

We Are Citizens

"Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)—¹²remember 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." Ephesians 2:11-12

Gentiles were out.

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. ¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household..." Ephesians 2:13-19

Gentiles are in.

We were ...

... separated, far away, excluded, foreigners & aliens, without hope, without God

We are...

... in Him, brought near, fellow citizens

"When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, ²⁸shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place." ²⁹(They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.) ³⁰The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. ³¹While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³²He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul." Acts 21:27-32

What does the world see when it looks at you?

An [atheos]? Living without God's help, living a godless manner, not believing that God has a plan for you.

Or a [sympolitai]? A fellow citizen. Calling on God for guidance, walking a life that is led by Jesus, modeling a life that is Christ-like to the world, believing God has a wonderful plan for your life.

Small Group Questions

1. Share with the group your answer to the question above.
 - A. Does your life ever resemble that of an [atheos]? When? At work? With friends? At home? Other?
 - B. When do you find it easy to resemble a [sympolitai]? At work? With friends? At home? Other?
2. Were you a natural born Christian (grew up in a Christian home) or a "naturalized" Christian (Met the Lord 'on your own' later in life)?
 - A. What are the advantages of both?
 - B. What are the disadvantages of both?
3. We were once separated, far away and excluded from the promises of God. Through grace we have been reconciled to one another and to God.
 - A. Is there a fellow citizen (a Christian brother or sister) that you are currently "not-reconciled" with?
 - B. At this moment in your walk with Christ, do you feel completely reconciled to God?