

**EPHESIANS – THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CHURCH –
OUR IDENTITY, OUR WALK, OUR WARFARE
PROGRAM 20 (#912200)
WEEK 4 (912344)
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**SERIES: Ephesians – The Mystery Of God’s Church –
Our Identity, Our Walk, Our Warfare**

TITLE: Program 20 – Christianity Was To The Jews First And Then The Gentiles

FRIDAY

OPEN

One of the greatest sorrows I experienced was studying history and discovering how the church treated the Jews. And one of the greatest joys I have is going to Israel and telling my Jewish friends how grateful I am to them to be a possessor of the things that God has given to Israel. O Beloved, do you know what God has done with the Jews and the Gentiles? We’ll study it today as we look at God’s precepts for life.

PART ONE

I’ll never forget what happened when I got an apartment in Jerusalem right next door to the King David and sat down and began to write the novel “Israel, My Beloved”. Oh how my heart absolutely broke as I wrote about the period of the crusades because this book takes you all the way from the

first captivity, from the destruction of Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian captivity all the way through the future into the second coming of Jesus Christ. And as you read this book and it was written for Israel. The last line of the book is when He turns and He looks at Israel and He says, “To the world you were just a Jew, but now they know you are Israel, My Beloved.” Israel is beloved of God. And what broke my heart as I wrote this true story in novel form as I wrote of the history of Israel through every period of their history was the persecution that they suffered under the crusades in the name of Christianity, as they would stick a cross in front of them and if they wouldn’t be baptized then they would burn them. They would kill them. They would put them to death. And then to read about the time under Hitler and what happened and to describe Kristallnacht when they went through in this organized move and they smashed all the windows of the Jewish establishments and the persecution was so great and the people were destroyed and then moving them into ghettos. And my heart absolutely broke. Last line of the book is really the heart of God. Israel is dear to His heart, but so are the Gentiles. And when you lay down the novel and you pick up the true story you pick up the Word of God, what you see in Ephesians chapter 2 and Ephesians chapter 3 is an awesome wonderful incredible mystery. That’s what we’re going to be looking at. But before we can look at that God wants to establish where the Gentiles were before they were brought into the body of Jesus Christ. Yes they were chosen in Christ **“...before the foundation of the world...,” (Ephesians 1:4b)** but the choosing of the Gentiles in a sense was something that the Jews were blind to and the Gentiles were blind to. And when you look at the status of the Gentiles before the coming of Jesus Christ you see that we owe the Jews a great debt of gratitude. No, we’re not supposed to persecute them. No, we’re not supposed to put them to death. No, we can’t force them to be baptized. And God, if we treat them this way then God is going to have to judge us even as He has judged every nation down through history that has been His

instrument of persecution or judgment against His chosen people. Well let's look at it. Ephesians chapter 2, in Ephesians chapter 2 in verses 1 through 10 which again is one long sentence, Paul has shown them that they “**...were dead in...trespasses and sins,**” (Ephesians 2:1) that the Jews were dead in trespasses and sins, but they were saved by grace Jew and Gentile saved only one way and that's by grace. No man is saved by the works. No Jew is saved by keeping the Law because if you keep the whole law and only break it at one point then you're guilty of breaking the whole thing. And so the law in a sense was a school master to shut them up unto obedience until faith in Christ would come. But the law really brought a curse on them. And it brought a curse on them because the law demanded absolute perfection. So now what he's going to show us is that [we're all saved by grace. And when we're saved by grace we're saved unto good works that God has ordained for us to walk in.] (Paraphrased, Ephesians 2:8-10) But remember the epistle to the Ephesians is an epistle a letter to Gentiles, to those that are not Jews. Now what is a Gentile? A Gentile is anyone that is not a Jew. As God looks at the classes of people in the world there are Jews and there are Gentiles. Now the Jews were formerly called Israelites okay. So they started off first as Israelites of the nation of Israel. And then eventually they were called Jews. Now Ephesians chapter 2 verse 11. He says “**Therefore...**” and when you see a therefore find out what the therefore is there for. I mark a “therefore” with three red dots in the shape of a triangle. And that's because therefore is a term of conclusion. So I want to see what is he concluding? What is the point? Usually when you find a “therefore” you'll find a point that God wants to make. And so it says “**Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh....**” (Ephesians 2:11a) Now we're marking every reference to “formerly.” And it's a very important word because what he's going to show them is what they were like before they came to know Jesus Christ, before they became saints of God. He's going to show them what they were like. So what I want us to do is just on your piece

