

## The Epistle to the Ephesians

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### WHEN THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN

Ephesians 2:11-18

#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson is exciting because it contains a remarkable historic event. It explains how a wall that separated Jews from all the other nations of the world for centuries, was crushed by the cross of Christ. This signaled the end of the Law for righteousness and opened the way for Jews and Gentiles to come near to God by the blood of Christ.

#### IMPORTANCE OF THIS LESSON

- ❑ It is important to realize that Christ, our Savior, was born in a Jewish home and reared as a Jewish child. He lived as a Jew and kept the Law. He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17).
- ❑ In dying He bore the curse of the Law and redeemed all, Jews and Gentiles, from that curse (Galatians 3:10-13).
- ❑ Born again Jews and Gentiles are now one in the Body of Christ (Ephesians 2:16).
- ❑ The main thrust is to show how hopeless, uncircumcised, alienated Gentiles could become “one new man” with divinely chosen, proud, Gentile-hating Jews.

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#### THE LESSON

- I. **Ephesians 2:11 “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands”**
- A. “Wherefore” – Whenever you encounter a “wherefore” or a “therefore,” especially in the writings of the Apostle Paul, always pause and reflect on what preceded the “wherefore.” For example, Ephesians 2:1-10 clearly states what we should remember and why we should remember it.
- B. “Wherefore remember” – If you are a Christian, you should often recall and reflect upon what you once were (Deuteronomy 7:6-11). Ephesians 2:1-10 speaks about your past life apart from Christ:
1. You were “dead in trespasses and sins.”
  2. In sin, you walked according to the ways of the world.
  3. You obeyed Satan, “the prince of the power of the air.”
  4. Your manner of life was like all the other children of disobedience, living to fulfill the desires of the flesh.
  5. You were, by nature, a child of wrath.
- How eternally grateful we all should be for the truth in Ephesians 2:4-5.
- C. “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh” – “Gentiles” is a term used in Scripture to indicate all people of all nations who are not Jews. The phrase “in the flesh” does not refer to their old adamic nature but to their nationality apart from the nation of Israel.
- D. “who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands” – Circumcision indicated that God’s desire and purpose was to make Israel a distinct, separate, and holy people. Deuteronomy 7:6 – “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”

1. In Genesis 12:1-3, God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham marked by three “I wills.”  
**I WILL: (Learn these for exam)**
  - a) make of thee a great nation.
  - b) bless thee and make thy name great.
  - c) bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
  - d) shew thee a land.
2. In Genesis 17:7-14:
  - a) God assured Abraham that the covenant He had made with him was an “everlasting covenant.”
  - b) All the land of Canaan was to be given to Abraham and to his seed for an everlasting possession.
  - c) Circumcision was instituted as the sign of the Abrahamic covenant – Abraham and every male child of his seed had to be circumcised.
3. Several things must be noted here. God’s desire and purpose was to make Israel a distinct, separate and holy people. Deuteronomy 7:6 – “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”
4. Israel is called the “Circumcision” in Ephesians 2:11. In derision they called the Gentiles the “Uncircumcision.” Israel had special privileges (Romans 3:1-2; 9:4-5), and responsibilities which led to pride in themselves, and the disdain of all Gentiles. On the other hand, the Gentiles, rejecting circumcision and jealous of Israel’s uniqueness, fiercely hated the Jews. The wall separating Jew and Gentile had to come down.

## II. Ephesians 2:12 – “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world”

A. In this verse, the Apostle continues to remind the Ephesian Gentiles of their precious position and condition. He states 5 things:

1. “*ye were without Christ*” – Paul began this great Epistle with the phrase, “*to the faithful in Christ Jesus.*” Everybody in the world is either “in Christ” or “without Christ.” No phrase could more accurately describe a person who is not saved. To be without Christ is to live in spiritual darkness: lost, blind, hopeless, and destitute of all the blessings of God’s great salvation.
2. “*being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*” – “Aliens” here means “strangers.” To say they were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel” is to clarify that they were not citizens of the Jewish State. They did not share in the special relationship Israel had with the true and living God, nor were they privileged to have the advantages listed in Romans 3:1-2 and 9:4-5. Read these verses.
3. “*strangers from the covenants of promise*” – What are the covenants of promise? There are eight covenants (binding agreements) God made in the Scriptures:

Edenic – Genesis 1:26	Mosaic – Exodus 19:5
Adamic – Genesis 3:15	Palestinian – Deuteronomy 30:3
Noahic – Genesis 9:16	Davidic – 2 Samuel 7:16
Abrahamic – Genesis 12:2	New Covenant – Hebrews 8:8

Three of these covenants contain special promises to Israel.

