

Ephesians

Transformed by Grace, Empowered by Peace

Study 8

The Gospel and the New Community

Ephesians 2:11-16

Ephesians 2:11-13 (NIV)

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

1) a) Fill in the blanks. Based on the video lecture, what are the 5 states of our former state of separation?

	State	Implication
1.	called “uncircumcised”	Not part of the Jewish nation
2.	separate from Christ	No rights
3.	excluded from citizenship in Israel / Alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel	Not part of the chosen people group
4.	foreigners to the covenants of the promise	Not part of the promise/agreement
5.	without hope and without God in the world	No access to unlimited being

b) Fill in the blanks. Based on the video lecture, what are the main things we should understand about a “covenant”?

What is a covenant?	A Binding legal agreement
What is it for?	A new level of intimacy
What does it cost?	Give up freedom in exchange for hope

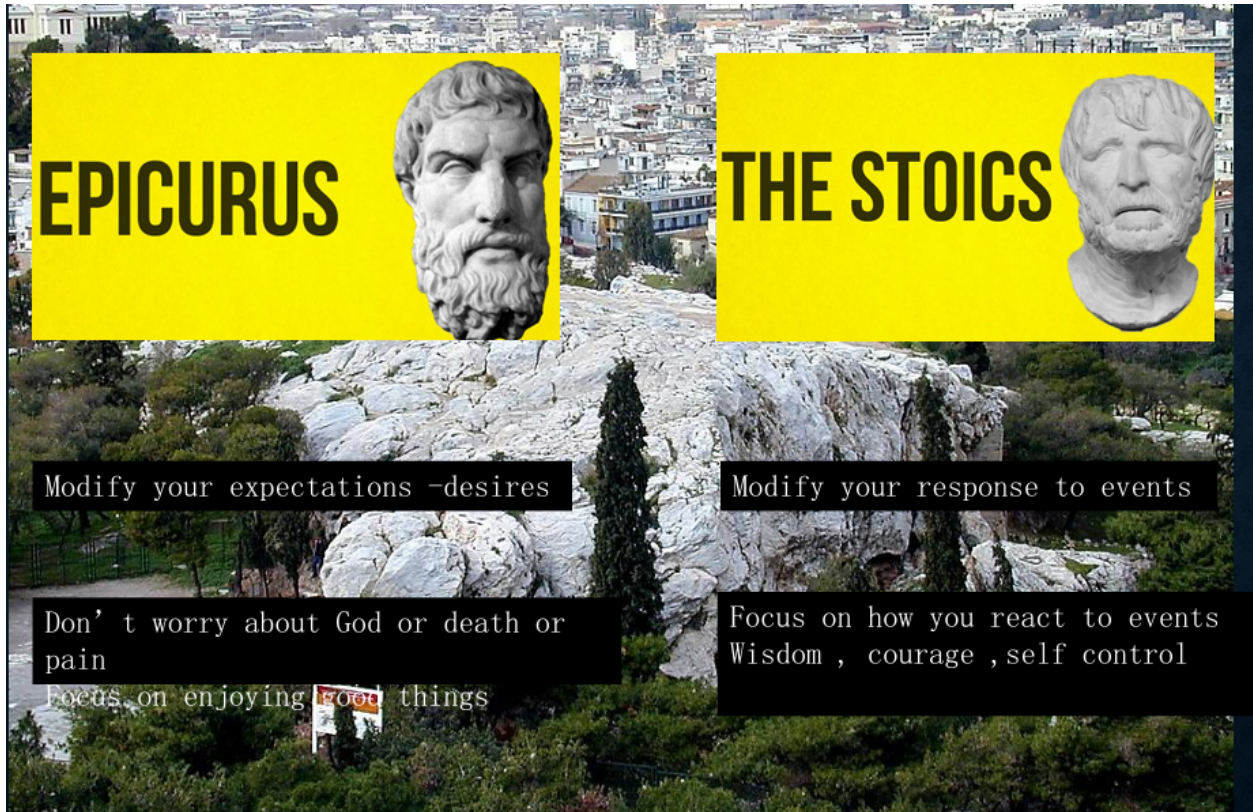
Why is a covenant with God different?	God can deliver His end of the promise
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c) Fill in the blanks. Based on the video lecture, what are some other types of covenants that exist?

