

The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON XXVII : VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL RECONCILIATION (2:11-22)

The Original Position of the Gentiles (2:11-13)

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (KJV)

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) — 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 through the blood of Christ. (NIV)

Wherefore, remember, that ye [were] once the nations in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands, that ye were at that time apart from Christ, having been alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and without God, in the world; and now, in Christ Jesus, ye being once afar off became nigh in the blood of the Christ, (Young’s Literal Translation)

v12 — FIVE DESCRIPTIONS OF THE GENTILES’ UNSAVED CONDITION — remember that you were at that time — ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ [hoti ēte tō kairō ekeinō] “Circumcision may be the obvious place to begin a discussion of the distinction between Jew and Gentile and it may be tactful to get it out of the way at the beginning as repulsive to Gentiles but there are more important things to remember, and so [Paul] now expresses the distinction in new ways. Verse 12 is parallel to v. 11 The [‘that’] is not causal but serves to introduce five descriptions of the Gentile condition. [Ephesians 4.17-19] throws a different light on that condition. *For the present [Paul] writes a description of the disadvantages which Gentiles suffered as seen, not by a Jew, but by a Jewish Christian.*” [Best, 240] *“By detailing Gentile deficiencies of an earlier time in such a fashion, [Paul] makes clear that he holds that Israel’s advantages at that time were real ones. Israel’s history did have validity, and as Gentile Christians think about their relationship to the salvation God has provided, they should be aware of a significant heritage in Israel.”* [Lincoln, 136]

‘REMEMBER’ # 1 — SEPARATED FROM CHRIST

separated from Christ — χωρὶς Χριστοῦ [chōris Christou] chōris = ‘without, apart from’. What does it mean to be ‘without Christ’ or ‘apart from Christ’? *It most likely has reference to being ‘without Christ’ as being separated from the Messiah in which Israel hoped.* Although this could probably be described as ‘common knowledge’, let us take a few moments to look at the terms used here:

THE MESSIAH FROM A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE — *“The word ‘Messiah’ (mashiach) comes from the verb mashach, which means to smear or anoint with oil, usually for the purpose of dedicating or consecrating something (such as a temple vessel) or someone (such as a prophet, priest or king) for the service of Adonai.”* [from http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Names_of_G-d/Messiah/messiah.html; May 15, 2014] *“Mashiach: The Messiah — Belief in the eventual coming of the mashiach is a basic and fundamental part of traditional Judaism. It is part of Rambam’s 13 Principles of Faith, the minimum requirements of Jewish belief (‘I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the mashiach, and though he may tarry, still I await him every day.’ – Principle 12 of Rambam’s 13 Principles of Faith). In the Shemoneh Esrei prayer, recited three times daily, we pray for all of the elements of the coming of the mashiach: ingathering of the exiles; restoration of the religious courts of justice; an end of wickedness, sin and heresy; reward to the righteous; rebuilding of Jerusalem; restoration of the line of King David; and restoration of Temple service.... [T]raditional Judaism maintains that the messianic idea has always been a part of Judaism.... The term ‘mashiach’ literally means ‘the anointed one,’ and refers to the ancient practice of anointing kings with oil when they took the throne. The mashiach is the one who will be anointed as king in the End of Days. The word ‘mashiach’ does not mean ‘savior.’ The notion of an innocent, divine or semi-divine being who will sacrifice himself to save us from the consequences of our own sins is a purely Christian concept that has no basis in Jewish thought. Unfortunately, this Christian concept has become so deeply ingrained in the English word ‘messiah’ that this English word can no longer be used to refer to the Jewish concept. The word ‘mashiach’ will be used throughout this page.”* [from ‘JUDAISM 101’ website, <http://www.jewfaq.org/mashiach.htm>; May 15, 2014] *Messiah = “Anglicization of the Hebrew, ‘mashiach’ (anointed). A man who will be chosen by G-d to put an end to all evil in the world, rebuild the Temple, bring the exiles back to Israel and usher in the world to come. It is better to use the Hebrew term ‘mashiach’ when speaking of the Jewish messiah, because the Jewish concept is very different from the Christian one.”* [from ‘JUDAISM 101’ website, <http://www.jewfaq.org/defs/messiah.htm>; May 15, 2014]