of paper; you know I always like to have you have a piece of paper in front of you. And I like you to have a pen so that you can sketch out the truth that I want to show you. There’s nothing like a visual aid, but on that piece of paper I just want you to draw a cross, okay. And what he’s going to show them is what they these Gentiles were like before the cross. So on the left hand side of the cross as you put it on the center of your page I want you to put BC and that is before Christ. All right what were they like before Christ? So he’s going to show us what they were like before Christ and then eventually what we’re going to see is what they were like AD what they were like now in the year of the Lord when they belonged to the Lord and now every year that they have is a year that God has given them in order to serve Him. All right so this is what we’re going to look at. All right now what you would do is on the left hand side of the page on the left hand side of the cross you would put formerly. And this is a key word “formerly” and you would write down what you were formerly. Then to get a good analysis of this and this is in the study guide the free study guide that you can download by going to “preceptsforlife.com,” that’s “preceptsforlife.com”. When you mark a word in the Bible and this is one of the things that we teach you to do is we teach you to mark key repeated words. So when I mark “formerly” I put a triangle over it and then I color it brown, because that’s what it was like before they came to know Jesus Christ. Well if you were doing that you would go through the text then and you would look at every place that you marked “formerly.” And what you would do is on a separate piece of paper you would say formerly the Gentiles or what the Gentiles were formerly or just formerly, whatever you want to do. Just so you get the point. And then you would make a list. You would look at each time the word “formerly” is used. Now when you do that and you mark it you can see it instantly on the page. And so you see in verse 2 of Ephesians 2 they “**...formerly walked according to the course of this world...,**” so you would put down how they walked and whose dominion they were under

formerly. But now we come down to verse 11. **“Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who were called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision’ which is performed in the flesh by human hands – remember that you...,”** you Gentiles, **“...were at that time separate from Christ....” (Ephesians 2:11-12a)** So what you would do is under “formerly” you would write after you write down what you learn in verse 2, you would write that they were separate from Christ. That means that they were separated from Jesus Christ. Now separate from Christ remember another way to say that is separate from the Messiah. The Messiah; Messiah is an Old Testament word. Christ is a New Testament word. They both mean the same. Messiah is from the Hebrew and Christ is from the Greek. And so they’re both the same thing. And he says [you were separate from the Messiah.] (Paraphrase, Ephesians 2:12) Well the Jews from the beginning of time, even from the Garden of Eden, Eve was looking for the Messiah because the Messiah the Christ the Promised One the Anointed One that would crush the head of the serpent that one that would crush the head of the serpent was the Christ the Promised One. So ever since they, then ever since the Garden of Eden and I want you to get that they were waiting for Messiah. But the Gentiles they didn’t know anything about Messiah. Oh they might have heard about Messiah if they were connected to the Jews, but otherwise they were separate from the Christ. Now being separate from the Christ it says they were **“...excluded from the commonwealth of Israel....” (Ephesians 2:12b)** In other words they were not part of this nation of Israel. You say big deal, who wants to be part of the Jews? Look at what’s happened to them. O my friend you would want to be part of the Jews because salvation was of the Jews. We’ll talk about it when I come back in just a minute.

PART TWO

Welcome back, Beloved. You know it’s almost been 2000 years since Jesus Christ was crucified. But I think we forget what it was like for the Gentile world before Jesus Christ came. I mean these people were in big trouble. They were cut off from God. The only way that they could come to God would be to come and become a proselyte of the Jews and of the Jewish faith. So this is what you’re seeing and this is so important that you understand this. Let’s go to Ephesians chapter 2 and pick up where I left off, verse 11. **“Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh....” (2:11a)** And he’s saying this is the way you were born. He says **“...who are called ‘Uncircumcision’....” (2:11b)** That means that they hadn’t participated in the covenant of circumcision. Now the covenant of circumcision said that every Jewish male had to be circumcised in the foreskin of his flesh. And that circumcision according to Genesis chapter 17 was a sign of the covenant that God had made with Abraham. And if any Jew wasn’t circumcised he was cut off. Well what you have is you have the Gentiles and when the Jews looked at them they divided mankind into the circumcised the Jews and the uncircumcision. When you go to the days of Hitler many times when they suspected that this person might be a Jew if he was a man they just pulled his pants down and they saw was he circumcised. And if he was circumcised they knew that he was a Jew. So circumcision was a sign of the covenant. So the Gentiles were called the uncircumcision by the circumcision that was made in the flesh by human hands. And he’s saying this because there is a circumcision of our heart. It’s a spiritual circumcision. As the flesh, the foreskin was cut back and rolled back in the act of circumcision so what God does is when He comes in and He saves us our hearts are circumcised and that old flesh in a sense is rolled away and we no longer have a heart of stone, but we have a heart of flesh. And so he talks about people being circumcised of heart or uncircumcised of heart. And so

