

1. Eph. 2 divides itself into vss. 1-10 which describes the conversion and Christian life of the Gentile Christians and vss. 11-22 which describes the oneness between Jewish and Gentile Christians which has come about solely because of what Jesus Christ did for both.
2. Vss. 11-12 tell us that formerly the Gentiles were very far removed from the Covenant of God and were, therefore, without God in the world. Vs. 13 tells us about the change that has taken place for Gentile Christians because of Christ. Vss. 14-15 tell us of the peace between Jew and Gentile because Jesus, by His active and passive obedience, has broken down the wall between them and, at the same time, has reconciled both Jew and Gentile to each other. Vs. 16 tells us that Jesus, by His cross, has reconciled both Jew and Gentile to God. Vss. 17-18 speak of God preaching peace to both Jews and Gentiles without distinction, to those far off (Gentiles) and to those near (Jews) and that therefore both have access through CHRIST by means of the HOLY SPIRIT to the FATHER.
3. At Rom. 3:1 Paul asks "What advantage has the Jew? What value has circumcision?" Paul answers: "First of all, the Jews were entrusted with the Word of God." That was the first big difference. Then Paul adds that the unfaithfulness of some Jews did not nullify God's faithfulness. Then at Rom. 9:1-5 Paul enumerates their advantages: they are Israelites, the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service, the promises, but, MOST OF ALL, from them Christ, true God, came.
4. At Gal. 3:15-18 Paul discusses the two Covenants which God gave the Jews: at Sinai God gave the Covenant of the Law. But, 430 years earlier God gave the Covenant of the Gospel. The Gospel, the forgiveness of sins, the way of faith, was first announced to Abraham. That is thoroughly discussed at Gal. 3-4 and Rom. 4-5. Then, to Moses, 430 years later, God gave the Covenant of the Law on Mt. Sinai. It contained both Moral Law (the ten commandments) and the Ceremonial Law, the Law which foreshadowed and symbolized the coming of Christ. It was ONLY for the Jews. The sacrifices, circumcision, and holy days were part of this Law. It is explained in detail in Hebrews. In fact, the Jews were known as "the circumcision" and the Gentiles were known as "the uncircumcision." Goliath cursed David by calling him uncircumcised. Stephen told the unbelieving Jews that they were uncircumcised in heart and ears. "Circumcised" came to mean "belonging to God" and "uncircumcised" came to mean "not belonging to God." When the Jews fell away from God they continued to refer to the outsiders as "uncircumcised" though, in very truth, they were uncircumcised despite the fact that they were physically circumcised. Intense hatred resulted between Jews and Gentiles. Furthermore, after the Babylonian Captivity the Jews became very monotheistic, believing in only one God whereas the Gentiles were very polytheistic. The difference increased.
5. Read Gal. 3:26-28. All become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Baptism clothes them in the righteousness of Christ. Now there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female.
6. John the Baptist baptized only Israel. Jn. 1:31. Before His Ascension Christ told His disciples to baptize all nations. Mt. 28:19. When Jesus sent the disciples out to practice preaching He told them to go only to Israel, not to the Gentiles. Mt. 10:5-6. But, before He ascended, Jesus gave His disciples world-wide instructions. Acts 1:8.
7. In Acts 10 God appeared to Peter, telling him not to consider Gentiles ^{(e)s} unclean. He went to Cornelius at Joppa. In Acts 11 Peter explained this to the Jerusalem church. Read what they said in vs. 18.
8. Jesus promised that the Jews would never lose their identity. Lk. 21:32. God kept His promise. But He also changed the Covenant to include the Gentiles. To this day Jews and Gentiles hate each other. But when both repent ~~and~~ believe in Jesus, all differences disappear.

and

Sermon Outline on Eph. 2:12-16, Lent V

Theme: WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR THE GENTILES

Introduction: There are two great periods in history, the Old Testament and the New Testament. Likewise there are two parts to our Bible. And there are two peoples in the world, the Jews and the Gentiles. God created all and, when man sinned, saved all. But there is a difference. Before Christ was the time of promise. From 2000 B.C. God's Covenant was with the Hebrews, the Jews. When Christ came and fulfilled all of God's promises, the Covenant was extended to the Gentiles. In fact, there is no longer any distinction. All are God's children by faith in Christ Jesus.

The Gentiles
I-He has brought them into the family of God

A-They had been far from God. Our text tells us that before they were without forgiveness of sins because they were without Christ. They were excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise. Under the Covenant made with Abraham the Jews of the OT had the promises of salvation. They were repeated in the symbols of the ceremonial law. They were repeated in the words of the prophets. They went to the tabernacle or the Temple and later to the Synagogues where they could hear of these promises of God. It is true, of course, that the majority of the Jews fell away from God. But the promises of God stood sure. When Christ came, think of Zacharias, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, Joseph and Mary. They were all pious Jews who believed God. Furthermore, our text tells us that the Gentiles formerly had no hope and were without God in the world. They had no hope of everlasting life and they did not know that God loved them. They were dead in trespasses and sin.

B-But now they are near in the blood of Christ. Vs. 13. Read Eph. 2: 1-10 the well-known passage about what God did for people who had been dead in their trespasses and sin. Peter went to Joppa and told Cornelius what God had done for him. Cornelius was a Gentile. In Philippi Paul told the jailor: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." The Gospel now also included the Gentiles. Why did God arrange it this way? No man knows. God made it possible for ALL to be saved. That is what is important.

II-He has brought Jew and Gentile together in peace.

A-He Who IS peace has caused peace. The word "peace" occurs twice in our text, in vs. 14 and 15. Vs. 14 says: "He (Christ) is our peace." Who is "our"? Jews and Gentiles. Jews and Gentiles hated each other. The Greeks hated the Jews. The Romans loathed the Jews. Think of how the people hated Pontius Pilate. By bringing peace Christ made the Jew and Gentile one.

B-Christ abolished in His flesh the law with its commandments and ordinances. Christ did two things: 1) By His living and dying He perfectly kept the moral law, the ten commandments. Neither Jew nor Gentile could live perfectly. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of this Law. Gal. 3:13. And He has abolished the ceremonial law (circumcision, the Sabbath, the sacrifices, the holy days) because these were merely a shadow of things to come. Col. 2:16. The Law had caused a wall of separation between Jew and Gentile. Christ fulfilled and abolished. That Law no longer separates us. The Gospel unites us. Only Gospel unites.

C-Christ has reconciled both Jews and Gentiles to God in one body. The word "one" occurs three times in our text, vs. 14, 15, 16. In the Creed we speak of "one holy, Christian Church." God is a God of one: One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling. Eph. 4:4-5. He reconciled us to God through the cross, destroying the enmity by means of the cross.

Conclusion: Paul went out and preached to all. In most cases a few Gentiles and a few Jews would become Christians, among whom there were no distinctions. They were God's children.