MESSIAH = ‘THE ANOINTED ONE’ IN HEBREW — “Anointing, the rubbing of the body with grease or oil, is meant to promote physical well-being. Legal anointing by pouring oil over the head supposedly confers strength or majesty. The Hittites anoint their kings, in Egypt the king anoints high officials, the vassal princes of Syria and Canaan are anointed, and priesthood is at times associated with anointing.... *The most common form of anointing in the OT is that of the king. Anointing is part of the ritual of enthronement and is the most distinctive individual act. Saul, David, and Solomon are all anointed, and among later kings we read of Joash, Jehoahaz, and Jehu (cf. also Hazeel and the general reference in Judg. 9:7ff.). God does the anointing in Ps. 45:7.... By means of it the people give the king his authority.* It is carried out by pouring oil on the head from a horn (1 Sam. 16:13) or other vessel (10:1). God himself may anoint or command the anointing (9:16; 10:1; 16:3). This fact denotes legitimacy in God’s eyes. When the anointing refers to neighboring kings, the point is that God directs the destinies of other nations as well. Anointing by God implies authorization and a specific commission whereby the king now represents the people....

- The High Priest. The OT does not tell us much about the anointing of the high priest. Its meaning is disputed; some view it as a rite of purification, others as a rite of empowering inasmuch as the high priest becomes the successor of the Davidic dynasty. In Zech. 4:14 we have both an authorized ruler and an authorized high priest. When these are called sons of oil, the element of holiness, i.e., of separation to God, is of great importance.
- The Priests. The idea of dedication and purification lies behind the extension of anointing to all priests.
- Prophets. In spite of 1 Kgs. 19:16 anointing of prophets is never the rule. In Is. 61:1 God himself anoints for a particular task, probably by conferring the Spirit.
- Objects. Jacob consecrates a pillar by anointing in Gen. 28:18. We also read of the anointing of the altars (Ex. 29:36), the tabernacle (30:26), the ark (30:26), the laver (40:11), and all objects relating to the altar (40:10)....
- The King. Saul is most commonly called ‘the Lord’s anointed.’ Apart from Saul, only Davidic kings bear the title (except in Is. 45:1). **Saul.** Since anointing is most common in Judah and for Davidic kings, it is surprising that Saul mostly frequently bears the title ‘the Lord’s anointed.’ The divine anointing that confers divine authorization and protection is the theological principle behind the usage.... The anointed belongs to God and is thus under his protection (Ps. 2:2). Yet he also belongs to the people (Ps. 28:8). He thus occupies a mediating position like the priest of prophet. Passages that refer to God’s anointed are not directly messianic or eschatological, but a messianic or eschatological understanding is implicit in many of them. **Cyrus as the Lord’s Anointed.** Is. 45:1 shows that the title may be used even where there is no rite of anointing and where a ruler of an alien faith and people is intended. The point here is that God gives Cyrus a definite mission that relates to Israel’s redemption. In this regard he replaces the impotent Davidic dynasty. As salvation is expected from the kingly rule of the anointed, hope focuses on the Persian king who steps into the breach. The expression is a bold and isolated one.... **Messianic Ideas in Israel.** Is. 9:5-6. The point here is the accession of a new Davidic ruler but with the eschatological implication (v. 6) of an indefinite reign of perfect salvation. The final Davidic king will be God’s representative on earth.” [Kittle’s TDNT Abridged, p1323ff]