he wants them to understand when he’s talking about this circumcision he’s talking about a physical circumcision made by human hands. He says **“remember that you were at that time separate from Christ....”(2:12a)** Not only were you separate from Messiah, not only did you not know that there was a Promised One who was going to come who would take away your sins, you didn’t have a sacrifice for sins. The blood of bulls and goats were sacrificed year after year on Yom Kippur on the Day of Atonement for the cleansing for the covering of their sins. It never took away their sins but at least they covered their sins. The Gentiles didn’t have that. So they were excluded from Christ. They were excluded from the commonwealth of Israel. They were not Jews. He says, **“...and [they were] strangers to the covenants of promise....” (Ephesians 2:12)** They knew nothing about this covenant of promise this covenant of promise of the Messiah coming of the Christ coming. And I’m going to show you those covenants so that you understand them those covenants of promise. But before I show you the covenants of promise I want you to see what Israel was to God. I want you to understand because you may have some anti-Semitism in you or you may belong to a church that says God is through with the Jews. The Jews did not believe in Jesus Christ. The Jews rejected God and so God is through with the Jews. Well God’s not through with the Gentiles. God is still bringing Gentiles to Himself and I want to tell you something. God is not through with the Jews. Treat them as a nation. Get to know what God has to say and you will understand that God has made a covenant with Israel and the covenants of God are irrevocable. And someday when Messiah comes then the Jews that are living during that time will be saved. All Israel will be saved because the gifts and calling of God according to Romans 11 are irrevocable. God is a covenant keeping God. Now what I want to do is I want to show you a very important passage in Deuteronomy chapter 7. Now Deuteronomy is what they call the second giving of the Law. It’s not a second Law but it’s a second giving of the Law. The first giving of the Law

was on Mount Sinai. Now if you can just look at your map in your study guide. And what you have is you have the coastline and then you have the Mediterranean Sea to the left. Inside the coastline you have the Sea of Galilee, then you come down and you have the Dead Sea which is shaped like a kidney bean with it's back toward the Mediterranean Sea. All right now, what he is telling us is that God is going to give them the Law again. He gave them the Law in the Sinai. Moses received the Law at Mount Sinai. But now they have traveled up and they are on the east of the Jordan River which connects the Sea of Galilee with the Dead Sea and they are here and God is going to give them the Law again. And He's giving the Law to the next generation because the first generation of Jews did not believe God and so they wandered in the wilderness for forty years and then God killed all of those that would not believe and now Moses is here and they are on the east of the Jordan and once again He is giving to them the Law. And He's giving them instructions because they're about to go into this land, a land, now listen very carefully, that is occupied by Gentiles. And this is what he says. **“When the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering...it, and clears away many nations before you...and when the Lord...delivers them before you... you shall make no covenant with them. ...You shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons.”** He says, “[You shall get rid of their altars,] **you shall tear [them] down...and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire,”** (Deuteronomy 7:1a, 2-3, 5) which shows the state of the Gentiles. The Gentiles are without God. They have no concept of worshiping one God. They do not know that there is one God. And then he says to them, **“The Lord did not set His love ...”** (7:7a) **“For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you** [out of all the peoples of the of the earth to be a people for His own possession.]” (7:6) This is Israel, **“...a people for His own possession....”** And he says **“The Lord didn't set His love on you**

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nor choose you because you were more in number than...the [other] peoples...you were fewest....” He says, “but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath [that] He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand....” (7:8) What was the oath that He swore to the forefathers? It was one of the covenants of promise and we’ll look at it in the next program.