

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE CONTINUE OUR LOOK AT THIS NEXT SECTION OF EPHESIANS, ~ 2:11-22.

▶▶ As we noted, ~ in **verses 11-22**, ~ Paul begins by urging us to remember certain things that described our unsaved life. ~ ~ Paul subsequently explains in detail how Jesus rectified our unsaved condition.

▷▷ Mainly, ~ Paul teaches us that God has brought believing Gentiles into a relationship with Himself, ~ has reconciled believing Jews and Gentiles, ~ remember a barrier, ~ ¶¶

↳ ↳ reconciled both groups to Himself ~ and united believing Jews and Gentiles into one new body, ~ the church.

▷▷ Paul also points out some of the results and draws out some implications from what he says in this section.

LAST TIME, ~ WE LOOKED AT VERSES 11-12.

▶▶ As we noted, ~ Paul calls upon Gentile believers to continually remember five things that described our unsaved condition.

▷▷ Paul says, ~ "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."

▶▶ The remembering Paul calls believers to do is not meant to make us feel guilty or to drag us down ~ but is meant to lead us to a greater appreciation for what God has done to rectify our unsaved condition ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and also to a greater appreciation for the present and eternal results of what God has done for us.

WHAT JESUS HAS DONE TO CORRECT OUR UNSAVED CONDITION DESCRIBED IN verses 11-12 ~ is spelled out for us in vv. 13-15a, ~ which we'll look at today.

PAUL WRITES, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ "13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ~ ~ 14a For he himself is our peace, ~ 14b who has made us both one ~ 14c and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ~ 15a by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances." ¶¶ 1/9

▶▶ In these verses, ~ we see four dramatic actions that Jesus took to rectify our unsaved situation described in [verses 11-12](#).

▶▶ Now, ~ perhaps it's important to keep in mind ~ that Paul is speaking to those who are already believers . . . ~ and looking back on the dramatic actions that Jesus took to rectify our unsaved condition.

▷▷ Paul is not teaching some kind of universal salvation here. ~~ E.g., ~ it is not that everyone has been brought near to God.

→→ Only those who have accepted the salvation that Jesus has provided through His death and resurrection have been brought near to God.

VERSE 13 EXPLAINS THE FIRST DRAMATIC ACTION THAT JESUS TOOK TO REMEDY our pre-salvation condition described in verses 11-12.

"¹³BUT NOW IN CHRIST JESUS YOU WHO ONCE WERE FAR OFF HAVE BEEN BROUGHT near by the blood of Christ." ~~ 1st Dramatic action Jesus took was to bring us near.

THE PHRASE "IN CHRIST JESUS" INDICATES THAT IT WAS BECAUSE OF ~ AND thanks to ~ Christ Jesus, ~ that we have been brought near.

▶▶ More specifically, ~ it was because of ~ and thanks to ~ what Jesus did that Gentiles have been brought near.

THE PHRASE "FAR OFF," ~ SIMPLY PUT, ~ WAS A HEBREW EXPRESSION THAT described the Gentiles.

▶▶ But the phrase is a good word picture of our separation from Christ.

▷▷ We were not just a little separated Jesus, ~ but "far off." ~~ There was not just a little distance between us and Jesus when we were unsaved. ~~ but a great distance separated us.

▶▶ The really exciting and great news for believers is that now our sins are "far off."

▷▷ In Ps. 103:12, ~ David writes, ~ "as far as the east is from the west, ~ so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

"YOU WHO ONCE WERE FAR OFF HAVE BEEN BROUGHT NEAR ~ [I.E., ~ NEAR TO GOD]."

▶▶ Could be paraphrased as, ~ "Once you were far away from God, ~ but now you have been brought near to him." ↴↴ 2/9

▷▷ "have been brought near" refers to a relationship with God.

↳↳ I.e., ~ because of ~ and thanks to ~ what Christ Jesus has done, ~ believing Gentiles now have a relationship with the one true God.

▶▶ Now, ~ we should mention one more time so there's no confusion, ~ Paul is not saying that all Jews are saved, ~ that only the Gentiles were far away from God.

▷▷ Paul points this out in Rom. 3:9-12. ~ "What then? ~ Are we Jews any better off? ~ No, ~ not at all. ~ For we have already charged that all, ~ both Jews and Greeks, ~ are under sin, ~ as it is written: ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "None is righteous, ~ no, ~ not one; ~ no one understands; ~ no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; ~ together they have become worthless; ~ no one does good, ~ not even one."

