

Ephesians 2:11-18

1/Far Away

Before we came to Christ, we were ‘far away’ (13, 17)

- Gentiles in the flesh
- ‘Uncircumcised’
- Separated from Christ
- Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel
- Strangers to the covenants of promise
- Without hope
- Without God

Two great words—

- **But:** see Romans 5:8; 5:20; 6:10
- **Now:** see 2 Cor 6:2; Romans 5:11; 8:1
- No matter how far we may seem to have been from God in the past, now we are brought near to Him

2/Brought near

- In Christ
- Reconciliation with God is only found in Christ.
- Through the blood of Christ
- It is only because Jesus shed His blood that we can be reconciled
- 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Not only are we brought near to God, we are brought near to one another...

- He himself is our (lit. the) peace (emphatic)
- He has made the both one
- He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility
- Example of PNG princess who was given as bride to prince of another tribe to atone for a killing. She became ‘peace’ to them and broke down hostility.
- 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility
- He has done this by destroying the power of the very thing that kept us separate – commandments and ordinances (15)

Does this mean the commandments no longer apply?

- No—God’s moral law is still applicable
- Verb = render ineffective, nullify, cancel, do away with...
- The power of the law to condemn us has been rendered ineffective.
- See Galatians 3:19-29

The result is—

- ‘one new man’
- Peace
- Reconciliation
- An end to hostility
- All through his body on the cross (14,16)

So we both have access to the Father (18)

- We are reconciled to God and to each other
- So there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female...
- Note the connection with baptism (Gal 3:27)

So we see—

- Peace and reconciliation with God
- Peace and reconciliation with each other
- We are all one in Christ

Let's step out in commitment to God and commitment to each other

For through Christ we all have access in one Spirit to the Father

In verses 11 and 12, Paul gives a graphic description of what it was like to be an unbelieving Gentile from a Jewish perspective. Make a list of the ways you would describe yourself before you became a believer.

1. Paul contrasts us being 'far away' and then 'brought near' (13, 17). Far away from what? Brought near to what?
2. People often think of peace as being a feeling. What does the word 'peace' mean here? (14) What does it mean to you that 'Christ is our peace'?
3. What do you think is the 'dividing wall of hostility'? (14). Isaiah 59:2 may help.
4. What do you think is the significance of the phrase 'in his flesh' (14). John 1:14 and Hebrews 10:19,20 may be helpful here.
5. Who are the 'two' referred to in verses 15 to 18? (Refer back to verses 11 and 12.)
6. Gentiles were 'far off' and Jews were 'near', but all come to God by the same means? What means? (13, 14, 16).
7. The three members of the Trinity are mentioned in this passage. What are their respective roles?
8. What are the implications of the phrase 'one new man (= person)'? (15).
9. What does 'access' mean? (18). What does it mean for us?

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