

**Bible Study Packet
Week 4**



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Ephesians 2:11-22

Peace

"In the first part of chapter 2, Paul said that in Christ we become new men morally and spiritually. Here he says that in Christ we become new men religiously and culturally."

Read 2:11-22 slowly twice. Recall what the whole passage is about and how it relates to the letter's theme.

Before Christ: Enemies

Gentiles (verse 11). Literally, "nations," or "ethnic groups" a somewhat contemptuous term for non-Jews. "Uncircumcised" was a very contemptuous term.

Circumcisions (verse 11). A ritual cutting away of the foreskin, signifying that a man is Jewish. Paul liked to quote Moses' and Jeremiah's teaching that true circumcision is "circumcision of the heart" that is, obedience in faith (see Romans 2:28-29; compare Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4)

The four descriptions of the Gentiles' position in Ephesians 2:12 are roughly synonyms: before Christ, only Jews were among the

community of those with whom God had begun a relationship through "covenants of promise." These covenants included all Old Testament contracts based upon God's promises with Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Judah, and Levi. In particular, the promise of the Messiah had been given only to Israel, although the prophets had hinted that non-Hebrews would be included (see, for example, Isaiah 55:3-5). Because of the promises, Jews had been "near" to God and His Messiah, but Gentiles had been "faraway"

1. a. Paraphrase Ephesians 2:12 what was the non-Jews' relationship to God and His promises before Christ?

b. Paraphrase verse 13 what is their new relationship, and how was it established?

2. What was the "wall of hostility" (verse 14) between Gentiles and Jews before Christ (see verses 12-15)?

5. What result of Christ's work does verse 18 describe?

6. It seems that the reason for the change in human relationships touches the core of the letter: Paul's vision of what the church is supposed to be. He described the church in a series of images. Name each image and tell what it teaches you about how Christians are supposed to function together.

Image	What it teaches about human relationships
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<p>(2:15- 16; 1:22- 23)</p>	
<p>(2:19)</p>	
<p>2:20- 22)</p>	

Prophets (verse 20). Probably refers not just to the Old Testament prophets but also to those in the early church recognized as having the spiritual situation and of seeing future events as present (see Acts 11:27-28; 13:1).

7. State in a sentence the main teaching of 2:11-22.

8. How does this passage relate to 2:1-10?

9. What does Paul's argument so far have to do with purposes for writing this letter? How does chapter 1 serve those purposes? Chapter 2?

10. Read over your responses to the questions in this lesson. Seek God's guidance through prayer to choose at least one change in your attitudes toward other Christians. Pray for His grace to change your behavior, and then record the specific first steps you can take to begin bringing this area of your life into conformity with his will.

11. List any questions you have about 2:11-22.