



# The Epistle to the Ephesians

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## CHAPTER TWO

# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

*“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,  
in which you once walked according to the course of this world,”*

## I. BROUGHT FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

- “*You*” may be strictly addressing Gentile Christians in Ephesus since v.11-22 is directed toward Gentiles. However, the facts presented in v.2-10 apply to all Christians, whether or Jew or Gentile (**Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28**). Therefore, I believe the “*you*” in v.1 is intended to address all the Christians in Ephesus.
- “*Trespasses*” and “*sins*” are used separately rather than synonymously.
  - The word rendered “*trespass*” signifies a “swerving aside and falling;” the word rendered “*sins*” is generally used to denote sin in the abstract and signifies an entire “missing of the mark” (Ellicott).
  - The glory of God must be the target upon which we aim our lives. When we miss the mark, we are guilty of sin.
- Those who are in sin are dead.
  - Sin always results in spiritual death (**James 1:15; Rom. 6:23, 5:12; Gen. 2:17**).
  - All who are capable of choosing between good and evil have been dead in sin, but all can be raised from death and be made alive in Christ (**Rom. 3:9, 23-26**).

# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

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in which you once walked according to the course of this world,”*

## I. BROUGHT FROM DEATH TO LIFE (cont).

- The idea of being “*dead in sin*” is used by false teachers to perpetuate the doctrine of total depravity.
  - Those who cling to this doctrine assert that since man is “*dead*,” there is nothing a “*dead*” man can do to bring himself back to life; the Holy Spirit must directly intervene. This “death” is on all people – infant or adult – due to the sin of Adam.
  - However, the word “*dead*” simply indicates a separation between man and God (Isa. 59:1-2), not an incapability of man bringing himself to God. Whereas physical death is the separation of the spirit from the body (James 2:26; Luke 8:49, 54-55), spiritual death is the separation of man from God.
- When a person is spiritually dead, it is the result of his own doing (“*your*”) and not the product of inherited sin (Col. 2:13; Eph. 2:1, NASB).
  - Sin is something we “*do*” – it is a choice we make (James 4:17; Isa. 7:16; Ecc. 7:29, 20).
  - Sin is not something imputed onto us (Rom. 9:11; Matt. 18:3; Deut. 1:39; Ecc. 7:29; Ezek. 18:20).
  - Each man bears responsibility for his sins (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 16:27; 1 Cor. 4:5; Job 34:10-13, ESV).



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## I. BROUGHT FROM DEATH TO LIFE (cont).

- Rom. 5:12 (the go-to verse for those propping up total depravity) makes it abundantly clear that man is not a sinner due to inheriting the transgressions of Adam (**Rom. 5:14**); instead, man is guilty of sin because *“all have sinned.”*
- All are guilty of, at one point or another, walking in sin and disobedience (**Rom. 3:23, 5:12; Ecc. 7:20; 1 John 1:8**). Once we realize we are dead we can become alive through Christ (**Rom. 6:23**).
  - Just as God displayed His mighty power through the physical resurrection of His Son, His power is also evidenced through the spiritual resurrection of those who submit to Him in obedience (**Rom. 6:1-12**).
  - When we look upon a corpse, it gives an awful feeling. When we look upon the very acts which bring about our spiritual death, do we possess the same feeling? Sadly, rarely is this case!
- To walk *“according to”* this world means we are walking in harmony with what the world does. We must not be conformed to *“this world;”* instead, we must be transformed (**Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:8, 2:10; 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4**).

# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

*“according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,”*

## II. DEATH BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE “PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR.”

- There is little doubt that Satan is under consideration here and Paul is saying the Ephesians (and all sinners who have obeyed the gospel) were once under his control, with Satan being their leader & prince.
- The connection of the “*world*” with the Evil One as its “*prince*” or “*god*” is not uncommon in the scriptures.
  - John frequently made the connection of Satan being the prince of this world throughout his gospel account (**John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11**).
  - Beelzebub is described as the “*prince of the devils*” in **Matt. 12:24**.
    - This may be a reference to Satan (**Matt. 12:26-27**), but I am not confident.
  - Paul also described Satan as “*the god of this age*” (**2 Cor. 4:4**).
  - The description of Satan as the prince of the power “*of the air*” may be in reference to **Eph. 6:12**, but I think Paul is just referring to the earth via a synecdoche (“*air*” is representative of earth).

# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

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## II. DEATH BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE “PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR” (cont).

- Satan is a spirit who *“now works in the sons of disobedience.”*
  - Satan has never ceased in his pursuit of drawing man away from God (Job 1:7, 2:2; 1 Pet. 5:8).
  - I do not know for certain if Satan is physically present on this earth as he once was in the form of a serpent in the Garden of Eden or in some other physical form, but all can be certain that he *“now”* (still) works in this world.
- People are sons (children) of whoever they imitate.
  - One can be a son of disobedience (Eph. 5:3-7; Col. 3:5-7), and, therefore, a son of the Devil (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10) by walking in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind.
  - Or a person can be a son of light (1 Thess. 5:1-10), and, therefore, a child of God (John 1:12) by imitating Him and walking in the light (Eph. 5:8-14; 1 John 1:7).

# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

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## II. DEATH BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE “PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR” (cont).

- “All” have conducted themselves according to the lusts of the flesh (James 1:14-15; Rom. 3:23).
- The Greek word translated “*lust*” can be used in a positive sense (Luke 22:15; Phil. 1:23), but it generally refers to sinful desires (consider Tit. 3:3; James 4:1). Such is the case in this passage.
- Sinful lusts comes from two sources, according to this text: the “*flesh*” and the “*mind*.”
  - “*Flesh*” indicates physical desires while “*mind*” indicates intellectual/emotional desires.
- Having fleshly or intellectual/emotional desires are not sinful in of themselves; the problem lies in the object of our fleshly and intellectual/emotional desires.
- We all lust, but our lust in the Spirit must overpower our lusts and desires that derive from Satan (Gal. 5:16-25).

# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

*“and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.”*

## III. A SINFUL NATURE?

- The phrase “*by nature children of wrath*” does not imply they were born into the world as sinners or with God’s wrath upon them. Instead, sinful conduct comprised their characters for so long that it had become their natural way of living.
- The Greek word translated here as “*nature*” can refer to:
  - Something innate or implanted (**Gal. 2:15**). However, this cannot be what the word means in this verse because man is not innately born with a sinful nature (**Ecc. 7:29a**); he develops a sinful nature by seeking out sinful and wicked schemes (**Ecc. 7:29b**).
  - The result of physical law (**Rom. 2:27, 11:21-24**). This meaning is not under consideration here because sin is not transmitted by physical law (**Ezek. 18:20**).
  - The physical differences between men and women (**1 Cor. 11:14**). This certainly is not under consideration here.
  - A habitual practice (**Rom. 2:12-14**), what we might refer to as something being done by “second nature.” This is how the word “*nature*” is used in this verse.



# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

*“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together,”*

## IV. “BUT GOD.”

- This passage and its message describing the salvation of man is wholly dependent on what God has done and what He has provided. God stepped in to save man because he is unable to save himself.
  - It is astounding that God would still love mankind even though every human with the ability to discern good from evil has rebelled against Him. God loved us and offered to save us when we did not love Him (**Rom. 5:6-11**).
- God forgives, pardons, and saves by His grace.
  - It is solely by God (not man) that humans can be saved. God forgives and pardons but we do not earn this forgiveness or pardon from sin. It is impossible to earn something that occurs by grace.
  - The ground of man’s salvation is God (**Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:8-9**); His grace (driven by His loving mercy) is the cause for salvation.

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## IV. “BUT GOD” (cont).

