



No longer outsiders

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Are you an outsider? It all depends is the best possible answer. The [Merriam-Webster online dictionary](#) gives these definitions of "outsider": "1: a person who does not belong to a particular group; 2 chiefly British : a contender not expected to win." According to this an outsider is either a person who doesn't belong or else a loser -- or perhaps both. Our American culture puts a considerable emphasis on "belonging" and sometimes 'belonging' in the sense of being an outsider. Our high level emphasis on personal freedom and individualism often makes the rebel the hero since he challenges the group in some way. But in more communal or collective oriented societies being an outsider is one of the worst evils to befall an individual. In such a culture, the group is everything. One has no personal identity apart from a social group such as family, vocation etc. Personal worth comes through the group to the individual. Without the group there is no individual value or worth.



The world of Paul was a very communal focused society. The Greeks defined it in terms of πολιτικός (citizenship). The Romans adopted pretty much the Greek model, but being a citizen of Rome (city) was critical. Without it you had no legal rights in the empire, apart from any local customs in place and that the ruling Roman authorities could override at will. Paul's Jewish world defined value and worth through being a part of the Covenant. God had chosen a people, not individuals, to be His own. You had to belong to the people through the covenant.

For both Jews and Greeks, this communal orientation fostered an intense elitist mentality. Jews divided humanity into two groups: 1) we Jews who belong to God (Ἰουδαῖοι), and 2) you Gentiles who are pagans (τὰ ἔθνη). Religious elitism controlled this perspective. The Greeks had their own slicing up of humanity: 1) we intelligent Greeks (οἱ Ἕλληνες), and 2) you ignorant barbarians (οἱ βάρβαροι), as Paul alludes to in Rom. 1:14, based on a feeling of intellectual superiority.

The astounding claim in Eph. 2:11-22 is that these divisions no longer matter. There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in Christ. Belonging to a group remains essential; that part isn't diminished in the New Testament. But belonging to Christ is the only group membership that now matters. To get a first century Jew to accept

such teaching was a huge challenge. To get Gentile Christian converts to accept full status in the community of believers was no small matter either. The challenge of Eph. 2:11-22 to its own world is very different from how it can challenge our world. We define insider / outsider with a different set of values typically. The heroic figure in the passage is the insider. No place exists for the outsider rebel. One must belong to Christ on the inside in order to be saved. Christianity in the biblical sense is a group participation experience, and this is the only authentic version of Christianity. And the possibilities for blessing on the inside are limitless. They are far more valuable than "insider" stock broker tips might be.

I. Context

The extensive background material developed in the previous study on [Eph. 1:1-14](#) serves as the foundation for the following sections under the study of the Context of the passage. I will attempt to summarize that material here, and supplement it only where needed for the content of 2:11-22.



a. Historical

External History. Ephesians was most likely dictated to a writing secretary sometime during the two plus years of Paul's imprisonment in the eastern Mediterranean coastal city of Caesarea by the Roman governors Felix and Festus (cf. Acts. 23:26-26:32). This would have been sometime between AD 58 and 60. The actual writer of the original document is unknown, but during this period Paul had numerous very capable individuals helping take care of him during his confinement at the hands of the Romans, including Luke, Silas, and other associates.

The trip from Caesarea to Ephesus via sea was not a lengthy journey for Tychicus, Onesimus, and others to make as they carried this letter, along with the one to the Colossians and the third one to Philemon who lived in Colossae. Ephesians was to be the first letter to be read as a quasi "cover" letter, thus setting a tone for the other letters. Consequently the contents of the letter probe some of the most profound aspects of being a Christian. A tone of celebrating Christian experience also permeates the letter. The importance of being a part of the community, the body of Christ, is highlighted.

Internal History. The time and place markers



inside 2:11-22 are general and not specific to just the events taking place in Ephesus. The time perspective flows between "then" and "now." That is, between pre-Christian and Christian conversion experience and the implications of both those periods. Paul utilizes the dominating cultural boundary markers of that day -- citizenship; a people identifiable etc. -- as his way of defining the nature of Christian experience for both Jew and Gentile. Thus, understanding this historical background sociologically is important for grasping the full impact of Paul's words. Relevant aspects of that history will be introduced in the exegesis of the passage below.

b. Literary

Genre. As a letter, Ephesians follows both the style of ancient letters in general and those in the Pauline collection of letters in the New Testament. The typical elements of Praescriptio (1:1-2); Proem (1:3-23); Body (2:1-6:20); Conclusio (6:21-24) are found.

Our passage stands as a part of the theological focus of the letter Body (cf. below). The literary shape of 2:11-22 is a series of doctrinal affirmations about the new people of God created by God's grace through the reconciling work of Christ in His death on the cross. These affirmations do not follow any distinctive literary genre, but are typical affirmations that can be found elsewhere in the writings of Paul in the New Testament. The central motif theologically for these verses is the concept of reconciliation (ἀποκαταλάσσω). In that work Christ has laid the foundation for God to create for Himself one new humanity (cf. v. 16a) out of Jews and Gentiles.