- a) The Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-4) – Israel was to become a great nation, fulfilled namely through Jacob and his family. The land of Israel was given to them for an everlasting possession (Genesis 13:14-17; 17:8).
- b) The Palestinian (Deuteronomy 30:3) – Assures Israel that though they have been scattered all over the world due to disobedience, they will repent, return, and be restored in the land when Christ returns. (Read Deuteronomy 28:63-65; 30:1; Romans 11:25-27).

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- c) The Davidic (2 Samuel 7:16) – The throne and kingdom of David would be established forever. Gentiles of course, were total strangers to these special covenants and had no dealings with or understanding of the true and living God.
4. “*having no hope*” – Without hope man is like a leaf shaken in the wind. When hope dies, nothing remains but fear and uncertainty. It is an absolute certainty that without God there is no hope for the unbeliever. Hope without God does not exist. Israel had hope. They had the hope of the coming Messiah, the hope of being established in the land God had promised. The Gentiles could not help but know and feel the difference. How precious it is for us who believe the Gospel to have Christ within us “THE HOPE OF GLORY,” (Colossians 1:27).
5. “*without God in the world*” – Millions today are going through life not believing in nor receiving the true and living God, the God of the Bible. The atheist, the doubter, the religionist who rejects the God of the Bible – the neglecter, and the spiritually indifferent – all know nothing experientially of the living God. The Ephesians had no knowledge of God, no evidence of His blessing, no assurance of His salvation, and no hope of Heaven. Man is without God, not because God has turned away from and repudiated man—man is a sinner and godless by choice. (Read Romans 1:21-24.)

**III. EPHESIANS 2:13 – “BUT NOW”**

“**But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**” (See also 1 Corinthians 15:20; Romans 3:21.)

Here we find one of the great *BUT NOWS* of Scripture. This verse is best understood by referring back to Ephesians 2:12, “That at that time ye were without Christ.” The Gentiles were shut out “far off.” They had no high priest, no mercy seat, no day of atonement, no blood sacrifice, no hope, and no God. **BUT NOW**, a way to God had been opened for the Gentiles. The shed blood of Christ had opened the door and provided a way.

**IV. Ephesians 2:14-18 – THE VERY HEART OF THIS LESSON**

- A. **Ephesians 2:14** – A wall separated Jews and Gentiles and it had to come down. That wall was the Law given by God to Israel through Moses. It was the middle wall of partition, separating Israel from all the other nations in the world. It was “*even the law of commandments contained in ordinances*” (Ephesians 2:15). Somebody or something had to do away with righteousness through **LAW**, and provide a superior way for the Jew and Gentile to come to salvation. Before the Law could be abolished, it had to be fully kept, which is precisely what Jesus did. In Matthew 5:17-18 Jesus said, “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, until all be fulfilled.” He said, “I am not come to destroy (the law) but to fulfil.” He brought down the wall by living an absolutely sinless life and thus could become the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people, Jew and Gentile.

1 Peter 2:22 – “*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.*”

2 Corinthians 5:21 – *For God hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us.*

Hebrews 4:15 – *He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

To bring down the wall, the penalty and curse of the law had to be borne – and Christ became that curse.

“*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*”

(Galatians 3:10-14).

The law and its curse were fulfilled in Christ. He became “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4). Salvation for Jew and Gentile is now entirely “by grace... through faith” (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9-10).

- B. **Ephesians 2:15** – **“Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace:”**  
By His sacrifice in our place and on our behalf Christ has abolished “the law of commandments” in order to make “in himself of twain (Jew & Gentile) one new man, so making peace.” That is peace with God and peace between Jew and Gentile.
- C. **Ephesians 2:16** – **“And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby”**  
Christ died not only that Jew and Gentile might be at peace, but that both might be reconciled to God, forming one body (the Church) by the cross. By the cross Christ tore down the wall and slew the enmity between Jew and Gentile. (We will study more about the church in our next lesson.)
- D. **Ephesians 2:17** – **“And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”**  
He came and preached peace to Gentiles who were far off, and to the Jews who were near.
- E. **Ephesians 2:18** – **“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.”**  
Now through Christ, both Jews and Gentiles have access to God by one Spirit unto the Father, (Hebrews 4:15-16). We close by pointing out that in the last sentence, you see the process of prayer. Prayer is made to the Father, by the Holy Spirit, through Christ. Amen.

