the law and the temple were not required
- All that was need was faith in Jesus Christ and the work on the cross

## Power of the Spirit

### **Ephesians 2:18**

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

## Access Via Son & Spirit

Jesus spoke of the exclusivity of salvation

- That salvation is through one man, Jesus Christ
- That access to the Father is through one man, Jesus Christ

### **John 14:6**

*Jesus says to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by Me.'*

Paul parallels that thought:

The exclusivity of salvation

- *For through Him*
- It is through Jesus alone a man is saved

The inclusivity of salvation

- *we both have access*
- All men have access (it is no longer Jews only)
- We don't have access to the Father without the Son
- We don't have access to the Father without the Spirit

Translation	=	access
Greek	=	prosagōgē
Pronounce	=	pross-argo-gay
Defintion	=	access or introduction

### **Francis Foulkes**

*In oriental courts there was a prosagoges who brought a person into the presence of the king.*

It's not what you know, it's who you know.

## Access Via The Spirit

How does this work?

### **1 Corinthians 12:13**

*For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit.*

The church is the body of Christ **Ephesians 1:22-23**

- We gain entry to the church (the body of Christ) by Spirit baptism
- It identifies us with Christ (his death, burial and resurrection)
- It includes us in His body
- It introduces us to the Father

- We do not gain entry to church by water baptism

<b>Water Baptism</b>	<b>Spirit Baptism</b>
Administered by men  <b>Acts 8:38</b> <i>And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptised him.</i>	Administered by God  <b>Mark 1:8</b> <i>I indeed have baptised you with water: but He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost.</i>
Is a command (to be obeyed)  <b>Acts 11:48</b> <i>And he [Peter] commanded them to be baptised in the name of the Lord.</i>	Is a promise (to be received)  <b>Acts 1:4</b> <i>[Jesus] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, 'but wait for the promise of the Father,'</i>

## After Christ Unification (With Israel) Unified Citizenship

### **Ephesians 2:19**

*Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.*

Translation = saints  
Greek = hagios  
Defintion = holy one, most holy thing

If you have been baptised by the spirit into the body of Christ

- You are part of the 'household of God'
- You are a 'holy one'
- You are set apart for God

If you have been baptised by the spirit into the body of Christ

- You are no longer a citizen of the world
- You are a 'holy one'
- You are set apart from the world

If you have been baptised by the spirit into the body of Christ

- You are no longer a stranger and foreigner to the kingdom of God
- You are a stranger and foreigner to the world
- You are at odds with the world

## Unified Construction

### **Ephesians 2:20-22**

*And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together grows to a holy temple in the Lord: in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.*

Paul has switched his symbolism

- From citizenship
- To household

He takes the picture of the house

- Considers its foundation
- Considers the cornerstone

## The Foundation

*And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets,*

- Apostles** Those taught intimately by the Lord to lay the doctrines of the church
- Prophets** Those ranked next to the apostles (not OT prophets) (e.g. Mark, Luke, Jude)

The church should be built

- On the foundation of the apostles doctrine
- Contained in the New testament writings

### The Cornerstone

*Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone;*

#### Wikipedia

*The cornerstone (or foundation stone or setting stone) is the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation. All other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure.*

- The foundation is the base on which building is constructed
- The cornerstone is the plumb-line/blueprint by which the building is constructed

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone

Our lives and the church should be constructed

- In line with the plumb-line of His character
- According to the blue print of His word

### The Building

*in whom all the building fitly framed together grows to a holy temple in the Lord:*

Often we fail to see the bigger picture

- Because we are self-consumed
- Because the Lord has focussed on the work in our lives

But the bigger picture is that we are being '*fitly framed together*'

- We see this on a Sunday morning
- We bring what the Lord has done in our lives during the work
- We see that feeds into the bigger picture of fellowship life

The bigger picture is of '*a holy temple*'

### The Dwelling

*in whom you also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.*

The same Holy Spirit

- That baptised us into the body of Christ
- In dwells both the individual believer and the corporate body
- Unifies both Jew and Gentile into a single dwelling place of God

The physical temple is destroyed

- A spiritual temple now exists i.e. the church

The law is fulfilled

- A new testament now exists
- Which endorses the old
- And forms a commentary on the OT (in light of Christ)

Old Position <b>Ephesians 2:12</b>	New Position
"without Christ"	"in Christ" <b>Ephesians 2:13</b>
"aliens"	"fellow citizens" <b>Ephesians 2.19</b>
"strangers"	"no more strangers" <b>Ephesians 2.19</b>
"no hope"	"you are called in one hope" <b>Ephesians 4:4</b>
"without God"	"we have...access to the Father" <b>Ephesians 2:18</b>