The concept of spiritual reconciliation is expressed in the New Testament mainly through the word group made up of καταλάσσω (I reconcile); ἀποκαταλάσσω (I completely reconcile); and καταλλαγῆ, ἡ (reconciliation). This word group shows up exclusively in the writings of Paul. The use of ἀποκαταλάσσω in Ephesians and Colossians rather than καταλάσσω, which is used elsewhere, suggests that Paul coined the verb, since it doesn't occur in Greek literature prior to the writings of Paul. The addition of the prefix ἀπο to the root verb stem καταλάσσω serves to heighten emphasis on the verb action and thus is often translated as "reconcile completely."

Although the terms can, and outside religious usage in the NT does, refer to horizontal reconciliation (person to person), Paul only makes mention of this in one place where he speaks of a husband and wife being reconciled to one another (1 Cor. 7:11). An [concordance tracing](#) of the English verb "reconcile" / noun "reconciliation" will turn up references in Matthew and Acts in addition to the Pauline writings. But these additional references are translating different Greek words outside the καταλάσσω

word group: Matt. 5:24 (διαλλάσσομαι); Acts 7:26 (συναλλάσσω); and Acts 12:20 (ἠτοῦντο εἰρήνην; literally, "they asked for peace"). These words exclusively designate horizontal reconciliation between individuals or groups of individuals.

Elsewhere in Paul the terms refer to humans being reconciled to God. Then the reconciled with God can be reconciled to one another as they cross ethnic, gender etc. boundaries through their common faith commitment to Christ.

In our world of such intense strife and warfare, we as believers need this reminder of God's intention in Christ.

Literary Context. The literary setting of 2:11-22 can be defined as follows. It is a part of the first division of the letter Body:

Body of the letter: 2:1-6:22

The first major segment (2:1-3:21) focuses on the marvelous redemptive work of God through Christ Jesus that has lifted us out of sin and into spiritual union and fellowship with Almighty God. This is brought to a grand climax with another doxology of praise in

3:14-21.

The second major segment (4:1-6:22) focuses on moral exhortation, technically known as *paraenesis*. The 'how we should live' emphasis here flows naturally from the 'who we are spiritually' first section in chapters two and three. Christian living has to be based upon spiritual relationship to the Heavenly Father for it to be authentic.

This first segment of the letter Body, 2:1-3:21, can be divided into the following pericopes based on the pericope headings of the UBS 4th rev. ed Greek New Testament:

1. From Death to Life, 2:1-10
2. **One in Christ, 2:11-22**
3. Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles, 3:1-13
4. To Know the Love of Christ, 3:14-21

A distinctive thought progression is developed in these two chapters and they have a heavy theological focus. Central to this theme is God's grace; cf. 2:5, 7, 8; 3:2, 7, 8. This is no surprise since God's grace was an important motif in the Proem of 1:3-23 (cf. 1:6, 7).

The first unit, 2:1-10, underscores the greatest expression of God's grace in the conversion moment for the believer. Eph. 2:8 captures the essence of



RECONCILIATION

it: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." The second unit, 2:11-22, builds on this to develop the idea of a brand new people of God emerging from this magnificent grace of God. This new people is to be made up of both Jew and Gentiles who have put their

faith in Christ. The third unit, 3:1-13, highlights Paul's personal calling from God to preach the gospel to Gentiles as a part of this divine plan of unification. This section then reaches a grand crescendo with the doxological praise of God's grace through Christ in 3:14-21.

II. Message

Literary Structure. The internal flow of ideas in vv. 11-22 is relatively easy to determine. Three sub-units can be clearly identified: 1) vv. 11-13; 2) vv. 14-18; and 3) vv. 19-22. These three segments are tightly linked to one another. Verses 14-18 stand as the foundation for the assertions in verses 11-13; and they also provide the theological implications that are made explicit in verses 19-22. For a detailed analysis of the Greek text see the [Block](#) and [Semantic](#) Diagrams, along with the [Summary of Rhetorical Structure](#) in the larger internet version of this study.

The reconciled people of God is the focus of the first and third units. Paul offers two perspectives on the new people of God in these two units. The reconciling accomplishment of Christ through his shed blood is the centerpiece of the passage in the second unit. Thus the first is based on the second; the third grows out of the second.



a. Then & Now, vv. 11-13

Greek NT	NASB	NRSV	<u>NLT</u>
<p>11 Διὸ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου, 12 ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐνοὶ τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. 13 νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.</p>	<p>11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands — 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.</p>	<p>11 So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision"—physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands— 12 remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.</p>	<p>11 Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. 12 In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. 13 But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.</p>

Notes:

The primary focus of the two Greek sentences in these verses is on a reminder of who the Ephesian readers were before Christ (vv. 11-12) and now who they are in Christ (v. 13).

We have here a continuation of the BC / AD perspective on Christian conversion that first surfaced in 2:1-10 and provided a major organizing structure for Paul's thoughts there. For a detailed discussion of this see, the [Bible study](#) "Before / After" on Eph. 2:1-10 at cranfordville.com. In that discussion Paul lined up the contrast of life before Christ and life after conversion in the following manner. It is instructive to see the list there and then to compare it with what he says here.

BC

1 You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. 3 All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

The Before Christ (BC) era was centered on spiritual death. Paul affirmed we **were** dead, not will be dead. That meant living according to the dictates of this world, under the control of Satan, and following our fleshly passions. Both non-Christian Jew and Gentile were living a life that made them deserving objects of God's wrath.