CHRIST = ‘THE ANOINTED ONE’ IN GREEK — When we speak of ‘our Lord Jesus Christ,’ we are not using the word ‘Christ’ in the sense of Jesus’ last name. *The word ‘Christ’ is a title, equivalent to the Hebrew word ‘Messiah’ in the OT.* Note as well that our English word ‘Christ’ is not a *translation* of the Greek word but rather a *transliteration*, meaning our English word is actually the Greek word taken letter-for-letter from the Greek into the English language. If we were to *translate* the Greek word then the English would be ‘anointed’ or ‘anointed one.’ But if we were to *transliterate* the word then we would take the Greek word directly into English without any translation. The Greek word looks like this: Χριστός and is taken letter-for-letter into English as ‘christos.’ As to the word’s meaning, here is one lexicon’s definition:

“Χριστός [christos] strictly *one who has been anointed*, symbolizing appointment to a task; as a title for Jesus, designating him as the *Messiah* sent from God (see JN 1.41), *Christ, (the) Anointed One* (MT 1.16).” [Friberg Greek Lexicon]

This word is taken from the root word χρίω [chriō] meaning ‘to be rubbed, anoint’. Here is some background on these words from Kittel-Bromiley’s Abridged Theological Dictionary of the NT:

“1. chriō, found in Homer and then in the tragic dramatists, means ‘to rub, to stroke,’ or, with oils etc., ‘to smear, to anoint.’ Use varies, so that we find the oiling of weapons, their smearing with poison, the rubbing of birds’ wings with pitch, whitewashing or painting, and rubbing with a garment, as well as anointing after bathing, or the anointing of the sick or the dead.

“2. christos means ‘smear on, anointed,’ and as a noun ‘ointment.’ It never relates to persons in the nonbiblical sphere....

“The Christ Statements of the NT. In all, christos occurs 529 times in the NT (379 times in Paul)....

“3. Luke. With the absolute christos (20:41; 22:67) Luke also uses ‘the Christ of God’ (9:20). The ‘of God’ shows by whom he is anointed and to whom he belongs. Before the high priest Jesus refuses to say whether he is the Christ but he affirms his divine sonship (22:67ff.). The title occurs in the accusation before Pilate (23:2), and the scoffers mock at his claim to be the Christ of God, the Chosen One (23:35). The impenitent thief joins in the mockery (v. 39). In the infancy stories the angel proclaims Jesus as Savior, Christ, and Lord (2:11). The eternal King of 1:31ff. is the royal Messiah of

David's house and also the Lord of Gentile believers. Simeon hails the infant Jesus as the Lord's Christ (2:26) who brings peace and salvation. The Messiah is also the Son of God in 1:32; 4:41. In 4:18 Jesus quotes Is. 61:1 to show that he is the Messiah as the recipient of the Spirit by whom he is conceived and who is given to him at his baptism. In 24:26 Jesus explains to the two disciples why the Christ had to suffer. This is the Lord's own understanding. In prophetic action, the way through the cross to glory brings it to fulfilment. The crucifixion and resurrection give the picture of the Messiah its decisive shape.

4. Acts. In Acts 4:27 the holy servant of God is said to be anointed by him. Peter tells Cornelius that God anointed Jesus (10:38). As Lord and Christ (2:36) Jesus is the one who is risen (v. 31) but who was also crucified (3:18). Conversion to this Christ brings remission of sins (3:19) and is the presupposition of the actualizing of eschatological salvation with his return. God has appointed Jesus as the Christ (3:20), and heaven must receive him until the time of consummation. The eschatological prophet is the royal Messiah all according to Scripture (vv. 22ff.). When the apostles preach and teach Jesus as the Christ they have the whole of his person and work in view (5:42; cf. 8:5, 12)....

“The Baptist denies that he is the Messiah (1:20), and Andrew claims that he has found the Messiah in Jesus (1:41; cf. 1:45, 49). The Messiah here is the kingly Messiah, Son of God and Son of Man (cf. 1:51), who has a special endowment of the Spirit (1:33). The aim of the gospel is to lead to faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (20:31), who acts in unity with the Father, who has come into the world to do so (cf. 11:27), and who by so doing gives life (5:21, 26). The Samaritan woman also sees in Jesus the Messiah (4:29), but she can do this only because Jesus reveals himself to her (4:25-26). Jewish leaders object to his connection with Nazareth and his open origin (7:26-27). In reply, Jesus points to his true origin with the Father (7:28-29). His coming from Galilee conceals his Davidic birth at Bethlehem (7:41-42). Only the power and content of his sayings show that he is truly the Christ. The final objection of his crucifixion remains (12:34). In his answer Jesus points to the limited duration of his earthly work (12:35-36). He also testifies to the eternal work of the glorified Lord (12:31-32; 14:12ff.)....