Types	Parity	Royal Grants	Suzerein-Vassal
Description	Mutual compacts	The unilateral promise of giving gracious gifts	Between a Greater king and a lesser king, needs condition
Example of occurrences	Gen 20:14-18	2 Sam 7:14	Deuteronomy

d) Fill in the blanks. Based on the video lecture, list out the biblical covenants.

Types of Biblical Covenants	Description
Adamic Covenant	Broken by Adam with the curse of death
Noahic Covenant	God promised Noah to withhold judgment
Abrahamic Covenant	Eternal life through faith
Mosaic Covenant	Natural Charter to Israel of Holy Seed and preserving people
Davidic Covenant	Divine/human son to rule the kingdom
New Covenant	Fulfillment of all precious covenants, salvation by faith



2) a) Fill in the blanks. Based on the video lecture, what is the Greek Epictetus's Philosophy? (ie, some things are up to us and some things are not up to us)

	Things beyond our control	Things in our control
List of examples	Actions and opinions of others, reputation, health, wealth	Own opinion, moral judgment, beliefs, desires, goals
The result if you rely on it	Misery	Happiness

b) Fill in the blanks. Based on the video lecture, what is the weakness of this Greek Philosophy?

Impoverished life
Passivity to evil (accommodate evil)
Ignore the source of evil, just accept evil
Absence of hope

Absence of intense love

Absence of solid eternal future

Ephesians 2:14-16 (NIV)

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

3) a) Comprehension questions.

i) Who is our peace, made two groups one and destroyed the barrier?

Christ

ii) Who was the wall of hostility between?

Jews and Gentiles

iii) According to the video lecture and the verses, how did Christ unite the two groups?

Blood of Christ(cross) and one Spirit -> new humanity,

iv) According to the video lecture and verse 15, what does “setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations” (NIV) or “abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances” (ESV) mean? (Refer to Hebrews 10:1,11-14 to help you)

It means Christ nullified the law that Jews had to practice, which included a bunch of rules and caused them to treat Gentiles as unclean (and therefore should be avoided).

Hebrews 10:1 (ESV)

For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Hebrews 10:11-14 (ESV)

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat

down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Takeaway

In Ephesians 2:11-16, apostle Paul tells the Ephesian church that Jews and Gentiles are to be united. In today's context, all the people of God should be united because of Christ.

Case Study

Case 1 – The Gospel and the New Community

Sher Prate has attended the 4th Baptist Church of Bangsar for over 5 years. The church normally plays hymn music which is nice and easy to sing. However, there was a group of young people who joined the worship team and started introducing drums and electric guitars to the team and played loud and fast-paced music. She complained to her life group leader about the new team and criticized the choice of songs they had. She said loud music doesn't please God. The leader didn't do much about it and she got frustrated and began to tell a lot of people in the church about it. Eventually, this caused a division of two groups of people in the church, one group preferred hymns only during worship service and the other group was fine with the new style.

- 1) a) **Discussion question. Was the issue Sher Prate brought up worth the divide?**

- b) **Discussion question. What are the other examples of the types of issues people differ over?**

- c) **Discussion question. What are the dangers of "Us Against Them" mentality? (You may read the article below to help you)**

Further Reading

Article: What Is the "Us Against Them" Mentality?

<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-is-the-us-against-them-mentality>

There are all kinds of ways to distinguish doctrines.² In this book I suggest four basic categories. We could explore further subcategories as well, but this fourfold ranking should help as a starting point:

- First-rank doctrines are *essential* to the gospel itself.
- Second-rank doctrines are *urgent* for the health and practice of the church such that they frequently cause Christians to separate at the level of local church, denomination, and/or ministry.
- Third-rank doctrines are *important* to Christian theology, but not enough to justify separation or division among Christians.
- Fourth-rank doctrines are *unimportant* to our gospel witness and ministry collaboration.

d) The excerpt above is taken from the book “Finding the Right Hills to Die On: The Case for Theological Triage (The Gospel Coalition)” by Gavin Ortlund. It categorizes the different doctrines we can disagree on into 4 ranks. Try to use it to identify which rank the following issues below fall into:

i) Whether Jesus was God or human: Which rank?

ii) Whether babies should be baptized: Which rank?

iii) Calvinism vs. Arminianism: Which rank?

iv) Old Earth or Young Earth doctrine:: Which rank?

v) End times doctrine: Pre-Millenium, Post-millennialism, or Amillennialism: which rank?