

Ephesians 2:11-18

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 AND 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 our access in one Spirit to the Father.

- I. Therefore - What’s it there for? To connect Paul’s previous thoughts for us around how great a salvation that we have. He is reminding them (and us) that this lofty salvation and position that we have was at one time reserved for the Jews only but we’ve been brought into the family.
 - a. Paul uses the terms “Uncircumcised” by the so-called “Circumcised” to point out something: **Genesis 17:10-14 (NASB)** 10 “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 “And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 “And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. 13 “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”
 - b. The Jews had this sign because they had a special relationship with God. He had chosen them. Why did God choose them? It wasn’t because they were a big deal.
 - c. **Deuteronomy 7:6-8,11-14 (NASB)** 6 “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 “The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt...11 “Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am

commanding you today, to do them. 12 “Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. 13 “He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you. 14 “You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle.

- i. Circumcision was a sign and a reminder for the Jewish person that the God of all creation had chosen them and made promises to them. There was a pride for them that not only had He chosen them, He sealed them with this outward sign that others didn't have and they did.

d. Here's what God always intended circumcision to be a sign of (heart change):

- i. **Deuteronomy 10:16 (NASB)** 16 "So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.
- ii. **Jeremiah 4:4 (NASB)** “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD And remove the foreskins of your heart, Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Or else My wrath will go forth like fire And burn with none to quench it, Because of the evil of your deeds.”

e. This is why Paul says the following in verse 11: **who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.**

II. In order to understand some of the verses here we need to quickly establish some background of the historic relationship between Jews and Gentiles:

- a. *“The Jew had an immense contempt for the Gentile. They said that the Gentiles were created by God to be fuel for the fires of Hell; that God loved only Israel of all the nations that he had made...It was not even lawful to render help to a Gentile woman in childbirth, for that would be to bring another Gentile into the world. The barrier between Jew and Gentile was absolute. If a Jew married a Gentile, the funeral of that Jew was carried out. Such contact with a Gentile was the equivalent of death; even to go into a Gentile house rendered a Jew unclean. Before Christ the barriers were up; after Christ the barriers were down.”- https://bible.org/seriespage/9-guilt-men-and-grace-god-part-2-ephesians-211-21#P1252_352904*
- b. Where did this mentality come from? We see where it comes from in the following verses: **14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,**

- i. **Enmity** - A feeling or state of hatred or animosity, hostility.
- ii. We are told that this enmity is the Law.
- iii. How can that be?

1. This favor that God bestowed on the Jew by choosing them and giving them the Law:

- a. **Romans 9:4-5a (NLT)** 4 They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises. 5a Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned...
 2. This would end up being a source of pride for the Jews. It was their downfall. Why? Because the Law became about them and their ability (and need) to fulfill it and caused them to miss the One that the Law was about (Jesus) and was supposed to fulfill the Law.
 3. **Romans 9:30-33 (NASB)** 30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."
 4. Jesus Christ took the away the hostility that the Law was causing between Jew and Gentile: **15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,**
 5. It was always Jesus who was going to fulfill the Law, not the Jews or any man for that matter:
 - a. **Matthew 5:17 (NASB)** "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.
 6. Peace (with men) - When Jesus fulfilled the Law He removed the stumbling stone for the Jews and created a common bond for all men. **Jesus is now what unites all of us. It's our commonality in Christ that now creates peace for all of us with other men, regardless of skin color, background, profession etc.**
 - a. **Galatians 3:28-29 (NLT)** 28 There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.
 - b. **Galatians 6:14-15 (NASB)** 14 But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.
- c. **16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 AND 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 our access in one Spirit to the Father.**
 - i. Peace (with God) - Jesus did so much more though than simply allowing men to have peace with each other because of His teaching and the way He lived (the Ghandi or Mother Theresa idea). He allowed us to have peace with God:

1. **Romans 5:1 (NASB95)** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,