“[John's] Epistles. Opponents, possibly Ebionites but more likely docetic Gnostics, deny that Jesus is the Christ (1 Jn. 2:22; cf. 5:5). In answer the author points to the one Jesus Christ who is Son of God (5:5-6). In 5:6 Jesus Christ is not just a double name; it firmly associates the historical Jesus and the heavenly Christ....

“Antichrist. Those who confess the sonship and messiahship of Christ by the Spirit (1 Jn. 4:15; 2:22; 4:2) are born of God (5:1), but those who contest them are antichrists (2:22) controlled by the spirit of antichrist (4:2). In 2:18 and 4:3 antichrist is a coming apocalyptic figure, the opponent of Christ whose power increases prior to the end but who is finally judged and destroyed. This figure, however, is already at work in false teachers (antichrists) who come from within the community and whose appearance shows that the last hour is near (1 Jn. 2:18; cf. 4:3; 2 Jn. 7).” [Kittle's TDNT Abridged, 849, 1328-1335]

‘REMEMBER’ # 2 — ALIENATED FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL

alienated from the commonwealth of Israel — ἀπῆλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ [apēllotriōmenoi tēs politeias tou Israēl] **alienated** = ἀπῆλλοτριωμένοι [apēllotriōmenoi] lit, ‘having been alienated,’ [Moule, 76] occurs in the NT only here, 4:18 and Col 1:21. In each of its other usages it refers to estrangement from God.

commonwealth — “The term πολιτεία [politeia] is used in classical Greek with reference to citizenship, or with reference to a commonwealth or state. It appears eight times in the LXX but not in the canonical books. In Maccabees it generally has reference to a way of life (e.g., 2 Macc 8:17; 4 Macc 17:9). **Hence, the term can be taken in three ways: citizenship, commonwealth, or state, or a way of life or conduct.** The term appears only twice in the NT. In Acts 22:28 it refers to a Roman commander who has purchased his ‘citizenship.’ **In the present context, although earlier commentators thought πολιτεία [politeia] referred to ‘a manner of life’ (Vulgate), the more recent commentators think it refers either to the state or commonwealth (AV, RV, ASV, RSV, NASB, NRSV) of Israel or to citizenship or membership (JB, NIV, NJB) of Israel.** Of these last two interpretations, the first has reference to a commonwealth, state, or body politic, whereas the last has reference to a citizenship, a figurative sense of belonging to a group, here the privileged community of Israel chosen by God as recipients of the promise. In the present context the last view is preferred because the whole context discusses the privileges of belonging to a group of people who had a relationship with God.” [Hoehner, 356f] But while Hoehner states some (especially early commentators) considered the word to mean ‘a manner of life,’ Ernest Best explains why this cannot be the sense, at least in this context: “Politeias” [commonwealth] has a wide range of meanings. It does not refer merely to Israel’s “way of life” since that would make 2:19 difficult; nor does it refer to the formal constitution of Israel. **It refers to membership in Israel in the special sense of possessing the rights, privileges and duties which go with belonging to Israel as a defined political and religious community. Our rigid separation between politics and religion was unknown in the ancient world.**” [Best, 241] Verse 19 says the following:

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Eph 2:19 NKJV)

I believe Ernest Best's point is that Paul is stating that the Gentiles were at one time alienated from Israel's ‘commonwealth’ (v. 12) but through Christ they are now ‘no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens...’ (v. 19) Not just this context but the entirety of the NT agrees the Gentiles becoming ‘fellow citizens’ with the Jews had nothing to do with taking upon themselves the Jewish way of life, as it did in the OT (e.g., see Acts 15). H. G. T. Moule agrees:

“Under the Old Covenant, it was generally necessary to belong, in some sense, to the outer Israel in order to be one of the inner.” [Moule, 77] Therefore in the OT there was no such things as a ‘Gentile believer,’ only ‘Gentiles who have entered into the Jewish faith.’

