

The 'IF THEN' Principle Applied in Ephesians 2

In this study, we will examine some foundational issues of 'mid-Acts' doctrine, and see how their basic understanding is **wrong** with the verses.

'Mid-Acts-ers' begin their spiritual gymnastics with 'rightly dividing' as their spring-board. Here they go:

2 Tim 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

Countless times in 'mid-Acts' messages, this quotation has been said,

"Since PAUL told us TO rightly divide

let's let PAUL show us HOW to rightly divide."

Then they proceed to a FAVORITE passage where they make their classic divisions: Time Past ---- But Now ---- and Ages to Come:

Eph 2:11-a Wherefore remember, that ye being **in time past** Gentiles in the flesh,

Since 'mid-Acts-ers' are so familiar with the 'IF THEN' principle, wonder how 'comfortable' they would be with it being used in Ephesians 2? Let's try it, and see how it works out.

'IF THEN' Point # 1

IF we Gentiles were the UNcircumcision ---

Eph 2:11-a Wherefore remember, that ye being **in time past**
Gentiles in the flesh,

Eph 2:11-b who are called **Uncircumcision**

THEN obviously, 'physical' Israel was the CIRCUMCISION:

Eph 2:11-c by that which is called **the Circumcision in the flesh**
made by hands;

Eph 2:12-a That **at that time** (At what time? In time past.)

'IF THEN' Point # 2

IF we Gentiles were WITHOUT CHRIST ---

Eph 2:12-b ye (**Gentiles**) were **without Christ**,

THEN by contrast, Israel HAD Christ.

PAUL showed that the Old Testament LAW was

- confirmed
 - established
 - ratified
 - validated
 - authenticated
 - sanctioned
 - certified
- **'IN CHRIST':**

Gal 3:17 And this I say, that

the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law,
which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul,
that it should make the promise of none effect.

The phrase 'in Christ' is written 78 times in the KJV.

- *It is written 1 time in Acts:* **Acts 24:24** And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning **the faith in Christ**.
- *It is written 2 times in Peter's 1st epistle. Here is 1 of them:*
1 Peter 5:14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.
Peace be with **you all that are in Christ Jesus**. Amen.
- *It is written 75 times in Paul's epistles however, Paul even applied the term to others --- who were **before** his ministry.*

Rom 16:7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, **my kinsmen (Israelites)**, and **my fellowprisoners (in jail for the 'same cause' of the 'same Christ')**, who are of note (**well known and respected**) among the apostles, who **also (among others, as the apostles - Gal 1:17)** were **in Christ before me**. (Paul)

Clearly, the 'Old Testament' saints were 'in Christ' **BEFORE Paul.**

That would mean that **THEY** were 'new creatures' too:

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore **if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

(also see **Heb 8:13**, Isa 64:8, Jer 18:6, Rom 9:21-24, 11:16, Gal 5:9)

THIS point is a major problem area for 'mid-Acts-ers' because they **guard** being 'in Christ' as only part of **PAUL's 'mystery program.'**

The churches of Judaea that were 'in Christ'

would not have recognized Paul, if they saw him

even though they knew about his reputation for persecuting people

who had faith 'in Christ'

before he himself came to his own faith 'in Christ':

Gal 1:22 And was unknown by face unto **the churches of Judaea which were in Christ:**

23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us **in times past now** preacheth **the faith which once he destroyed.**

The Judaeans saints that were 'in Christ' were **examples** to the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and **in the Lord Jesus Christ** (1 Thess 1:1), of **how to suffer for Christ:**

1 Thess 2:14 For ye, brethren, became followers of **the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus:** for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, **even as they have** of the Jews:

The church of God which is at Corinth, with **all the saints** which are in all Achaia (2 Cor 1:1) were also **companions in suffering for Christ:**

2 Cor 1:7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as **ye are partakers of the sufferings,** so shall ye be also of the consolation.

Peter also taught the saints not to be surprised if they suffered for Christ:

1 Pet 4:12-16 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as **ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings**; that, when his glory shall be revealed, **(at His coming)**

ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be **reproached for the name of Christ**, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you:

on their part he is evil spoken of,

but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16 Yet if any man **suffer as a Christian**, **(also see Acts 11:26)**

let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Moses knew 'the end of the Lord' (James 5:11), the reward for the faithful, and he was resolved to endure **reproach** for the sake of **Christ**:

Heb 11:24-26 By faith **Moses**, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to **suffer affliction** with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming **the reproach of Christ** greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for **he had respect unto the recompence of the reward**. **(also see Psa 19:7-11, 58:10-11; Prov 11:18; Isa 40:10, 62:11; Matt 5:12, 16:27; 1 Cor 3:8,14; Col 3:24; Heb 10:34-36)**

Moses was 'in Christ' just as the Old Testament was 'in Christ' like Paul said, that we already read in Gal 3:17. According to Paul, both Moses and Israel (the church in the wilderness-Acts 7:38) were sustained in Christ:

1 Cor 10:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized **unto Moses** in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for **they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ**.

They drank of Him, the Fountain of Living Waters (Jer 2:13, 17:13), as did the woman of Samaria. Jesus revealed to her that **He** was Messias/Christ:

John 4:10, 13-14 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee **living water**.

