

# Small Group Discussion Outline



## A New Kind of Human Ephesians #6

In the second chapter of Ephesians, Paul outlines four key steps that God has taken towards the fulfilment of His purposes which Paul had previously outlined in chapter one.

The second of these key steps is found in Ephesians 2:11-22



**Read: Ephesians 2:11-22**



**What do you think the second key step God has taken is?**

This is a bit of a trick question as there are actually two key steps outlined in this passage. The first is that God has reconciled and united Jews and Gentiles (non Jews), the second is that God has removed the barriers between Gentiles and Himself, He has drawn everyone to Himself.

Historically there has been a lot of animosity between the Jews and, well, pretty much everyone else. By the first century AD this animosity had developed into a thinly-veiled hostility.

The Jews had allowed their privileged position as God's chosen people to become, what they viewed, as favouritism by God. It was even thought that the only reason Gentiles existed were to be fuel for the fires of hell.

As you can imagine, this kind of attitude did not go down too well with those who happened to be Gentiles!



**Read: Genesis 17:14, 1 Samuel 17:26b**



**What kind of label is "uncircumcised" in these contexts?**

To be "uncircumcised" meant to be outside of God's promises and blessings, and was an insult used by Jews of Gentiles.



**Read: Ephesians 2:11-12**



**How does Paul view circumcision?  
Describe the state of all Gentiles before Jesus came.**

Paul, although elsewhere in the New Testament he states the value and importance of the Jewish Law, here he reveals that the ritual of circumcision had become something that was purely physical and had no spiritual implications.

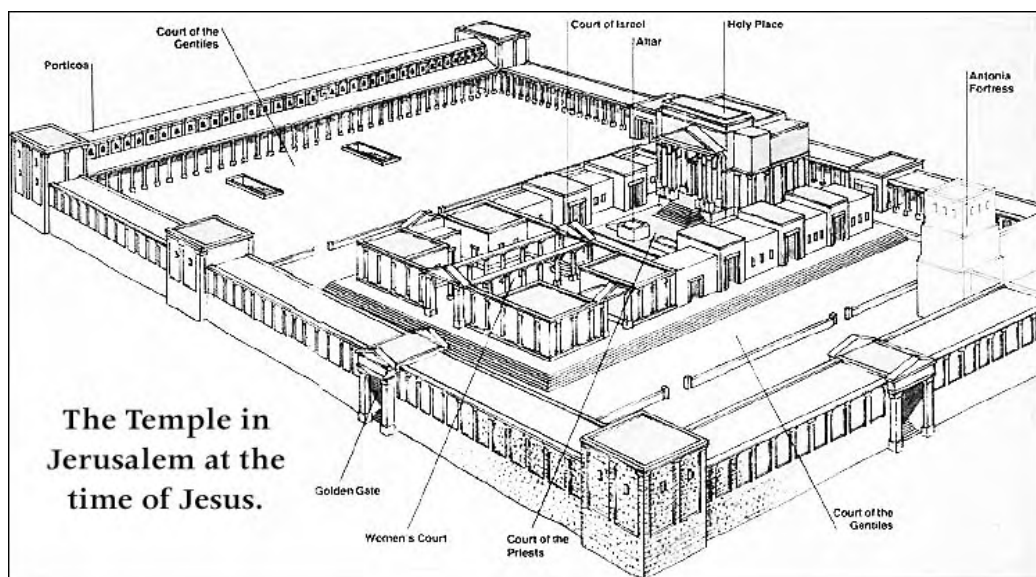


**Read: Ephesians 2:13-15a**

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The barrier that Jesus “destroyed” was a spiritual one which prevented Gentiles from having access to God, from receiving His promises and living under His blessings. It had, however, the perfect illustration in the design of God’s temple in Jerusalem.

The temple had several different courts of progressive exclusiveness. The outermost court was the Court of the Gentiles. This was as close as Gentile were permitted to come into God’s presence. It was here that Jesus did much of His teaching. There was a barrier that kept Gentiles from going any further with warning signs posted on it. They read: “No foreigner is allowed within the balustrades and embankment about the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will be personally responsible for his ensuing death.”

In addition to this, the rest of the temple was actually on a higher level than the Court of the Gentiles, there were several walls and gates and guards and steps which prevented non-Jews from coming close to God.



***What does this image tell us about our position in relation to God were it not for Jesus?***



***Read: Ephesians 2:15b-20***

***What has Jesus done?***



***What is our position in relation to God because of what Jesus has done?***

***Are there any barriers which remain between us and God?***

***Are there any barriers remaining which we cannot remove?***

The only thing that can stand between us and God is sin, and this is very easily dealt with because of God’s forgiveness. Only we can create barriers between God and ourselves.



***What are some of the reasons people feel that they cannot come close to God?***

***Who holds the keys for removing these?***

***What are some of the results of believing that we cannot come close to God?***

God has done everything to remove all the barriers between us and Him, nothing can stand between us the things we allow to like sin in our lives and the lies of the enemy. God has drawn us close to Him, so we are close, regardless of how we may feel.

***How will believing this truth change our lives?***

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