▷▷ Here in verse 13 of Eph. 2, ~ like in verse 12, ~ Paul's focus here is on the Gentiles, ~ so he just mentions us.

▶▶ Right now I would like to call your attention to the passive verb, ~ "have been brought near." ~ Reinforces the truth that neither we ~ nor our works ~ are the source of our salvation.

▷▷ We did not, ~ and could not, ~ bring ourselves near to God. ~ Jesus brought us near.

↳↳ And again, ~ my fellow believers, ~ it is because God is "rich in mercy" and loved us with a great love that we now have a relationship with God.

THEN PAUL TELLS US HOW JESUS BROUGHT US NEAR TO GOD.

▶▶ "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near ~ [and here's how:] ~ by ~ [or, ~ through] ~ the blood of Christ."

▷▷ "by the blood of Christ" refers to Jesus' violent sacrificial death on the cross when He shed His precious blood for humanity.

▶▶ For sins to be forgiven and to have a relationship with God, ~ blood had to be shed. ~ Heb. 9:22b (LEB) tells us, ~ "and apart from the shedding of blood ~ there is no forgiveness."

▷▷ And Lev. 17:11 (NIV) says, ~ "For the life of a creature is in the blood, ~ and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; ~ it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. ¶¶ 3/9

▷▷ So the price required to obtain forgiveness of sins and a relationship with God was blood, ~ but not just any blood.

↳↳ As the old hymn says, ~ "What can wash away my sin? ~ Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

↳↳ In 1 Pet. 1:18-19, ~ Peter writes, ~ "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, ~ not with perishable things such as silver or gold, ~ but with the precious blood of Christ, ~ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

↳↳ The description of Jesus as "a lamb without blemish or spot" alludes to the requirements for the Passover lamb.

→→ The Israelites who left Egypt had been saved from the angel of death because of the blood of an unblemished and spotless lamb.

↳↳ Likewise, ~ forgiveness of sins and being brought near to God, ~ i.e., ~ a relationship with God, ~ **could only be secured by the blood of a 100% pure and sinless person.**

→→ And because Jesus was 100% pure and sinless, ~ His "precious blood . . . like that of a lamb without blemish or spot," ~ ¶¶

↳↳ met the requirements for forgiveness and being brought near to God.

▶▶ And it was through Jesus' shed blood on Calvary, ~ my fellow believers, ~ that our sins were forgiven and Jesus brought us into a relationship with God.

OF COURSE, ~ WE ONCE AGAIN SEE IN ALL OF THIS THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST IN our salvation.

▶▶ But that's not all. ~ We also see the exclusivity of Christ in our salvation.

▶▶ This is extremely important to go over, ~ because there are many voices out there trying to convince us that "all roads lead to Rome," ~ so to speak.

▷▷ I.e., ~ a lot of voices out there are telling us that there are many roads to God. ~ No, ~ there are not. ~ **If someone wants a relationship with God and go to heaven when they die, ~ there is only one road, ~ Jesus.**

▶▶ In ~ Jn. 14:6, ~ Jesus said, ~ "I am the way, ~ and the truth, ~ and the life. ~ No one comes to the Father except through me." ¶¶ 4/9

▷▷ Jesus' message is crystal clear. ~ He does not claim to be "a way," ~ or "a truth," or "a life." ~ He does not claim to be "one of many ways," ~ or "one of many truths," ~ or "one of many life's."

↳↳ His crystal clear message is that He is "the way," ~ "the truth," ~ "the life." ~ IOW, ~ the only way to salvation.

▷▷ And if that's not enough for us, ~ Jesus takes His crystal clear message one step further and declares that "No one comes to the Father except through" Him.

▶▶ In [Col. 2:8](#), ~ Paul warns us about belief systems that are not in agreement with sound Christian doctrine.

▷▷ He tells us to not let anyone capture us with empty, ~ deceitful philosophies that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of evil, ~ rather than from Christ.

↳↳ Any belief system that denies that Jesus is the only way that we can have a relationship with God and spend eternity in heaven, ~ ↴↴

→→ is an empty, ~ deceitful philosophy that comes from human thinking and from the spiritual forces of evil.

