Ephesians 2:11-22

1. 2:11-22 is parallel with 2:1-10
   a. 2:1-10 begins by presenting all individuals as being **objects of God’s wrath** with a **sin nature** in the **cosmos** controlled by **Satan**
   b. 2:11-22 presents the Gentiles as being outside the advantage (5x) of the Israelites. The Israelites had been given the promise of a historical opportunity for salvation through the Messiah (the anointed one, Christos, Christ).

2. 2:11-12 identifies the Gentiles as having FIVE disadvantages that were actually advantages for Israel:
   a. “separated from Christ”
   b. “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel”
   c. “strangers to the covenants of promise” (notice COVENANTS, plural; not covenant, singular)
   d. “having no hope”
   e. “without God in the world”

_Ephesians 2:11 – “Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—“_

1. “Therefore” refers back to 2:1-10 which is a single sentence in the Greek.
2. Notice Gentiles are referred to as *ta ethne* or “the Gentiles” which highlights the fact that they were the notorious underprivileged group. This is not a derogatory insult, but a matter of spiritual and religious fact. To deny this information or to receive it as an insult is to minimize or ignore the Gentile’s problem.
3. But, notice Paul is quick to emphasize the Jews merely possess a physical sign of a covenant with the potential of the promise of salvation. The Jews had “circumcision in the flesh made by hand.” No real salvation, but a sign that they had received a promise of salvation.
   a. Effectual circumcision is done in the heart as in Galatians 5:6.
   b. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant of a coming promise. Once the promise has been fulfilled in Christ the issue is no longer circumcision, but the faith in Jesus being the Christ.

_Ephesians 2:12 – “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.”_
1. “separated from Christ” – The Gentiles had no promise, understanding or expectation of a coming Messiah to deliver them from the oppression of the world (sin, kosmos, Satan).
   a. Unbelieving Jews were separated from Jesus, but not from the promise of the Messiah.
   b. The Gentiles were separated from the promise of the Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ.
   c. Romans 3:2
2. “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel” –
   a. “alienated” – apellotriomenoi – this signifies being alienated from God in the New Testament:
      i. Col. 1:21 –
      ii. Eph. 4:18
   b. “commonwealth” – politeias – a body of citizens, a franchise, citizenship. It was used to refer to Roma citizenship. Here it refers to citizens of the franchise or body known as Israel.
      i. There is a contrast of closeness and relationship with Israel being “citizens” here before the fulfilled promise and with 2:19 where Gentiles and Jews are “members of God’s household” after the work of the Messiah.
      ii. In Exodus this nation of Israel was placed under legal contract to be “the people of God.”
3. “strangers to the covenants of promise” – (notice COVENANTS, plural; not covenant, singular)
   b. Covenants:
      i. Abraham – Gen. 15:7-21; 17:1-21
      ii. Isaac – Gen. 26:2-5
      iii. Jacob – Gen. 28:13-15
      iv. Israel – Exod. 24:1-8
      v. David – 2 Samuel 7
c. “of promise” ties all the Covenants God established in to the original promise given to Abraham. The covenants where all part of God bringing about the fulfillment of his ultimate/original promise to Abraham.

4. “having no hope” – The Gentiles were outside the scope of Israel’s promises of deliverance and salvation.

5. “without God in the world” – The Gentiles had relationships with gods and they may have known there was a “God”, but God had not reached out to them as he had the Jews. The Gentiles could not go back into their history, their literature, their religions or their philosophy and figure out the way of salvation through Christ.

6. Jews advantage:
   a. Romans 3:1-2 – “What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God.
   b. Romans 9:4-5

Ephesians 2:13 – “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

1. Isaiah 57:19 – “Peace, peace, to the far and to the near,” says the Lord,”
   - Isaiah 15, 18-21 – “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite… I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners, creating the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace, to the far and to the near,” says the Lord, “and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.” ”

Ephesians 2:14 – “For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility”
1. “He himself is our peace” – Isaiah 53:5 – “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.”

