

# EPHESIANS

## GRACE & GLORY

COMMENTARY AND QUESTIONS | EPHESIANS 2:11-22 | part 05

### Ephesians 2:11-22\_“A New Community”

#### COMMENTARY:

##### **REMEMBERING OUR CONDITION** (Ephesians 2:11-12):

Just as Ephesians 2:1-3 records all of mankind’s depravity in the eyes of God, verses 11 and 12 of chapter 2 describe the complete separation between the Gentile people (every non-Jewish person) and God. Paul refers to these Gentiles as the “uncircumcised” and the Jewish people who viciously rebuked the Gentiles as “circumcised.” God originally gave the idea of circumcision to Abraham as an outward sign of acceptance to His covenant people. However, it is clear that God is no longer after the physical act of circumcision, but requires a circumcision of the heart that all people both Jew and Gentile can experience (Cf. Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11-13). Furthermore, verse 12 expands on the weight of our alienation before God. The main idea is to remember. Remembering who we were is a way to LIVE IN who we are. Remembering who we were keeps us humble, disintegrates prejudice, grows us in “gospel awareness,” and magnifies the transforming grace of God!

##### **The Great Response:**

Due to the deep division between the Gentiles and God (and his people), God had to act! We who were far off have been “brought near by the blood of Christ” (v. 13). The apostle moves on to elaborate. The word “both” in verse 14 clearly refers to the Jews and the Gentiles and the destruction of the “wall of hostility” between them. Thus, Christ is the peacemaker! Verses 15-18 contain a great deal of theology so read carefully! As mentioned before, we are not just reconciled to God because of Christ, but we are reconciled to each other as “one body,” both Jews and Gentiles (v. 16). In essence, we do not work our way into God’s presence (circumcision, material sacrifices, etc.). Jesus has completed the work that gains us God’s presence. This is another great reality of the gospel that is unbelievably God exalting. Take a few minutes to think about in detail these verses and what an infinitely wise mind it would take to think up salvation the way God did! “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable are his ways” (Romans 11:33).

##### **What We Have Now Become** (Ephesians 2:19-22):

After describing step by step what Christ has done to reconcile two groups of people, he summarizes the results in verses 19-22. The result of Christ breaking down the wall of hostility, abolishing the law of commandments, and preaching peace to those far and near is a completely new people. Christ reconciles two groups that bitterly despise each other and calls them citizens of the same city and members of the same family! Paul begins chapter 2 by describing how Christ reconciles us to God and ends the chapter by describing how Christ reconciles people. Thus, salvation allows you to enter into a relationship with God (vv. 1-10) and allows you to enter into to this new family of believers (vv. 11-22)!

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## QUESTIONS:

1. Read Ephesians 2:11-22. Write down any insights/thoughts/questions from it.
2. Who do the “uncircumcised” and the “circumcised” refer to? Which one are we?
3. Why do you think it is important to remember who we were (the description of the Gentiles in verse 12 is exactly who we were) before Christ saves us?
4. What are the five things Paul lists out to describe the alienation of the Gentiles and God (v. 12)?
5. How have we been “brought near” (v. 13)? Explain what this means in your own words.
6. Who does “both” refer to (v. 14)? How are we made one (v. 15)?
7. How does Paul describe us now as a result of the cross (v. 19)? What does this mean in your own words?
8. Since we are now a part of this Kingdom, what does Paul say our reason for being built is (v. 22)? How well do you do this in your own life?