

BC and AD
Ephesians 2:11-13

INTRO: Ephesians 2:11 opens with the words: "Wherefore remember." Consider where you came from: "dead in trespasses and sins", vs 1; a child of disobedience, vs 2; and depraved and doomed to hell, vs 3. That was your BC condition, your position before Christ. Now consider the believers AD position, his condition after Christ becomes Lord and Savior. Believers are alive with Christ, vs. 5; believers are positioned in heaven, vs 6; and believers are saved by grace not works, vss 8-10.

I. VS. 11, JEW AND GENTILE

A. The ancient world was divided into two groups: the Jews and the Gentiles. That division was considered absolute: Jew and Gentile; Jews and dogs! Here, verses 11-13, Paul speaks of the regenerating work of Christ for the Gentiles.

B. "Gentiles in the flesh."

1. This was a fact of history. They had not been circumcised.
2. They, the Gentiles, were called uncircumcision by the Jews who called themselves circumcision.
3. Gentiles carried in the flesh the evidence of their low estate.

C. The Jews had come to believe that the only thing that really mattered was the sign in the flesh.

1. The Jews were proud of calling themselves circumcision.
2. The sad thing was that the Jews possessed the sign, circumcision, but not the thing signified.
 - a. They were circumcised "in the flesh" only, but not in their hearts (Deut. 10:16 "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked."), ears (Jere. 6:10 "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it."), and lips

(Ex. 6:12, 30 “And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?”; “And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?”).

- b. Their circumcision was merely minor surgery, a manual operation--the cutting away of the foreskin.
- c. It was outward, not inward. Today many folks are still trusting in the outward signs. Many attach undue importance to these signs, even counting them as works of salvation.
 - 1.) Infant baptism,
 - 2.) Baptismal regeneration,
 - 3.) Communion as a sacrament,
 - 4.) Sacerdotalism, etc.

D. “Circumcision, designed as a covenant mark to remind Abraham and his descendants of their relationship to God (cf. Gen. 17:9-14), in time had become the very sign of Jewish exclusiveness” (Hobbs 43).

E. Paul wrote what he did in this verse to remind the Gentile believers at Ephesus of their former low position, and their present high position.

- 1. Those who were called dogs had become rich in Christ (1:18).
- 2. Those who were lost have been redeemed and forgiven (1:7).
- 3. All of this is to the praise of His glory. Paul wanted them to glorify God for His grace.

II. VS. 12, WITHOUT HOPE

A. “At that time” points back to their lost condition, their BC time and condition.

- 1. “At that time” points back to the time before they had heard and believed the Gospel (1:13).
- 2. All of us who know Christ need to be reminded of our lives before Christ and thank God for all He has done for us in forgiving our trespasses and sins.

- B. Paul lays out the miserable condition of the Ephesian believers before they came to Christ. This is a picture of all of the unsaved now, and a reminder to all believers of what our position used to be.
1. “Christless” Before hearing the Gospel and coming to Christ, the Ephesians were separated from Christ. They were living apart from Him.
 - a. They worshiped their idol goddess Diana and were headed to hell. Paul saw belief in anyone or anything other than Christ a tragedy.
 - b. Before they were called by the Gospel (II Thes. 2:13-14), they groped in darkness, in the filth of sin. Anyone without Christ is condemned (Jn 3:36).
 - c. Salvation makes us appreciate God’s electing grace (1:4).
 2. “No citizenship” They had lacked citizenship among God’s chosen people. The Ephesians had been excluded from the protection and promises of God.
 - a. The Ephesians were once a people without spiritual citizenship, but through the blood of Christ, they were given a spiritual home.
 - b. To have citizenship spiritually means to be God’s own peculiar possession.
 - 1.) God said this of the Jews in Amos 3:2: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” To know means to take special interest in, to be concerned about, to care for, to set ones affection on. God saw all the other nations but did not know them. He had no particular interest in them; they were aliens; they were outside the commonwealth of Israel.
 - 2.) Thank God through Christ, we, the Gentiles, have been grafted in; and those who believe are His peculiar people (I Pet. 2:9).

3. “Strangers from the covenants” The word stranger means friendless, without a share in.
 - a. “The essence of the covenant of grace, to which the present passage refers, is the experience of ‘the friendship of Jehovah’ (Psalm 25:14)” (Hendriksen 129).
 - b. In their unconverted condition, the Ephesians had been strangers to God’s friendship.
 - c. To be without the basic covenant is to be without grace. The basic covenant that God made with Abraham was a covenant of grace (Gen. 12:1-3). The blessing of the Gentiles is included in this covenant.
 - d. It is through the new covenant, the Lord Jesus, that the Gentiles are included (Heb. 9:12).
 - e. We have special rights and privileges because of the new covenant.
4. “Having no hope” What a terrible thing it is to be hopeless!
 - a. Hope is the knowledge of God’s promise of salvation and confidence in its fulfillment (Titus 1:2). To be without hope of eternal life is terrible.
 - b. Without Christ there is no hope, none at all.
 - 1.) No hope in life or death,
 - 2.) No hope in this world or the one to come,
 - 3.) Life without Christ is to be hopeless, you have nothing to look forward to.
 - c. Without hope means emptiness:
 - 1.) Empty philosophy- hopeless,
 - 2.) Empty tradition- hopeless,
 - 3.) Empty religion- powerless to save.
5. “Without God” If you don’t know the Son of God, you don’t know God (John 17:3).
 - a. The very word godless has a terrible sound to it.
 - b. The Ephesians had had gods, but they were vain and empty.

- c. To be without the true knowledge of God is to be godless. Without the true knowledge of God men are:
 - 1.) unholy,
 - 2.) unrighteous,
 - 3.) without peace,
 - 4.) without salvation,
 - 5.) without a divine compass to sail the sea of life with.

III. VS 13, MADE NIGH BY THE BLOOD

- A. The “but now” in this verse and the “but God” of verse four express what has happened to the believer.
 - 1. The Ephesians were at one time far away as is illustrated by verse 12.
 - a. They were far away from the knowledge of God.
 - b. Literally and spiritually they had been far away from God.
 - 2. These who were far off were now “made nigh” by the blood of Christ.
 - a. It is the blood that brings us nigh 1:7.
 - b. Our gospel is a gospel of blood. This is the foundation of the Christian faith (Heb 9:22).
 - c. It is the blood that draws us nigh, not:
 - 1.) Our nature-- it is depraved.
 - 2.) Good deeds are useless and unable to save (vs 9).
 - 3. If you are going to be near God, you must be saved.
 - a. If you are not saved, you have never been near God.
 - b. The only way Christ can bring us near to God is by His blood.
 - 1.) In John 1:29, John said: “Behold, the Lamb of God...” John recognized this in seeing Jesus as the sacrifice.
 - 2.) The Lord’s Supper reminds us of the shed blood of Christ for sinners.

CONCLUSION: The blood of the covenant gives hope to the hopeless, help to the helpless and salvation to the lost.

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