2. “dividing wall of hostility” or “barrier of the fence” – the low wall separating the Gentile Court in the on the Temple Mount from the inner courts for the Jews was called “Soreq” in Hebrew. It had 13 openings in it to allow Jews to pass through the wall into the Jewish courts. Signs were posted on the wall in three different languages stating “NO ENTRY FOR GENTILES”. They basically said, “No foreigner is allowed past this point on penalty of death.”
   a. The courts of the temple mount were enclosed with a double colonnade of pillars that stood 37 feet high. The perimeter measured about ¾ of a mile.
   b. The area immediately inside this colonnade was the Court of the Gentiles.
   c. Dividing the court of the Gentiles from the courts of the Jews was a 4.5 foot high barrier called the dividing wall.
   d. Josephus says there were 13 stone slabs written in Greek and Latin placed along this wall warning the Gentiles NOT to enter the Jewish courts.
   e. Acts 21:28-29 – Paul had just recently (24-36 months ago) had trouble with this very issue.
A complete inscription was found in Jerusalem in 1871 and is now housed in the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul. The translation of the Greek (not Hebrew) says: "Foreigners must not enter inside the balustrade or into the forecourt around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his ensuing death."
g. This inscription was found near the Lions Gate located in the NW wall of Jerusalem:

h. Josephus mentions this barrier and the inscription twice:
   i. (193) When you go through these [first] cloisters, unto the second [court of the] temple, there was a **partition** made of stone all round, whose height was three cubits: its construction was very elegant; (194) upon it stood pillars, at equal
distances from one another, declaring the law of purity, **some in Greek, and some in Roman letters**, that “no foreigner should go within that sanctuary;” for that second [court of the] temple was called “the Sanctuary;”

*(Josephus Jewish War.5.5.1 [193–194]*)

ii. *(417)* Thus was the first enclosure. In the midst of which, and not far from it, was the second, to be gone up to by a few steps; this was encompassed by a **stone wall for a partition, with an inscription, which forbade any foreigner to go in, under pain of death.** *(Josephus Jewish Antiquities 15.11.5 [417]*)

i. Southern Steps
Ephesians 2:15 – “by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace.”
1. On the cross Jesus died to fulfill the Jewish law and forever put an end to the ceremonies and rituals. No longer would there be a need for the Jews to use rituals to enter the presence of God:
   a. No more blood sacrifices
   b. No more ritual for legalistic purity
   c. No longer was Jewish circumcision necessary
   d. Jewish dietary regulations where no longer needed

Ephesians 2:16 – “and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”

1. “Reconciliation” a Greek word to describe restoration of a relationship after a period of hostility or personal conflict.

Ephesians 2:17 – “And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.”

1. Jesus work made possible the message of peace to both the Gentiles ("far off") and the Jews ("near")

Ephesians 2:18 – “For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.”
1. Note the Trinity:
   a. "through him" – Jesus Christ, the Son
   b. "by one Spirit" – the Holy Spirit, the third member
   c. "to the Father" – God, the Father

Ephesians 2:19 – “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

1. From 2:12 a reversal:
   a. “strangers as in "strangers to the covenants of promise" – The promises are not in the covenants, but in Christ.
   b. “aliens” as in “alienated from the commonwealth of Israel” – Israel does not hold citizenship because citizenship is in Christ.

2. “Fellow citizens” from “sum-politai”
   a. “sum” from “sun” – a preposition meaning “with” or “joined close-together in tight identification”
   b. “polites” meaning “citizen”. IN the Greek texts and papyri politeia refers to a government, state or a commonwealth.
   c. Same idea as in Philippians 3:20 where this kingdom or commonwealth is in Christ and is part of the kingdom of heaven coming to earth.
      i. Philippians 3:20 – “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”
Ephesians 2:20 – “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,”

Ephesians 2:21 – “in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.”

Ephesians 2:22 – “In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”
22 in whom also you are being built together for a habitation of God, in the Spirit.

en hō kai hymeis synoikodomeiste eis katoikētron tou Theou,
in whom also you are being built together for a habitation of God,

en Pneumatì.
in [the] Spirit,