#### **CONCLUSION**

God has not cast away His people Israel. Please read the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:4-16. David’s throne, house, and kingdom were to be established forever. As a nation, Israel is blind to the truth of who Christ was. That blindness was “in part,” or temporary, until “the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” Israel will yet be saved when their Deliverer and Messiah returns in glory and power (Romans 11:25-27).

**Ephesians**  
**Exam – Lesson 6**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Choice – Circle the letter in front of the correct answer. Only one answer is correct unless otherwise stated.

1. The remarkable historic event spoken of in Ephesians 2:14-18 is: (Value 4 points)
  - a. the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles was broken down by the resurrection.
  - b. the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles was broken down by the ascension.
  - c. the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles was broken down by the death of Christ on the cross.
2. The important truth found in this segment of Scripture and supported by Matthew 5:17 is: (Value 3 points)
  - a. Christ did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it.
  - b. Christ did not come to fulfill the law but to destroy it.
  - c. Christ came to show us how we can fulfill the law.
3. When we encounter a “wherefore” or a “therefore” in the writings of Paul we should: (Value 4 points)
  - a. skip over it.
  - b. check what preceded it.
  - c. check what followed it.
4. In the light of Ephesians 2:1-3, we should be grateful for Ephesians 2:4-5 because: (Open Bible) (Value 3 points)
  - a. God loved us enough to give us new life.
  - b. God did not condemn us.
  - c. Christ rose from the dead.
5. In the Bible the word “Gentile” refers to: (Value 4 points)
  - a. Americans.
  - b. only the strangers that lived among the Jews in Palestine.
  - c. all people of all nations who are not Jews.
6. Circumcision indicated to the Jews that: (Value 3 points)
  - a. God had not forgotten about them as a nation.
  - b. God would love them and care for them forever.
  - c. God wanted them to be a separated and holy people.
7. The Gentiles hated the Jews because: (Value 4 points)
  - a. the Jews were a separated people.
  - b. they were jealous of the Jews and rejected circumcision.
  - c. the Jews hated the Gentiles.
8. To be “without Christ” means: (Value 3 points)

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- a. you have never heard about Him.
  - b. that you are not a Christian.
  - c. that you are not a member of a local church.
9. “Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel” means: (Value 4 points)
- a. they were Romans instead of Jews.
  - b. they were great sinners.
  - c. they were not citizens of the Jewish state.
10. “Strangers from the covenant of promise” meant that: (Value 3 points)
- a. the covenants God made with Israel did not apply to the Gentiles.
  - b. they were not citizens of the Jewish state.
  - c. they were Romans instead of Jews.
11. “Without God in the world” means: (Value 4 points)
- a. that a person never has heard about God.
  - b. that a person has not been born yet.
  - c. that a person is godless, having no personal connection with God.
12. Which three of the following covenants made promises to Israel? (Circle the letter in front of the correct ones.) (Open Bible) (Value 9 points)
- |                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a. the Edenic – Genesis 1:26    | e. the Mosaic – Exodus 19:5           |
| b. the Adamic – Genesis 3:15    | f. the Palestinian – Deuteronomy 30:3 |
| c. the Noahic – Genesis 9:16    | g. the Davidic – 2 Samuel 7:16        |
| d. the Abrahamic – Genesis 12:2 | h. the New Covenant – Hebrews 8:8     |
13. The reason the wall between Jews and Gentiles had to come down was: (Value 4 points)
- a. their hatred for each other.
  - b. their system of sacrifices was no longer needed when Christ died on the cross.
  - c. the law of commandments for Jews and Gentiles had to be fulfilled and abolished.
14. What was the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles? (Value 4 points)
- a. man’s sinfulness
  - b. the sacrificial system God gave to the Jews
  - c. the law given by God to Israel through Moses
15. Christ put an end to the law as a way of gaining righteousness, so people now are saved by: (Value 4 points)
- a. doing good works.
  - b. grace through faith.
  - c. biblical baptism.
16. God has not forsaken Israel, but has: (Value 4 points)
- a. made them dead in trespasses and sin.
  - b. caused them to return to the land of Palestine.
  - c. made Israel temporarily blind spiritually.
17. According to Ephesians 2:15-16, what did Christ accomplish on the cross? (Open Bible) (Value 12 points)
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

18. In Ephesians 2:1-10 there are five things mentioned that are true of a person before he becomes a Christian. Name three of them. (Open Bible) (Value 12 points)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

19. What are the four "I wills" that are found in Genesis 12:1-3? (Open Bible) (Value 12 points)

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_