The AD (after Christ) era, Paul declares, centers on having been made alive in Christ. This means spiritual resurrection out of the previous spiritual death and being seated in "heavenly places" with Christ. That is, we are alive with God and have access to His presence. All this is a work of God's grace intended for our good works that bring praise of our Heavenly Father.

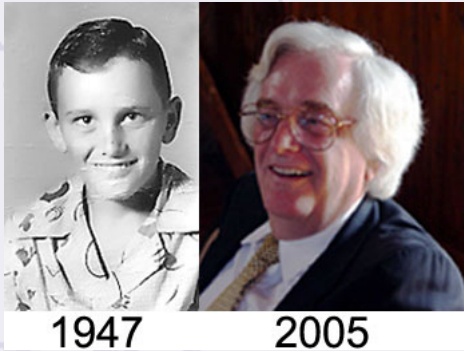
This declaration in 2:1-10 sets the stage for a continued contrast between the then and now in vv. 11-13, but with a different focus. The spiritual reality is the same, but the images that Paul uses are different.

What was his readers' BC life? He calls upon them to remember what this period was like. This era before Christian conversion is described by two ὅτι-clauses playing off the imperative verb μνημονεύετε. This admonition is couched in a present imperative Greek command form of the verb. The implication of this is to call for a continual awareness of the past, rather than for a one time reminder. Clearly Paul felt that his Ephesian readers should never forget where they had come from spiritually. The past is an important part of appreciating the depths of what God had done for us in Christ when He liberated us from that past.

One side note: there's a difference between remembering and celebrating. I've heard many "testimonies" about conversion -- especially from preachers -- who took delight in depicting their sinful, rebellious non-Christian life before conversion. With a few that I have listened to over these sixty plus years now, I came away with the impression that they

AD

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.



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had a little sadnesses in giving up at least some aspects of their sinful past in order to become a Christian. That's not what Paul had in mind here in any stretch of the imagination! Only shame and guilt about our life and living before Christ should be present in our recollection of that life. To glory in it sends clear signals of

a failure to have genuinely repented of that life in coming to Christ.

Paul's depiction of the BC era in verses 11-12 is twofold and is introduced by a couple of "that" (=ὅτι) clauses standing as the direct object of the imperative verb to remember.

First: "that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called 'the uncircumcision' by those who are called 'the circumcision' — a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands —" (ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου). He begins with a reminder of their ethnic origin as Gentiles, or non-Jews. See the Jew - Gentile slicing up of all humanity discussion above under [Literary Genre](#). Paul here anticipates that his initial targeted readership in this circular letter for Ephesus and beyond was going to be read to predominately non-Jewish Christian communities. By birth (lit. in the flesh, ἐν σαρκί) his readers were τὰ ἔθνη (Gentiles). The pejorative nature of this term from a Jewish view was blatant. Alfred Edersheim in his classic writing [The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah](#) notes this about Jewish attitudes toward others in the first century world:

And then, as the proud Roman passed on the Sabbath through the streets, Judaism would obtrude itself upon his notice, by the shops that were shut, and by the strange figures that idly moved about in holiday attire. They were strangers in a strange

land, not only without sympathy with what passed around, but with marked contempt and abhorrence of it, while there was that about their whole bearing, which expressed the unspoken feeling, that the time of Rome's fall, and of their own supremacy, was at hand.

To put the general feeling in the words of Tacitus, the Jews kept close together, and were ever most liberal to one another; but they were filled with bitter hatred of all others. They would neither eat nor sleep with strangers; and the first thing which they taught their proselytes was to despise the gods, to renounce their own country, and to rend the bonds which had bound them to parents, children or kindred....

Paul's readers were Gentiles. That was roughly equivalent to being called "white trash" in our world. But Paul reminds them of another label tacked on by the Jews of their day: "uncircumcised" (ἀκροβυστία). Only a very few Semitic cultures in the ancient world practiced circumcision of their males. For the Jewish people circumcision took on profound religious significance based on the linking of God's covenant with Abraham to being circumcised (cf. [Genesis 17:9-14](#)). Particularly important was Gen. 17:13-14:

13 Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

But Paul's attitude toward the spiritual significance of circumcision here is very different. He considers it merely as a physical action (ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου) that has been given false religious significance (ὕπο τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς).

Earlier in both Romans (4:1-12) and also to some degree in Galatians (3:15-18), he had persuasively argued that God had declared Abraham righteous based on Abraham's faith commitment (Gen. 15:1-6) decades before He insisted that Abraham be circumcised (Gen. 17:9-14). Thus circumcision as having the power to bring one into the Covenant with God that was the basis of salvation -- as taught by the scribal Jews of Paul's day -- was completely false and was based on twisted interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Thus for Gentiles to be called "Uncircumcised" by circumcised Jews was about the modern equivalent of saying



"worthless pagans."

What's the value in being reminded of a day when prejudicial labels defined you as outcasts and worthless? Both ethnically and spiritually! Paul evidently saw here the utterly black canvass that God would use to paint his picture of the Gentile believer in Christ with the most vibrant, brilliant colors imaginable. Against such a dark, foreboding backdrop the grace of God would shine as bright as the noon-day sun.

He also signals in this first segment the shallow, superficial nature of the labels "Gentile" and "uncircumcised." This was the false Jewish assessment of non-Jews. But it focused on one outward physical characteristic: circumcision. And even that was questionable because of the false religious value to circumcision that the Jews had given to it.