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

MESSIAS in the Old Testament was CHRIST in the New Testament:

John 4:25-26 The woman saith unto him,

I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ:

when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, **I that speak unto thee am he.**

Moses and the prophets wrote about Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ:

John 1:41,45 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, **We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.**

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, **We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus** of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Who else, but Christ, was Moses in? Moses knew Christ; he wrote of Him:

John 5:46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

Abraham was also happy to know about Christ:

John 8:56 Your father **Abraham rejoiced to see my day:**

and he saw it, and was glad. (also see Gen 15:1-6, Gal 3:7-9, 16)

Point # 2 showed Gentiles were without Christ, but Israel had Christ:

Matt 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name **Emmanuel**, which being interpreted is, **God with us.**

'IF THEN' Point # 3

IF we Gentiles were **ESTRANGED** from Israel, we were **HOSTILE** ---

Eph 2:12-c being **aliens** from the commonwealth of Israel,

THEN Israel had fellowship / friendship with God, as Abraham's seed:

2 Chron 20:7 Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to **the seed of Abraham thy friend** for ever?

Luke 12:4 And I say unto **you my friends**, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

'IF THEN' Point # 4

IF we Gentiles were **FOREIGNERS** from the covenants of promise ---

We did **NOT share** in them:

Eph 2:12-d and **strangers from the covenants of promise**,

THEN Israel **HAD** the covenants and the promises:

Rom 9:4-5 Who are **Israelites; to whom pertaineth** the adoption, and the glory, and **the covenants**, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, **and the promises**;

The next verse goes back to Point # 2, that Israel **HAD** Christ:

5 Whose are the fathers, and **of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came**, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

'IF THEN' Point # 5

IF we Gentiles had **NO** hope ---

Eph 2:12-e having **no hope**,

THEN Israel **HAD** hope (Joel 3:16-17, Matt 22:31-32, John 11:24-25):

Psa 146:5 Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,
whose hope is in the LORD his God:

Israel's hope was everlasting life in the land of promise

the resurrection of the dead (Job 19:25-26):

Acts 26:6-8 And now I stand and am judged for

the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, **hope** to come. For which **hope's** sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you,

(What was that hope?) that **God should raise the dead?**

'IF THEN' Point # 6

IF we Gentiles were WITHOUT God ---

Eph 2:12-f and **without God** in the world:

THEN Israel HAD God (Matt 1:23). Moses told the children of Israel:

Deut 31:6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, **he it is that doth go with thee;**
he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Isa 41:10,14 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel;
I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

Back in the Ephesians 2 passage the "But now" section is next.

Of the things we Gentiles did NOT have in time past

NOW because of Christ's blood (the blood of the NEW testament)

.... we HAVE them all:

Eph 2:13 **But now** (How is the change possible?) **in Christ Jesus**
ye who sometimes were far off
are made nigh **by the blood of Christ.**

We will go through each of the points again ... to see how it's different now.

Point # 1

We Gentiles were the UNcircumcision ---

But now (Eph 2:13) we Gentiles ARE the circumcision:

Phil 3:3 For **we are the circumcision**, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Col 2:11 In whom also **ye are circumcised** with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Point # 2

We Gentiles were WITHOUT CHRIST ---

But now (Eph 2:13) we Gentiles HAVE Christ:

Col 3:3 For ye are dead, and **your life is hid with Christ** in God.

Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery **among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you**, the hope of glory:

Point # 3

We Gentiles were HOSTILE **ALIENS** and **ENEMIES** ---

But now (Eph 2:13) we are brought back into a state of **HARMONY**
with God:

Rom 5:10 For if, when **we were enemies**,
we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,
much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Col 1:20-21 And, having **made peace through the blood of his cross**, by him **to reconcile** all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things **in earth**, or things **in heaven**.
21 And **you, that were** sometime **alienated and enemies** in your mind by wicked works, **yet now hath he reconciled**

But now (Eph 2: 13) we Gentiles are also brought into **HARMONY** with Israel:

Eph 2:14-18 For **he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;**
 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity,
 even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;
 for **to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;**
 16 And that **he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross,** having slain the enmity thereby:
 17 And came and preached **peace** to you which were afar off,
 and to them that were nigh.
 18 For **through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.**

Point # 4

We Gentiles were STRANGERS from the covenants of promise --- But now
 (Eph 2: 13) **we share in Israel's promises as partakers 'WITH' them:**

Eph 2:19 Now therefore **ye are no more strangers and foreigners,**
 but **fellowcitizens with the saints,**
 and **of the household of God;**

Rom 11:17 And if some of the branches be broken off, **(due to unbelief)**
 and thou, being a wild olive tree **(Gentiles),**
 wert **grafted in among them (Israel),**
 and **(Gentiles) with them (Israel) partakest**
 of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

Eph 3:6 That the Gentiles should be **fellowheirs, (we share the same inheritance with them)** and **of the same body,**
 and **partakers of his promise in Christ** by the gospel:

Point # 5

We Gentiles had NO hope --- But now (Eph 2: 13) ... we Gentiles have hope
 in Christ of the resurrection of the dead:

Titus 2:13 **Looking for that blessed hope,** and the glorious appearing
 of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Titus 3:7 That being justified by his grace,
we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Rom 15:13 Now **the God of hope fill you**
with all joy and peace in believing, that **ye may abound in hope,**
through the power of the Holy Ghost.

2 Thess 2:16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Fa-
ther, which hath loved us, and **hath given us** everlasting consolation and
good hope through grace,

Point # 6

We Gentiles were WITHOUT God ---

But now (Eph 2:13) we Gentiles HAVE God:

Rom 15:33 Now **the God of peace be with you all.** Amen.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Ghost,
be with you all. Amen.

To remember our dreadful position in time past (Eph 2:11-12)

But now (Eph 2:13) how we have been blessed!

'Mid-Acts-ers' try to make these blessings **in a SEPARATE 'SECTION'**
completely DIVIDED away from the promises Israel had.

But 'mid-Acts-ers' are **wrong.** God broke down the middle wall of partition,
but 'mid-Acts-ers' still have a wall erected between the saints 'now'
and the saints who were 'in Christ' BEFORE Paul.