VERSE 14a EXPLAINS THE SECOND DRAMATIC ACTION THAT JESUS TOOK TO correct our unsaved situation described in verses 11-12.

PAUL: ~ "FOR HE ~ [I.E., ~ JESUS] ~ HIMSELF IS OUR PEACE." ~ I.E., ~ BETWEEN J & G.

▶▶ "[peace](#)" refers to the state of harmonious friendship between Jews and Gentiles in the church. ~ Paul echoes Isaiah's description of Jesus as the "[Prince of Peace](#)" in [Is. 9:6](#).

▷▷ Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would end hostility and establish an era of well-being. ~ While referring to the establishment of Jesus' kingdom, ~ it applies here as well.

▶▶ Christ has produced this peace between believing Jews and Gentiles. ~ Formerly, ~ as we know, ~ **Jews and Gentiles were alienated and separate, ~ and regarded each other with hatred.**

▷▷ Jesus' second dramatic action was to bring friendship, ~ harmony, ~ and wholeness to the relationship between the two groups.

IN VERSE 14b, ~ PAUL NOTES THE THIRD DRAMATIC ACTION THAT JESUS TOOK to remedy our pre-salvation condition described in verses 11-12. ↴↴ 5/9

PAUL SAYS THAT JESUS "HAS MADE US BOTH ONE." ~~ NOW, ~ WE'LL COME BACK TO this next time in verse 15b, ~ so I'll just comment briefly now.

▶▶ Jesus' third dramatic action was to unite Jews and Gentiles into one people, ~ one body, ~ the church.

▶▶ As Paul says in 1 Cor. 12:12-13, ~ NASB ~ "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, ~ and all the members of the body, ~ though they are many, ~ are one body, ~ so also is Christ. ~ ~ ¶¶

▷▷ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, ~ whether Jews or Greeks, ~ whether slaves or free, ~ and we were all made to drink of one Spirit ~ [i.e., ~ we all share the same Spirit)."

▶▶ Believing Jews and Gentiles worship the same God, ~ have the same Savior, ~ have the same hope, ~ look forward to the same heaven, ~ belong to the same family.

▷▷ In Eph. 4:3, ~ as we'll see, ~ Paul tells believers to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

↳↳ Then in vv. 4-6, ~ he tells us why, ~ "There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call — one Lord, ~ one faith, ~ one baptism, ~ one God and Father of all, ~ who is over all and through all and in all."

VERSE 14c EXPLAINS THE FOURTH DRAMATIC ACTION THAT JESUS TOOK TO rectify our unsaved situation described in verses 11-12.

PAUL SAYS THAT JESUS "HAS BROKEN DOWN IN HIS FLESH THE DIVIDING WALL OF hostility."

▶▶ The hostility between Jews and Gentiles formed a dividing wall between us.

▷▷ The phrase, ~ "the law of commandments expressed in ordinances" in verse 15, ~ which refers to the Mosaic law, ~ should be looked at as the cause of the hostility between Jew and Gentile.

▷▷ There's a question of punctuation in Grk. text . . . and how verses 14-15 should be translated. ~~ And some translations point to the law as being the hostility.

▷▷ However, ~ nowhere in Scripture is the law presented as hostile. ~~ It may cause hostility, ~ as Paul discusses in Rom. 7:8-11.

↳↳ But in itself it is not hostile, ~ as Paul points out in Rom. 7:12, ~ 16. ¶¶ 6/9

▷▷ After my research on this, ~ I believe the best way to look at this, ~ as the ESV points to, ~ is that the hostility between Jews and Gentiles formed a wall that divided the two groups ~ and was caused by the law.

↳↳ TPID, ~ the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles was their hostility for one another. ~ And this hostility was caused by the Mosaic law.

→→ We can paraphrase verse 14b this way: ~ "Jesus has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall, ~ i.e., ~ the hostility between Jews and Gentiles."

▶▶ Specifically speaking, ~ this hostility between Jews and Gentiles came about because many Jews misused the Mosaic law.

▷▷ The stipulations of the law were to protect the Jews from the practices of the world.

↳↳ Also, ~ Israel was to be a kingdom of priests as a testimony to God.

→→ Furthermore, ~ they were to keep the law which provided opportunity to witness to their Gentile neighbors of God's wonderful deliverance and care.