- The phrase “*But God*” appears frequently in the Bible to show God stepping in and acting on behalf of man for his benefit.
  - Physical salvation (Gen. 8:1, ESV; 1 Sam. 23:14; Exod. 13:18, ESV).
  - God remaining with us during trials and persecutions and ensuring these things occur for our good (Acts 7:9; 2 Cor. 7:5-7, ESV; Gen. 50:15-20).
  - God working through man to further His cause (1 Cor. 3:6).
  - The salvation of man (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4-7).

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## IV. “BUT GOD” (cont).

- The reminder of God’s richness in grace, love, and mercy is especially frequent in this epistle (**Eph. 1:7, 1:18, 2:7, 3:8, 3:16**). God’s mercy is overflowing and abundant.
- The richness of God’s mercy is made abundant in the *“great love which He loved us.”*
  - Extending mercy is how God shows His love for all mankind (“us”) (**Isa. 63:7**).
  - God hates sin, but He offers mercy because he loves all of mankind, even sinners (**Psalms 145:8-9**).
    - God is capable of hating sin while still lovingly extending his mercy and remaining longsuffering toward the sinner in hopes that they will repent and take advantage of His love, mercy, and patience (**Mal. 1:3; Rev. 2:1-6; 2 Pet. 3:9**).
- Jesus is the manifestation of God’s love (**Tit. 3:4**).
  - The death of Christ is the ultimate proof of God’s love (**John 15:13**).
- As in **Eph. 1:4**, stress is laid on the love of God as the moving cause for salvation (**John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; Rom. 5:8**).

# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

*“and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

## IV. “BUT GOD” (cont).

- God, just as He physically brought Christ from death to life and seated Him in Heaven (**Eph. 1:20**), also brings mankind from spiritual death to life and figuratively seats us with Christ.
  - We recognize that baptism is the point at which those who are spiritually dead become alive (**Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:11-13**), but this verse is not speaking about how man can become alive. It simply refers to (in a general sense) the fact that man can be made alive again after once being spiritually dead.
    - This rebirth (**John 3:3-5**) is impossible without God’s mercy, love, grace, and kindness offered through Christ.
- Saints “*sit together*” with Christ, indicating a “sharing” is taking place (**Rom. 8:17**).
- The conversion and salvation of sinners serves as evidence, or proof, of the mercy and goodness of God.
  - God’s purpose in making saints alive are to bestow His love and live as a monument to His goodness.
  - What an incredible responsibility saved people carry, to live as an embodiment of God’s mercy to the world (**1 Tim. 1:12-17**).



# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*

## V. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH.

- Salvation from sin comes by God’s “*grace*” and man’s “*faith*.”
  - Since salvation is by grace, no man should boast or glory because he did nothing to merit God’s grace. It is impossible to be saved on our own abilities or merits.
  - No man can boast because God had to intervene (“*But God*” – v.1) to offer spiritual re-creation after what man brought upon himself through sin (Eph. 4:20-24; Gal. 6:14-16).
- Salvation (not man’s faith) is “*the gift of God*” (John 4:10; Rom. 6:23).
  - Some say the “*gift of God*” is the gift of faith. They say God opens the hearts of sinners through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit and grants sinners faith.
  - It is certainly true that God and the Holy Spirit operate in the salvation of sinners, but this indirectly occurs through the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Neither God nor the Holy Spirit gift mankind faith to believe the scriptures.
  - God does not give man “*faith*,” He gives man the gift of salvation. However, God’s gift of salvation is conditioned upon man’s obedient faith.

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## V. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH (cont).

- “*Grace*” is God’s part; “*faith*” is man’s part. Neither is imposed by God upon man against his will.
  - God has offered his grace, and this offering should drive men to have faith, but this does not always occur
  - Mankind is not saved by grace alone, nor is mankind saved by faith alone; mankind is saved by God’s grace and his own obedient faith (**James 2:22-26**).
- Sinners avail themselves to the benefits of God’s “*grace*” through “*faith*” (**Rom. 5:1-2**).
- “*Faith*” is the sinner’s response to God’s “*grace*,” and saving “*faith*” obeys God’s word (**John 3:36; Heb. 5:9; 11:8; James 2:14, 17, 24**).
  - Obedience does not earn salvation. Obedience is the means for receiving the blessing of salvation given by God.
  - When a person acts “*through faith*” to obtain the “*gift*” of God, he has not cheapened or earned in any way the unmerited “*gift*” of God granted by His grace. Instead, the person has simply “*done*” what God says to obtain the “*gift*” (**Luke 17:10; Acts 2:37, 9:6, 22:10**); the person acts upon his faith (**Rom. 6:16-18; Heb. 5:8-9**).