Against such it would be easy to dismiss any religious assessment coming from people connected to the Jews, as were the early Christian leaders who were themselves Jewish. And certainly most of first century Roman society looked with even greater contempt on the Jewish people of that world, than the contempt Jews typically held toward Gentiles.

Second: "that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ).

For Gentiles to dismiss the Jewish assessment of them would be to overlook some authentic spiritual realities that were present in their pre-Christian existence. In the second "that"-clause in verse 12, Paul lists several authentic aspects of his readers pre-Christian life (τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ).

1. They were "without Christ" (χωρὶς Χριστοῦ). Most importantly these people were cut off from Christ who is the exclusive means to salvation and relationship with God. To be missing relationship with Christ meant the loss of everything spiritually. That's as true today as it was then. Additionally, this phrase in this context has the further tones that non-Jews in their pre-Christian state were without a Messiah. They possessed no anticipation of a divinely commissioned Deliverer who would rescue them from their spiritual death.

2. They were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" (ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ). This very Jewish oriented phrase underscores the legitimate role of Covenant Jews in that time. The

Israelite people were God's chosen people. To be a part of that covenantal people was to be under God's blessings. Jews did enjoy certain advantages before God as Paul had earlier written about to the Romans (cf. Rom. 9:4-5):

4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; 5 to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

The Jewish people enjoyed a wonderful religious heritage. And that was something Paul's Gentile readers didn't possess. And because of that they suffered serious deficiencies in their religious life. Jesus had alluded to this in his conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4:22, "You worship what you do not know; we [Jews] worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews."

3. They were "strangers to the covenants of promise" (ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας). Most centrally in not being Jews, Paul's Gentile readers were not a part of the covenants of promise. In God's eternal plan of salvation (as its called in German *die Heilsgeschichte*), His blessings flow to humanity through covenants beginning with the one made with Abraham. That covenant was renewed several times during Abraham's life and became the foundation for understanding the concept of eternal salvation. Paul's Gentile readers in their pre-Christian existence were not participants in that blessing. Instead, they were "aliens" (ξένοι), non-citizens who possessed no right of participation.

4. They had no hope (ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες). These Gentile readers also did not possess hope in their pre-Christian life. What is meant here is that they did not possess any authentic spiritual hope for eternity. Christian hope is the expectation of eternal life lived in the full blessing of God and experienced unceasingly through the ages of eternity. In other words, it is Heaven. The Greek word for hope, ἐλπίς, possesses a level of expectancy of realization that its English counterpart often does not contain. To possess such anticipation with absolute certainty is to have one's life defined and guided by a marvelous objective. This is the essence of Christian hope as set forth in the New Testament: we know that we're Heaven bound and each day of life brings us a day



closer to arriving at home. That brings excitement and anticipation in growing levels the closer to arrival we get.

5. They were "without God in the world" (ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ). Paul began by declaring that his Gentile readers didn't possess Christ in the pre-Christian existence. He concludes by declaring that they didn't possess God either. They were ἄθεοι (*atheoi*), atheists. Not that they didn't believe in the existence of deities, for they accepted the existence of hundreds of gods and goddesses. The world of the first century was an overwhelmingly religiously focused culture -- far, far more than our American culture. They had many gods and goddesses, but they didn't have God -- the only one who actually exists. Paul provides a new take on the idea of an atheist. He / she can be one who believes in the existence of deity, but does not have authentic relationship with the true God who alone exists. The issue is not our mental attitude about the existence of God; rather, it's about our genuine relationship with that God.

Thus to the BC column begun in 2:1-4, Paul adds several more traits beyond being in spiritual death with all its implications.

In verse 13, he shifts to the AD column with a powerful declaration: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἱ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ). In Christ a great reversal has taken place. Here Paul shifts to a dramatic metaphor of spatial distance as the foundation of this depiction of Christian conversion. Before conversion (οἱ ποτε ὄντες...) his Gentile readers were μακρὰν (far off). With this dramatic image he alludes to all that he has just declared in verse 12 about the Gentiles in their pagan days. Those days meant they were a long ways away from God. He was distant to them, and they to Him. To be far away from God is to be separated from God.

But note the contrast between 'then' (ποτε) and 'now' (νυνὶ) present here. The now, νυνὶ, is an emphatic expression, rather than the more common temporal





adverb for now, νῦν. It is not just 'now'; rather, it is "NOW!" The coming of Christ into their lives has brought dramatic change and transformation. Central here to Paul's expression is that the coming of Christ has brought them 'near' (ἐγγύς) to God. God is now reachable; He is accessible; He is Father.

What makes the difference? How do we move from "far away" to "near"? Paul's answer here

is twofold: ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ("in Christ Jesus") and ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ ("in/by the blood of Christ"). To

come into spiritual union with Christ takes place through the blood of Christ. Christ and the cross are inseparably linked. And the cross means blood -- blood being poured out in sacrificial death. It's grizzly; it's horrible; it's repugnant. But it's essential and critical to our moving from "afar off" to "near."

This is a [foundational teaching](#) of the New Testament. [1 Peter 1:18-19](#) sums up the link this way:

18 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.

Christ's shed blood is the key to our salvation.