▷▷ However, ~ rather than using the law as a witness, ~ it became the tool that enabled them to look down on the Gentiles whom they considered sinners.

↳↳ This in turn led to the hostility of Jews toward Gentiles.

↳↳ And due to this, ~ and the tenacity with which they practiced their law, ~ they were considered by the Gentiles as prideful and stubborn ~ and were hated by the Gentiles.

▷▷ The misuse of the law resulted in hostility that formed a barrier between J. & G.

▶▶ Now, ~ if you think about it, ~ we Christians could fall into the same kind of trap that many of the Jews did.

▷▷ We are God's people and are to be Jesus' witnesses to the world.

▷▷ But rather than being a proper witness, ~ we could very easily fall into the trap of using our status as the people of God as a tool that enables us ~ ~ ↓↓

↳↳ to look down upon non-Christians ~ and to have the attitude that we're better than they are ~ and to treat them as such. ↓↓ 7/9

▷▷ Here we see another reason to remember the way we were.

↳↳ Because our status as Christians was given to us as a free gift. ~ It was not given to us because we're special or better than everyone else. ~ And in no way, ~ shape, ~ or form did we earn it.

▷▷ The point is seen in what Moses told the Israelites in Deut. 7:6-8.

↳↳ "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. ~ The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, ~ out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ~ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, ~ for you were the fewest of all peoples, ~ but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, ~ that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, ~ from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

▷▷ So, ~ we have no right to look down upon non-Christians ~ or to have the attitude that we're better than they are ~ or to treat them as such.

NOW LET'S CONTINUE WITH VS. 14c, ~ & THE 4th DRAMATIC ACTION JESUS took . . .

▶▶ This hostility between Jews and Gentiles Jesus "has broken down in his flesh," Paul says.

▶▶ The verb for "has broken down" means "to destroy or reduce something to ruin by tearing down or breaking to pieces."

▷▷ Jesus reduced the hatred between Jew and Gentile to ruin by breaking it to pieces.

▷▷ "in his flesh" means this happened on the cross. ~ I.e., ~ when He shed His blood for us, ~ he destroyed the hatred between Jews and Gentiles.

THEN IN VERSE 15a, PAUL TELLS US HOW JESUS "HAS BROKEN DOWN IN HIS FLESH the dividing wall of hostility."

▶▶ He did it, ~ Paul says, ~ "by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances," ~ which was the cause of the hatred. ~ Mosaic law.

▶▶ Unfortunately, ~ a number of translations use the words "abolishing" or "abolished."

▷▷ This can make things rather confusing since, ~ in Matt. 5:17, ~ Jesus said, ~ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; ~ I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." ↴ 8/9

▶▶ The word actually means "to render inoperative, ~ nullify, ~ invalidate." ~~ Simply put, ~ by satisfying the demands of the law and meeting its penalty, ~ Jesus rendered it inoperative.

▶▶ Elsewhere, ~ Paul gives us the picture of what he means here.

▷▷ Speaking of our forgiveness, ~ in Col. 2:13-14, ~ Paul writes, ~ "And you, ~ who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, ~ God made alive together with him, ~ having forgiven us all our trespasses, ~ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. ~~ This he set aside, ~ nailing it to the cross."

▶▶ The law has been canceled. ~~ It's been set aside. ~~ The cause of the enmity has been put out of action. ~~ There is now no cause for Jewish and Gentile believers to be hostile to one another. ~~ Jewish and Gentile believers are united and equal.

▷▷ As Paul writes in Gal. 3:28, ~ "There is neither Jew nor Greek, ~ there is neither slave nor free, ~ there is no male and female, ~ for you are all one in Christ Jesus." ~~ Saving faith in Jesus makes us all united and equal.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN WE WERE UNSAVED, ~ WE WERE "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."

▶▶ But Jesus intervened to rectify our horrible situation. ~~ He carried out four dramatic actions on our behalf.

▷▷ Through shedding His blood, ~ He brought us into a relationship with God.

▷▷ He has brought peace between believing Jews and Gentiles.

▷▷ He united Jews and Gentiles into one new people, ~ the church.

▷▷ And He destroyed the hatred between Jews and Gentiles ~ by nailing the system of law with its commandments and regulations to the cross, ~ thereby removing the cause of the hatred.

TO JESUS BE THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER.

LET'S PRAY 9/9