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## V. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH (cont).

- We are not saved by works.
  - Salvation does not come from works of the Law of Moses (Rom. 3:28, 4:1-12).
  - Salvation also does not come from works of man’s own righteousness (Rom. 10:3; Tit. 3:5).
  - But we are saved by performing the works of God (John 6:28-29; Luke 17:3; Mark 16:16; James 2:14-26; etc.).
- We are not saved by grace alone or faith alone.
  - If salvation is by grace only, every person will be saved even though the Bible teaches that all men will not be saved (Matt. 7:13).
  - If salvation is by faith only, all believers will be saved even though the Bible teaches that all believers will not be saved (Matt. 7:21-23).
    - Believers who refuse to obey will be lost eternally (John 12:42-43; James 2:19).
    - Likewise, believers who turn back to the world and do not repent will be lost eternally (James 5:19-20).

# A New Spiritual Position – Brought from Death to Life (2:1-10)

*“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

## VI. SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH FOR A PURPOSE (TO WORK!).

- Although we are saved by faith through God’s grace, retaining salvation is dependent on a willingness to abound in good works.
  - “*For*” at the beginning of v.10 directly continues the thought of v.8-9, showing why people are saved (to be Christ’s “*workmanship*” created for “*good works*”).
  - While “*good works*” in and of themselves cannot save man, they are so vital that God re-created saved men and women specifically for “*good works*.” These works have been part of God’s plan (“*prepared beforehand*”) from the very beginning (1 Thess. 4:7).
  - Christians are “*His workmanship*;” we were not created (saved) to fulfill our own desires but Christ’s desires.
- Saved people are specifically created “*for good works*” (Tit. 2:14, 3:8).
  - God’s grace drives (“*teaches*”) us to do good works (Tit. 2:11-12; Rom. 6:15-23).
  - Possessing biblical faith demands a specific pattern of living (Rom. 1:16-17; 1 Thess. 5:9-10; John 15:1-8; Tit. 1:16, 2:7, 3:14; Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12).



# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—”*

## I. REMEMBER HOW YOU WERE ONCE WERE KNOWN.

- “*Therefore*” looks back to what to what was stated previously in v.1-10.
- There is a call to remembrance beginning at v.11. The truths that Paul presented in v.1-10 are now to be applied directly to these people identified as “*once Gentiles in the flesh*,” i.e. physical and literal Gentiles.
- “*Gentile*” here is from the root Greek word “ethnos,” which is a collective noun that seems to impersonally overlook the individuality of a person. The Gentiles were literally foreigners in the flesh and they were also seen as heathen in spirit (Caldwell).
- One derogatory label that Jews used to describe Gentiles was the “*Uncircumcision*.”
  - It appears that this term (akrobustia) originated with the Jews because another word (akroposthia) was used by Hippocrates and Galen in secular Greek literature to denote the male foreskin (Caldwell).
  - The purpose in the Jews using this label was to show contempt against the Gentiles (Judg. 14:3; 1 Sam. 14:6, 17:26, 31:4; Ezek. 31:18).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

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## I. REMEMBER HOW YOU WERE ONCE WERE KNOWN (cont).

- To be identified as the “*Uncircumcision*” would obviously be demeaning not only due to the spiritual implication but also for the fact that it called significant public attention to a private part of the male Gentiles’ anatomy.
  - This is a great example of the Jews speaking the truth (it was literally true that the Gentiles were uncircumcised), but they stated this truth with contempt and resentment and not love (**Eph. 4:15**).
- Circumcision demonstrated the covenant between God and Israel (**Gen. 17:9-14**).
  - Circumcision was honorable only because of suggested spiritual association (**Rom. 4:9-12**). Yet, many Jews were circumcised only “*in the flesh by hands*” and not in their hearts, where it was most important (**Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16, 30:6; Jer. 4:4, 6:10; Ezek. 44:7; Rom. 2:28-29**).
- Paul makes it clear that although the Jews may label Gentile Christians as “*Uncircumcision*,” they are no longer uncircumcised, spiritually speaking (**Gal. 5:6; Rom. 2:28; Col. 2:11-12**).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“that at that time you 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.”*

## II. REMEMBER YOUR PRIOR CONDITION.

- The Gentiles once were:
  - Without Christ – Their former condition was without connection to Christ, even in promise. Now, like all of mankind, nothing but their sins could separate them from Him (**Rom. 8:31-39; Isa. 59:1-2**).
  - Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel (“*citizenship in Israel*,” NIV) – By fleshly birth, the Gentiles were initially excluded from God’s holy nation (**Deut. 7:1-6, 14:2**).
  - Strangers from the covenants of promise – The covenant of promise given to Abraham and the rest of Israel (**Gen. 12:1-3; Rom. 9:4**). In contrast to the Jews, Gentiles had no promise of land, no promise to be a great nation, and no promise that through them all nations would be blessed (**Gal. 3:15-16; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 55:3-5**).
  - Without (having no) hope – Although the Jews misunderstood the nature of His kingdom, the Gentiles did not glory in the hope of the coming kingdom of the Messiah like the Jews did (**Acts 13:32-34; 26:7; 28:20**).
  - Without God – The Gentile world was religious but lacking submission to the one true God (**Acts 17:22-23**). Their heathen gods were no gods at all (**Gal. 4:8**). The Gentiles turned away from God and were without the same advantages of the Jews who possessed the Law of Moses (**Rom. 1:21-32, 3:1-2; Eph. 4:17**).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”*

## III. APPRECIATE YOUR CURRENT CONDITION IN CHRIST.

- “*But now*” serves as the antithesis to what was stated previously (“*at that time*”).
- The Gentiles were once without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, without hope, and without God, “*but now*” are brought near by the blood of Christ. The Gentiles were lost, “*but now*” they were reconciled in Christ Jesus.
  - Nearness to God is not possible without being drawn by Christ (**John 12:32, 14:6**).
- Paul uses the phrase “but now” throughout his epistles to contrast what man was before being brought near by the blood of Christ versus where those who are obedient now stand after acting upon His atoning sacrifice (**Rom. 6:22, 7:6; Col. 3:8**).
- Jesus is identified as the source of the blessing, but our union and fellowship in Him is also the blessing (**1 Cor. 10:16** [NKJV footnote for “*communion*” reads, “fellowship or sharing”]).
- This union of the Jews and the Gentiles as one people was foretold by Christ (**John 10:16**).



# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,”*

## IV. PEACE ACCOMPLISHED.

- Peace between Jew and Gentile is possible due to the cross taking away the enmity (Law of Moses) between them, but peace between God and man is also possible due to the cross destroying the enmity (sin) between them (**Rom. 5:9-10**).
- Christ provides peace through His sacrifice (**Col. 1:20; Rom. 5:1**), but, contextually, *“He himself is our peace”* (**Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:1-5**); He is peacemaker (**John 14:27, 16:33; 2 Thess. 3:16**).
  - When Jesus died on the cross, He brought *“both”* the Gentiles and the Jews together, bringing *“peace”* between them. He removed *“the middle wall of separation”* that stood between the Gentiles and God – the Law of Moses.
  - *“Law of commandments”* and *“ordinances”* refer to the Law of Moses, which was “abolished” when Christ died on the cross (**Col. 2:14; Heb 9:15-17**).
  - The Law of Moses was abolished because it fulfilled its purpose in leading people to Christ (**Gal. 3:23-25**), identifying sin and demonstrating man’s need for forgiveness (**Rom. 7:7-13**), and providing a shadow of the true sacrifice for sin (**Heb. 10:1-4**).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

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## IV. PEACE ACCOMPLISHED (cont).

- When Christ died, the enmity (the Law of Moses itself) also died. The Law of Moses is dead; there is no life to be found in it today (**Gal. 5:1-11**). It was made void (**Rom. 3:31**).
- These verses clearly show the Law of Moses was no longer active when Paul penned the epistle. Christ “*abolished*” the Law after it had fulfilled its purpose (**Matt. 5:17-18; Gal. 3:23-25**).
- The Law of Moses caused (was the source of) “*enmity*” between Gentiles and Jews because the Jews had the Law and the Gentiles did not. Once it was abolished, peace was made possible.
  - The Jews regarded the Gentiles with hatred, and the Gentiles the Jews with scorn. Now, says the apostle, they are at peace. They worship the same God. They have the same Saviour. They depend on the same atonement. They have the same hope. They look forward to the same heaven. They belong to the same redeemed family. Reconciliation has not only taken place with God, but with each other (Barnes).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”*

## V. UNITED AS ONE NEW MAN.

- Christ’s death destroyed all dividing barriers, bringing all people together into one body upon their obedience to Him (John 10:16; Gal. 3:28; Acts 10:34-35; Ezek. 37:22).
  - There no longer is a reason to identify Jews and Gentiles as separate entities in any spiritual sense (Col. 3:10-11; 1 Cor. 10:17).
- By taking away the Law of Moses, a “*new man*” not marked by earthly boundaries or nationality is available to all people.
  - This new man is neither Jew nor Gentile but a creature made in the likeness of Christ (Rom 6:4-5) and unified as “*one*” in Christ (Gal. 3:28; 2 Cor. 5:17).
  - There are no physical or racial characteristics important for obtaining peace with God through Christ. Rather, peace is established upon the faith of mankind and their subsequent obedience (Rom. 5:1-2).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”*

## VI. RECONCILED AS ONE NEW MAN.

- “*Reconcile*” – bring back a former state of harmony (Thayer).
  - Consider 1 Cor. 7:11.
- The cross offers reconciliation to the body of Christ and unity in Him (**Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15**). Both Jews and Gentiles (all people) can be reconciled to God through the cross (**Rom. 5:16-18**).
- If people act upon the offer of reconciliation, they are placed into “*one body*,” the church (**Eph. 1:22-23**).
- Those who have been reconciled to God are responsible for making known the ministry of reconciliation to the world (2 Cor. 5:18-21).



# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”*

## VII. PEACE IN CHRIST AND ACCESS TO GOD BY THE SPIRIT.

- It is possible that Paul is quoting Isa. 57:19 here.
- “Peace” is offered through the preaching of the gospel (Eph. 2:17, 6:15; Acts 10:34-37; Rom. 10:14-16; Zech. 9:10). The gospel call itself is one of peace (Col. 3:15).
- Peace was/is offered to all.
  - Those who were “near” clearly refers to the Jews while those who were “afar off” refers to the Gentiles.
  - Both now have access to the Father “by one Spirit.” This access to God is accomplished “through” Christ (Eph. 3:11-12; John 14:6; Rom. 5:1-2).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”*

