

Exegetical Notes – Ephesians 2:11-22

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Ephesians 2:11-22

Verses 11-13

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— ¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

- “Therefore,” because of what was just said (see Ephesians 2:1-10). There, Paul tell his readers, gentile Christians, that before they knew Christ, they were dead in their transgressions and sins. They were without hope and could not save themselves. But “because God loved them so much,” He sent Jesus, His only begotten Son, to save them. This was done because God loved them, not because they loved Him. They were saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Jews, called “the circumcision,” bore on their physical bodies the mark of God’s people, circumcision. Gentiles, called “the uncircumcised,” did not bear that mark in their flesh. They were looked down on and considered unworthy of God’s love because they did not bear the mark of God in their flesh. Non-Jews were considered shut out of the kingdom of God and unworthy of His love. Non-Jews were thought to be without hope by Jews.
- But, God chose to bring those considered outside and lost close to Him through Jesus’ blood. Those “once far away” were brought near to God through the sacrifice of Jesus.

Verses 14-18

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his

flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

- Jesus is our peace. He took the two groups of people in the world, Jews and non-Jews, and made them one by removing the wall between them which divided them.
- This dividing wall was the Old Testament law with all its commands and regulations. The illustration may come from the temple. The court of the Gentiles was marked off by a physical wall. Only Jews were allowed to pass through the gate in the wall into the temple proper. A sign over the gate warned non-jews that if they went any farther in, they would be executed. Keeping the Law of Moses was a work of the flesh which Jews assumed made them acceptable to God. It was something they did. Gentiles, non-Jews, who did not keep the law were unacceptable to God and could not enter His presence.
- Jesus' sacrifice changed this. No one comes to God because he keeps the law. Everyone is reconciled to God by Jesus' death on the cross. So Jesus brings us near to God. Jesus gives us peace. Jesus gives us access to God. Jesus makes us God's sons and daughters. Salvation is not through acts of the flesh. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus. He saves us. We do not save ourselves.

Verses 19-22

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

- “Consequently,” because of what God did in Christ. Those who were considered outside are brought in. Those who were without Christ, those who were considered aliens and strangers, those who were without hope and without God, are, by the action of God, made part of the people and family of God.

- The Apostles, the Old Testament Prophets, and Jesus first and foremost have all proclaimed this great truth. All the witnesses agree. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ and not by works of the flesh.
- All are joined together in Christ. Christ is the capstone. Christ is the foundation. Jesus holds it all together. We are the stones of this holy temple. God lives in us through the presence of His Holy Spirit.
- We don't do any of it. It is all of God. We receive it by trusting Jesus to give it to us. It is by grace that we are saved through faith in Jesus!

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