The connection of all this to us today who are overwhelmingly Gentile Christians is obvious. Outside of Christ our spiritual condition is dismal and bleak. In truth, it is living in spiritual death. But in the blood of Christ we have come into spiritual union with Christ. And this means that we have been brought near to God whom we now have relationship with and access to. What a powerful declaration of scripture!

b. Christ the Reconciler, vv. 14-18

Greek NT

14 Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν, ὃ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφότερα ἐν καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, 15 τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας, ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην 16 καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ. 17 καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς· 18 ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγήν οἱ ἀμφοτέροι ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.

NASB

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; 18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

NRSV

14 For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. 15 He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, 16 and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. 17 So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; 18 for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father.

NLT

14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. 16 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. 17 He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. 18

Notes:

This second segment presents several challenges for clear understanding. It clearly stands as a justification (γάρ) for what Paul has just said about the BC / AD condition of his Gentile readers. Obviously it is the center piece of the three fold passage division as the [Block Diagram](#) of the Greek text visually illustrates. But what of the background of this rather well crafted and somewhat poetical declaration about Christ?

Many NT scholars are inclined to see hymnic structure to these statements. But is there enough evidence to justify such claims?

The answer to this question depends in part on the connection of Eph. 2:14-18 to Col. 1:15-20, which is generally thought to be remnants of an early Christian hymn:

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers — all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

This probable early Christian hymnic expression is often seen as the model for Eph. 2:14-18 and as a piece of pre-formed Christian tradition that is incorporated into Paul's letter. The surrounding context of Col. 1: 12-14 and 1:21-23 bears some resemblance thematically to Eph. 2:11-3 and 2:19-22. But enough differences exist to seriously question whether this similarity to Colossians points to a hymnic origin for 2:14-18. More likely they point to a common author treating generally related themes.

Another basis for the hymnic understanding is the perception of a chiasmic structure in 2:14-18 or an even larger chunk of the text. Various proposals exist but usually follow to some extent the one proposed by Thomas Yoder in the *Believer's Church Bible Commentary* (iPreach) incorporating the entire passage:

- A Once strangers and aliens without God (2:11–12)
- B Christ has brought near the far (2:13)
- C Christ is our peace (2:14–16)**
- B' Christ proclaimed peace to the far and the near (2:17–18)
- A' Now no longer strangers, but part of God's home (2:19–22)

Although initially appealing, this schema has numerous problems connected to it, as Andrew Lincoln (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems) points

Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

out:

Some of the indications that hymnic material could lie behind this section are the break with the surrounding context of the contrast schema, the “we” style that interrupts the “you” style of address to the readers in vv 11–13 and vv 19–22, the opening emphatic predication (“he is our peace”), the pointedly Christological content of the material, the heavy use of participles, the apparent *parallelismus membrorum*, the piling up of a number of *hapax legomena*, and awkward syntax which suggests interpretation. Such features, in the light of the analysis which follows, have made it seem more probable that we are dealing with hymnic material that has been reworked (cf. also Schlier, 122–23; Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymnen*, 24–31; J. T. Sanders, *ZNW* 56 [1965] 216–18; Fischer, *Tendenz*, 131–37; Gnilka, 147–52; idem, “Christus unser Friede,” 190–207; Barth, 261–62; Burger, *Schöpfung*, 117–33; Wengst, *Christologische Formeln*, 181–86; Lindemann, *Aufhebung*, 156–59; Martin, *Reconciliation*, 168–71) than with a straightforward argument (pace Mussner, *Christus*, 100–101; Merklein, *BZ* 17 [1973] 79–102; Ernst, 314–21; Schnackenburg, 106–7, 112).

But what is the extent of such hymnic material? Against those who would include v 17 or v 18 (cf. Schlier, 123; Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymnen*, 24–31; Gnilka, 147–52; idem, “Christus unser Friede,” 197–200; Barth, 276; Fisher *Tendenz*, 132; Burger, *Schöpfung*, 128–33), it must be said that the language and concepts of v 17 come from the OT passage Isa 57:19, clearly take up v 13, and are formulated as an address to the readers (cf. the introduction of the second person plural ὑμῖν), and that v 18 reads more like the writer's own summary of the significance of the preceding verses in language reminiscent of Rom 5:2. In addition, neither v 17 or v 18 easily provides reconstructed lines which would be of an appropriate length for the original hymnic material (cf. also Wengst, *Christologische Formeln*, 182–83). It is behind vv 14–16 that there may well be traditional material which spoke of Christ as the one who provides cosmic peace and reconciliation (cf. also J. T. Sanders, *ZNW* 56 [1965] 216–18; Wengst, *Christologische Formeln*, 181–86; Lindemann, *Aufhebung*, 156–59; Martin, *Reconciliation*, 172).

Some traditional material may well be incorporated, along with similar emphases found in Colossians. Additionally, the proposal of some more recent

commentators that 2:14-18 assumes Paul's midrashic interpretation of Isa. 57:19¹ and it has some possible merit, but is limited. In my opinion the existing structure of 2:14-18 should be attributed to the composition of Ephesians itself, rather than to some pre-existing document. But this does not exclude the borrowing of short phrases etc. from such material.

The present syntactical structure of the Greek text breaks the ideas down into two main emphases:

1. He himself is our peace...and
2. He has proclaimed peace to the far and near ones.

The [Block Diagram](#) of the Greek text highlights this core structure.

