

(11) Therefore, remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh --- called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made by hands ---- remember that you were at that time separated from Christ...alienated 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 once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both “one,” and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the Law of commandments expressed in ordinances --- that He might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility!

(17) And He came and preached peace to you who were far off, and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

(19) So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Think on these things:

- 1) From the Jewish perspective, what are you “in the flesh” (v. 11)? **A Gentile.**
- 2) In ancient times, being circumcised distinguished Jewish men from men of every other culture. With whom did God establish this unique requirement to identify his peculiar people (see Genesis 17:1-13)?

#### **Abraham**

- 3) Before salvation, Paul describes most of us at that time as “separated from Christ” (v. 12). What advantages do/did the Jews have over everybody else in the world? Consider Romans 9:4-5. As strangers to these advantages, how are Gentiles described (v. 12b)?

Advantages – **Adoption through Abraham; seeing God’s glory; God’s covenants with Abraham, Noah, and Moses; 10 Commandments and various social laws; guidance for worship; the Patriarchs; physical lineage of Jesus (born of the Jews).**

Strangers – **without hope and without God in this world.**

- 4) A fallacy of biblical doctrine is to believe that all God’s promises to Israel NOW belong to the Christian Church. God never withdrew His promises to Israel (Romans 11:25-31). Instead, He “added” (grafted in) new people with His promises to other people groups (Gentiles). Ours is the rapture and mansions, and God calls us His “children of the promise” (Romans 9:6-8). What served as the bridge between Jews and Gentiles --- in God’s sight --- to make us “one” (v. 13)?

#### **The blood of Jesus from His death on the cross.**

- 5) Essentially, God sent Jesus to be the “peace” between Jews and Gentiles, although many Jews reject Jesus to this day. The Jews are called enemies of the Gospel (Romans 11:28), and there is

a hostility that remains. Vs. 14-15 say Jesus is making us both one, creating in Himself one new man (i.e., type of believer; see Galatians 3:28-29). What is Jesus doing with the hostility that exists between “believers” (vs. 14, 16)? How should one Christian treat another Christian who is very different from him/her (culture, race, method or day of Christian worship, etc...)?

**Christ “breaks down the dividing wall of hostility” that exists among the nations. He demolishes it! --- Loving God, we show others the mercy and kindness that Jesus has shown us.**

- 6) What is Jesus’ message to both sides (v. 17)? What has He done that only He could do (v. 18)? Consider also Hebrews 10:19-23. Do you remember what Jesus said in John 14:6?

**Jesus preached “peace” to both sides --- and He provides both Jew and Gentile with access to God the Father. We can now enter boldly into God’s presence. John – “I am the Way...no man comes to the Father but by Me.”**

- 7) Our passage concludes with a discussion on God’s household. Jesus is the ‘cornerstone’ (v. 20); He “aligns” the building’s orientation and anchors the foundation. Who does v. 20 say makes up the foundation? (Do you see how Old and New Testament are bound together?) As the building is being constructed, what does v. 21 say the structure will become? Who will dwell there (v. 22)?

Foundation? **Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles.**

Structure? **A Holy Temple.**

Who Dwells Here? **We will dwell there with God through the Holy Spirit.**

- 8) Vs. 11-12 say uncircumcised Gentiles were once aliens and strangers to Israel’s covenants. V. 19 says that is no longer the case. What is the position of Gentile believers today?

**Gentiles are fellow citizens with Jews, and members of God’s household.**

- 9) Take a moment to skim 1 Peter 2:4-10. What more do we learn about Jesus as the cornerstone? Can you identify who the “builders” were in this passage? Who was once “not a people” but now are God’s people by having received mercy?

Jesus? **Christ may be rejected by men, but He is chosen and precious to God. Our “acceptable” sacrifices to God are offered through Him.**

Builders? **The Jewish nation generally, but the Jewish religious leaders more specifically.**

“Not a People”? **Gentiles have received mercy and are now made into God’s people, too.**

People and situations I want to pray for this week: