

“Different or the Same?”
“Ephesians” — Part 5
Ephesians 2:11-22

1. Gentile condition before Christ = Separation

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (*that done in the body by the hands of men*)— 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.

Ephesians 2:11-12

The plights of Gentiles:

- Called the uncircumcised by the circumcised
- Separate from Christ
- Excluded from citizenship in Israel
- Foreigners to covenants of promise
- Without hope
- Without God in the world

“God called Israel that through them He might reveal Himself as the one true God. Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles that they might be saved, but Israel became like the Gentiles, and their light burned dimly.”

Dr. Warren Weirsbe

Principle:

When the church is least like the world,
it does the most for the world.

2. What Christ did for gentiles = Reconciliation

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Ephesians 2:13-18

Understanding the problem:

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question...The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

Acts 15:1-11

Jews and Gentiles brought together:

- In Christ we have been brought near to God.
- Christ destroyed the dividing wall between the two.
- Christ created one new man out of the two.

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Romans 10:12-13

- Christ reconciled both by the cross.
- Christ preached a message of peace to both.

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand...

Romans 5:1-2

- Both have access to God by the same Spirit.

3. Together in Christ = Unified

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

Ephesians 2:19-22

- One Nation: Citizens of heaven

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew

nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
Galatians 3:26-29

• **One Family: God is our Father**

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
Hebrews 10:19-22

• **One Temple: God dwells in His Church**

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."
2 Corinthians 6:16

Practical Applications:

Citizenship in God's Nation is based on personal faith. The promises of a new standing in Christ apply only to those who have actually placed their faith in Him. Being raised in a Christian home doesn't qualify you for promised standing in Christ.

Are you helping others to trust in Christ? Do you share the "Good News" of eternal life? Are you living as an ambassador of peace?

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us...
2 Corinthians 5:20