1. He himself is our peace (Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἔστιν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν). The central declaration is the Christ is our peace. What is meant by this? Peace between Jew and Gentile? Peace between sinful humanity and God? Or, both of the above? Probably the latter is the major point. Peace means that those afar off (Gentiles) have been brought near so that both groups (Jew & Gentile) now stand near, i.e., within access to God. But given the bitter animosity toward one another, they could only come together peacefully through a major miracle of transformation. Christ himself facilitates that transformation into peace with God and peace with one another.

If Isa. 57:19 is in Paul's mind to some extent, then his use of its terminology in the LXX goes counter to the current scribal interpretation. The far ones in scribal Judaism were Jewish Diaspora and the near ones were Palestinian Jews living in the homeland. Later on, this text was reinterpreted in rabbinical circles with the far ones being Jewish sinners and the near ones being righteous Jews. See b. *Bera-kot* 34b, *Num. Rab.* 11.7 and *Mek. Exod.* 20.25 in the Talmud for details. But Lincoln (*WBC*, Logos Systems) calls attention to at least one rabbinical tradition that sees the contrast between Jews and Gentiles (proselytes): *Num. Rab.* 8.

What is peace (ἡ εἰρήνη)? Again, Lincoln (*WBC*, Logos Systems) gives a helpful summation:

As is well known, in the OT the notion of peace (שָׁלוֹם, šālôm) involves more than the absence of war or cessation of hostilities. It denotes also positive well-being and salvation, and it is frequently seen as God's gift and as a major element of eschatological expectation. In this context in Eph 2, peace

does, however, stand primarily for the cessation of hostilities and the resulting situation of unity. It is a relational concept which presupposes the overcoming of alienation (cf. vv 12, 13) and hostility (cf. v 15) between Gentiles and Jews. It is possible that for a Jew such a notion would recall the vision of eschatological peace which would prevail when the Gentiles joined Israel in worship in the temple in Zion, a vision found in Isa 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-4, although there is no conscious effort to invoke such prophecies here. It is neither peace with God (Rom 5:1) nor cosmic peace (Col 1:20) that is the focus of attention in v 14, although it becomes clear in vv 16-18 that the former is foundational for this writer also. Peace, in v 14, is not merely a concept nor even a new state of affairs, it is bound up with a person. Christ can be said to be not only a peacemaker or a bringer of peace but peace in person. The title "prince of peace" in Isa 9:6 may have prepared the way for such an attribution of peace to a person, but the language here is hardly an allusion to that verse (*contra* Stuhlmacher, " 'Er ist unser Friede,' " 345). Later rabbinic thought could call the name of God and of the Messiah "peace" (cf. Str-B 3:587) but not, of course, in specific connection with Jews and Gentiles. That Christ himself is seen as the peace between the two groups here in v 14 is in line with the thought of v 15 that the making of peace, by creating one new person in place of two, occurred "in himself." This identification of Christ with the blessings of salvation that he brings can be found in other places in the Pauline corpus (cf. 1 Cor 1:30; Col 1:27; 3:4).

With three participle phrases, Paul amplifies Christ as the source of peace.

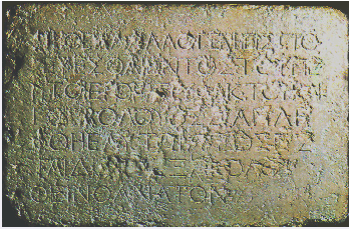
- a) "in his flesh he has made both groups into one"

(ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφοτέρα ἓν). Christ is the one who has brought Jew and Gentile together before God on a common plane. God seeks a unified people who serve Him. In Christ, such becomes possible. For the first century world -- and for ours as well -- the notion that Jews and Gentiles can come together on one footing before God was radical, and humanly impossible.

b) "and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (ὁ...καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ). Christ has broken down the partitionary wall. What's that? The appositional qualifier that follows, "the hostility between us" (τὴν ἔχθραν), defines it to some extent. Very possibly Paul had in mind the wall of partition in the Jerusalem temple that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the other inner courts where



¹Peace, peace, to the far and the near, says the Lord; and I will heal them. (NRSV)



NOT ONE FOREIGNER IS TO ENTER INSIDE THE...AROUND THE SANCTUARY, BARRIER, AND EMBANKMENT. HE WHO IS SEIZED, HIMSELF RESPONSIBLE IS FOR THE FOLLOWING DEATH PENALTY

Jewish women and men were permitted to enter

for worship. At the entrance to the inner courts was the above warning threatening death to any Gentile who crossed into the courts where Jews worshipped God. The trumped up accusation by Jewish purists that Paul had indeed encouraged a Gentile, a Trophimus from Ephesus no less, to cross that boundary in the Jerusalem temple was the reason for his imprisonment at Caesarea (cf. Acts 21:27-31). Most likely the Ephesians were aware of this incident in Jerusalem by this time. Although Paul had not actually encouraged Trophimus to do this out of respect for Jewish laws, he knew that in truth God had crossed out that warning chiseled in stone at the entrance gate of the temple inner courts.

c) "He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, 16 and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it."

