

“Wherefore Remember ...”

“... that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:11f). Paul has shown the Gentiles that they were dead in sin but they had been made alive in Christ. This work was not from merit, it was a work wrought by grace. They, with the Jews, had been made His workmanship *“created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had afore prepared that they should walk in them”* (Eph. 2:10). *“By grace they had been saved, through faith, and that not of themselves, it was the gift of God ...”* (Eph. 2:8).

Paul calls these Gentiles to remember what they state had formerly been before God’s grace was shed upon them. Prior to the coming of Jesus the condition of Gentiles had been sordid indeed. They had been separated from Christ: the expectations of the Messiah was pronounced among Jews. The gospel records many incidents where people reflected whether John or Jesus was “the Messiah.” This was not so much among the Gentiles. They were separate from him; separate from knowledge of him, separate from the blessings of him. They were dead in sins; expectation of rectifying that condition was slim to them indeed.

They were *“alienated”* from the commonwealth of Israel. Gentiles were alienated -- enemies to the commonwealth of Israel. Israel was God’s chosen people, seed of Abraham. Jews were “proud” of their heritage and some trusted that that was sufficient to make them acceptable to God. John warned, *“Think not to say without yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham”* (Mt. 3:9). And while just being a descent of Abraham did not made a man approved with God; it was an honor, an honor Gentiles did not share.

They were *“strangers from the covenants of the promise.”* God had first made a covenant with Abraham; then repeated it to Isaac and Jacob. He promised Abraham he would make of him a great nation; that he would give his seed a land and that *“in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”* The word in the Ephesian text is *“promise.”* Paul mentions Israel and *“promises”* in Romans 9:4, but land promises had never been made to Gentiles and so it is the covenants of the promise, that promise being, *“In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”* Prior to their redemp-

tion in Christ, they had been unfamiliar with God's promise to Abraham, and aside from that, they were dead in their sins, certainly no blessing!

Gentiles in their former state, "*had no hope and were without God in the world.*" Gentiles dead in sin and separated from Christ entertained no hope of forgiveness nor of a blessed future life. Being without God, made their prospects nonexistent.

"*But now in Christ Jesus, ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ*" (Eph. 2:13). Briefly attention has been given to the blood of Christ (we are redeemed through it, Eph. 1:7) and here Paul mentions it again. Those who were afar off had been made nigh to all those things they had once been strangers to. Through the blood of Christ they no longer were separated from Christ, no longer strangers from the covenants of the promise, no longer without hope and God. They were never any long alienated from the commonwealth of Israel because they had, as he later states, become "*fellow citizens*" (2:19). NEXT: "The Middle Wall Of Partition."

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