## VII. PEACE IN CHRIST AND ACCESS TO GOD BY THE SPIRIT (cont).

- I hold the position that the Holy Spirit is under consideration here (not a united heart/mind among believers) for a few reasons:
  - Similar language is used in **Eph. 4:4**, clearly referring to the Holy Spirit.
  - The role of the Holy Spirit in the redemption of mankind was discussed in **Eph. 1:13-14**.
  - The Holy Spirit is a mediator (intercessor) between God and man in other respects (**Rom. 8:26**).
  - These verses teach that God offers access to Him through Christ, but how do we learn to take advantage of this offer of peace? By the Holy Spirit revealing the mind of God (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**; **John 15:26, 16:13-15**; **1 Pet. 1:10-12**).
  - Those who are born of the Spirit (**John 3:3-5**) obtain access to God. Those led by the Spirit (**Rom. 8:12-14**), filled with Him (**Eph. 5:18**), bear His fruit (**Gal. 5:22-23**), and are unified in Him (**Eph. 4:3-6**) retain access to God.
  - Just as the preceding verses convey the unity of all mankind together under Christ, this verse conveys the unity of the Godhead in the salvation of man, just like **Eph. 1:3-14**. **Eph. 2:19-22** continues the thought of unity and describes citizens, saints, & members of God’s household as being dwelling places of the Holy Spirit (**1 Cor. 6:19**).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”*

## IX. THE RESULT OF CHRIST’S SACRIFICE.

- “Now, therefore” points to the result of the Gentiles receiving and acting upon the same offer of peace and reconciliation through Christ, that result being the Jews and Gentiles unified in the household of God.
  - Gentiles are not just citizens but “fellow citizens,” indicating equal privileges, advantages, and access to God.
- Citizenship also implies an existing government/kingdom.
  - If there is no kingdom, there is no citizenship, meaning the Gentiles would still be alienated from God, directly contradicting the entire message of this passage.
- All who are saved make up the spiritual household (family) of God (**Gal. 3:26-29**).
- Since all Christians are members of the same house (Heb. 3:5-6), mutual affection should abound among all members of this household (**John 13:34-35; Gal. 6:10**).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”*

## X. A TEMPLE OF AND FOR GOD.

- Paul uses the figure of a “*temple*” to describe the church.
  - The “*holy temple*” where God dwells is built with saved souls who are growing (1 Pet. 2:4-10).
  - Not only is the whole collection of believers called the temple of God (the church) but saints are also called the temple of God due to Him dwelling in them via his Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 John 3:24; Acts 2:38).
  - God no longer dwells in a physical house made with hands but in the hearts of His people (Acts 17:24; John 4:19-21, 14:23; Eph. 3:17), as has always been His desire (Isa. 66:1-2, 57:15).
- Christians are not just “*of*” the household of God but are the very structure itself, both individually (1 Cor. 3:9, 16) and as the church (Eph. 4:11-16), built upon by the apostles and prophets (1 Pet. 2:5).

# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”*

## X. A TEMPLE OF AND FOR GOD (cont).

- How did the apostles lay the foundation?
  - The church was built upon the truth Peter confessed in **Matt. 16:16-18**.
  - The apostles laid this same foundation whenever they preached the message of Jesus Christ as the Son of God (**Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 3:5-11**). It is not the apostles themselves that serve as the foundation but what they taught (**Phil. 4:9**).
- How did the prophets lay the foundation?
  - Old Testament prophets did not fully understand God’s mystery yet still pointed to Christ and His church (**1 Pet. 1:10-12**).
  - New Testament (first century) prophets understood the mystery yet bore the same responsibility (**2 Pet. 1:16-21**).
    - I believe Paul is referring to New Testament prophets in this passage since the other two instances of “*apostles and prophets*” in this epistle refer to first century prophets (**Eph. 3:5, 4:11**).



# A New Spiritual Position – Those Once Far Off Brought Near (2:11-22)

*“having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”*

## X. A TEMPLE OF AND FOR GOD (cont).

- Although the church is built upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ remains the “*chief cornerstone*” (Psalm 118:22).
  - When constructing a building, a laborer often establishes a measurement in one corner and builds the structure based on that one established standard. The entire structure is then determined by and adjusted to the measurement that one corner provides. The same applies with Christ to the church and each individual Christian. No measurement of faith and no work is true and righteous unless it follows the standard set by Christ.
- It is worth noting the specific tense of verbs used in this passage showing that Christians and the church’s building and growing is progressive in nature, or ongoing (“*being fitted*” . . . “*being built*”), indicating the process of being fitted and built is not complete, nor is it necessarily ever completed on this side of eternity (1 Pet. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:17-18; Col. 2:6-7).