(ὁ... τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας, ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ). This most radical declaration is that in Christ God had done away with the Law. But the participle καταργήσας more precisely means that God rendered the Law useless as a means of salvation, as so understood in the Judaism of Paul's day. Paul is not saying that God did away with the Old Testament. Nor with the Law itself, as embedded in the Old Testament. In Gal. 3:19-25,

Paul earlier wrote that the Law serves a worthwhile purpose to define sinful activity and thus to point us to Christ. But, under no means can it provide salvation. The very hostility between Jew and Gentile in Paul's world was evidence of that. Christ alone can nullify that hostility and enable peace to reign. His intent in dying on the cross was

1) "that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace," and 2) "and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross." The impact? "thus putting to death that hostility



through it."

2. He has proclaimed peace both to the far off and to the near ones: "17 So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; 18 for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father"

(17 καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς· 18 ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφοτέροι ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα). Here Paul brings the τοῖς μακρὰν / τοῖς ἐγγύς (Gentile / Jew) contrast to the forefront. Now only is Christ Peace in its very embodiment, he has proclaimed this peace to both Jew and Gentile. Paul understood that the ministry of the historical Jesus was focused on the Jewish people. But he also saw what the gospel writers knew. Jesus ministry and message was ultimately for all humanity. It was not a message that before becoming a Christian you have to convert to Judaism because salvation belongs only to Jews. The cross of Christ nullifies any such thinking! This is the universal thrust of the Gospel.

In verse 18 Paul bases this universal thrust of the Gospel on the theological principle that both Jew and Gentile alike have access to the Father through the one Holy Spirit. This echoes the language of Rom. 5:1-2, "1 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God" (NRSV). Paul will pick up the access theme again in Eph. 3:12, "Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him." That entrance gate in the Jerusalem temple was the visible access to God in the minds of Jews in Paul's day. Above it was the above listed inscribed stone forbidding Gentiles access. But that stone God removed at Calvary.

The marvelous truths of these verses concerning the work of Christ have tremendous relevance to our lives today as Christians. Our world is torn apart with hostility between groups of people using religion, ethnicity, social status, nationalism, political ideology et als. as the basis of hostility toward other groups. Even among Christian groups, partitioning walls have been built up around denominationalism, doctrine etc. We Baptists have a miserable track record in recent times for divisiveness. But there's hope for us as Baptists. The [Celebration of New Covenant Baptists](#) meeting in Atlanta (Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2008) holds great promise for most Baptist groups in North America of finding ways to work together with a unified commitment to the Gospel of Christ.

Greek NT

N-A 27th ed

11 Διὸ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου, 12 ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. 13 νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

14 Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν, ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμώτερα ἐν καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, 15 τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας, ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην 16 καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ. 17 καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς 18 ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμώτεροι ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. 19 Ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι ἀλλὰ ἐστὲ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ, 20 ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, 21 ἐν ᾧ

NASB

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands — 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; 18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, 20 having been

NRSV

11 So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision"—physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands— 12 remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. 15 He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, 16 and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. 17 So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; 18 for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of

NLT

11 Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. 12 In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. 13 But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

14 For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. 15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. 16 Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. 17 He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles

πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρμο-
λογουμένη αὕξει εἰς ναὸν
ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ, 22 ἐν ᾧ καὶ
ὕμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς
κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ
ἐν πνεύματι.

UBS 4th edition

11 Διὸ μνημονεύετε
ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη
ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι
ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς
λεγομένης περιτομῆς
ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου,
12 ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ
ἐκείνῳ χωρὶς Χριστοῦ,
ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς
πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ
καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν
τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ἐλπίδα
μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν
τῷ κόσμῳ. 13 νυνὶ δὲ
ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς
οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν
ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς ἐν τῷ
αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

14 Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ
εἰρήνη ἡμῶν, ὃ ποιήσας
τὰ ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐν καὶ τὸ
μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ
λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ
σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ, 15 τὸν νό-
μον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγ-
μασιν καταργήσας, ἵνα
τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ
εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον
ποιῶν εἰρήνην. 16 καὶ
ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς
ἀμφοτέρωθεν ἐν ἐνὶ σώ-
ματι τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ
σταυροῦ, ἀποκτείνας
τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν αὐτῷ. 17
καὶ ἐλθὼν εὐηγγελίσατο
εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς
μακρὰν καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς
ἐγγύς. 18 ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ
ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν

built on the foundation of
the apostles and proph-
ets, Christ Jesus Himself
being the corner stone,
21 in whom the whole
building, being fitted to-
gether, is growing into a
holy temple in the Lord,
22 in whom you also are
being built together into
a dwelling of God in the
Spirit.

οἱ ἀμφοτέροι ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύ-
ματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. 19
ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι
καὶ πάροικοι ἀλλὰ ἐστὲ
συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων
καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ, 20
ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ
θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων
καὶ προφητῶν, ὄντος
ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ
Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, 21 ἐν ᾧ
πᾶσα οἰκοδομὴ συναρ-
μολογουμένη αὕξει εἰς
ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ,
22 ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς
συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς κα-
τοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν
πνεύματι.

the household of God,
20 built upon the founda-
tion of the apostles and
prophets, with Christ
Jesus himself as the cor-
nerstone. 21 In him the
whole structure is joined
together and grows into
a holy temple in the Lord;
22 in whom you also are
built together spiritually
into a dwelling place for
God.

who were far away from
him, and peace to the
Jews who were near. 18
Now all of us can come
to the Father through
the same Holy Spirit
because of what Christ
has done for us. 19 So
now you Gentiles are no
longer strangers and for-
eigners. You are citizens
along with all of God's
holy people. You are
members of God's fam-
ily. 20 Together, we are
his house, built on the
foundation of the apos-
tles and the prophets.
And the cornerstone is
Christ Jesus himself. 21
We are carefully joined
together in him, becom-
ing a holy temple for
the Lord. 22 Through
him you Gentiles are
also being made part
of this dwelling where
God lives by his Spirit.

Greek Text Diagram

11 Δίῳ
1 μνημονεύετε
ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη (ἦτε)
ἐν σαρκί,
οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία
ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς
ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου,
12 ὅτι ἦτε
τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ
χωρὶς Χριστοῦ,
ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ
καὶ
ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας,
ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες
καὶ
ἄθεοι
ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.
13 δὲ
2 νυνὶ
ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ
ὑμεῖς ... ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς
οἱ ποτὲ ὄντες μακρὰν
ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
14 γάρ
3 Αὐτὸς ἐστὶν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν
ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφότερα ἐν
καὶ
τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας,
τὴν ἔχθραν,
ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ,
15 τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν...καταργήσας,
ἐν δόγμασιν
ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίση
ἐν αὐτῷ
εἰς ἓνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον
ποιῶν εἰρήνην,
καὶ
16 ἀποκαλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους...τῷ θεῷ
ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι
διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ,
ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν
ἐν αὐτῷ,

17

καὶ
ἔλθῶν

4

εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν

τοῖς μακρὰν

καὶ

5

(εὐηγγελίσατο) εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς·

δι' αὐτοῦ

18

ὅτι...ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν

οἱ ἀμφότεροι

ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι

πρὸς τὸν πατέρα,

19

ἄρα οὖν

6

οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι

καὶ

πάρρικοι,

ἀλλὰ

7

ἐστὲ συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων

καὶ

οἰκείοι τοῦ θεοῦ,

20

ἐποικοδομηθέντες

ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλου καὶ προφητῶν,

ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,

21

ἐν ᾧ πάντα οἰκοδομῆ...αὐξίαι
συναρμολογουμένη
εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον

ἐν κυρίῳ,

ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς

22

συνοικοδομεῖσθε

εἰς κατοικητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ

ἐν πνεύματι.

Semantic Diagram

		Διὸ							
I--	1-----	1	Pres	Act	Imp+	2	P	(ὕμεις)	
	A--	δὲ							
	2-----	2	1 Aor	Dep	Ind	2	P	ὕμεις	
		γάρ							
	1-----	3	Pres	---	Ind	3	S	Αὐτός	
	B--	καὶ							
		a-----	4	1 Aor	Dep	Ind	3	S	(αὐτός)
		2--	καὶ						
		b-----	5	(1 Aor	Dep	Ind	3	S	αὐτός)
		ἄρα οὖν							
	A-----	6	Pres	---	Ind	2	P	(ὕμεις)	
II--		ἀλλὰ							
	B-----	7	Pres	---	Ind	2	P	(ὕμεις)	

Summary of Rhetorical Structure

The twofold thought structure of the passage becomes clear with the emphatic inferential conjunctions ἄρα οὖν in verse 19. This stands in contradiction to the typical paragraphing break at verse 14 in most translations. Such ignores the role of the causal conjunction γάρ that introduces a set of justifications for the first two core expressions. It has the distorting effect of making the implications of statements 6 and 7 too dependent on the theological declarations of statements 3-5.

Additionally, the division of the passage into two sections, vv. 11-13, 14-22 (statement #1-2 and 3-7), ignores the obvious central role that the theological declarations concerning Christ in statements 3-5 play in this passage. Note the boxes above highlighting this.

Paul's thoughts revolves around calling the Ephesians to remember their spiritual status before God as Christians (#s 1-2). This is based on the reconciling work of Christ (#s. 3-5). Out of that reconciliation comes a new status as the unified people of God (#s. 6-7).

He begins with a contrast. They need to remember what they were before Christ (# 1) and then what happened to them when they came to Christ (# 2). The temporal contrast between ποτὲ and νυνὶ frames the thoughts of these two statements. In statement 2, Paul introduces the spatial concept of μακρὰν / ἐγγύς, but doesn't develop it.

In the theological affirmations about Christ, #s 3-5, statements 4 and 5 pick up the contrast of τοὺς μακρὰν and τοὺς ἐγγύς. Here these represent Gentiles (τοὺς μακρὰν) and Jews (τοὺς ἐγγύς). But in Christ the both (οἱ ἀμφότεροι; τοὺς δύο) -- Jews and Gentiles -- have become one people (έν).

The implications of this are made explicit when Paul returns to focus on his readers in statements 6 and 7. Here the implications of the μακρὰν / ἐγγύς contrast become clear:

μακρὰν	ἐγγύς
ξένοι	συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων
πάρρικοι	οἰκίῳ τοῦ θεοῦ

Paul envisions a marvelous bringing together of Jews and Gentiles in the reconciling work of God in Christ. In common commitment to Christ they become one people of God.