Andrew Lincoln sums up what I believe Paul to be saying like this:

“The Greek word here politeias can mean right of citizenship but it is more likely to have the meaning here of constitutive government, state or commonwealth. Israel is therefore being viewed as a theocratically constituted nation.” [Lincoln, 137]

‘REMEMBER’ # 3 — STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE

and strangers to the covenants of promise — καὶ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας [kai xenoi tōn diathēkōn tēs epangelias] Expressed in Jewish terms as was the second, the Gentiles were “strangers” in respect to the *covenants* (plural) of *promise* (singular). “The plural ‘covenants’ is unusual, appearing in the NT only at Rom 9.4, where the singular is a variant, and Gal 4.24, which mentions two covenants of which only one refers to Israel. Normally God is regarded as having a covenantal relationship with Israel which was renewed or reaffirmed on a number of occasions. In Jewish literature the plural regularly means ‘promises, decrees, oaths.’ *The covenant made with Noah is irrelevant as predating that made with Abraham and in any case it is not a covenant made with Israel. [Paul] speaks of a promise (singular) as associated with the covenants and though the term promise is not frequent in the OT, appearing almost as often in Ephesians as in the whole of the OT, there is a forward look in the covenants relating to the continuance of Israel which could be seen as indicating a promise. Gentiles are strangers in respect of that forward look and so to that promise.*” [Best, 242] “The reference is to the *many* Compacts, as with Abraham, Moses, Levi, David, Joshua; and *perhaps* to the New Covenant itself, as of course ‘connected with’ the Promise.” [Moule, 77] Therefore the *promise* (singular) would refer to the *future inheritance of the seed of Abraham, pointing towards and being fulfilled in their promised Messiah.*

‘REMEMBER’ # 4 — HAVING NO HOPE

having no hope — ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες [elpida mē exontes] “*The final two phrases are couched in terms which appear to lack any reference to Israel yet to a Jew they would have been natural consequences of the preceding three in representing the ‘spiritual’ condition of the Gentiles. But the latter, who would not have been troubled by the first three accusations, would have rejected these two as false because, with few exceptions, they did not regard themselves as atheists or without hope.... The reference to hope follows naturally on that to the promise, for hope arises out of promises. Jewish hope was wider than the expectation of a Messiah or an afterlife; it was essentially the hope that the Jewish people should continue to be God’s people and he their God, though the hope might be expressed with varying emphasis in different periods and by different people.*” [Best, 242f] But while the Gentiles would have denied they were “without hope”, in reality, while they lived in the world apart from Christ there was no real hope for them. “*The statement here is absolute.... It is not only that they had not the hope, the Messianic hope which was one of the distinctions of the Israelite, but that they were utterly without hope. Ignorant of the Divine salvation and of Christ in whom it was found, they had nothing to hope for beyond this world.*” [Salmond, Expositor’s GK Testament, 293]

BIBLICALLY: HOPE IS NOT ‘WISFUL THINKING’ — By definition ‘hope’ is not a mere wish, e.g., ‘I hope it doesn’t rain this weekend.’ Rather *the Christian hope is the firm expectation based upon the promises of God. Hope is a complex emotion made up of a desire for an object and an expectation of obtaining it. Where either of these is lacking, there is not Scriptural hope.*

THE UNSAVED HAVE WHAT THEY CALL ‘HOPE’ BUT IT IS ILLUSIONARY, UNREAL — It is not that the unregenerate do not have their hopes; it is that their hopes are illusions and the only real hope is found within the scriptures. “A variety of hopes for the future could be found among Gentiles, and this is an evaluation of such hopes. They could be seen as no hope because they were not the true hope, based on the promise to Israel of the Messiah and the salvation of the end-time. *It is only Christ among the Gentiles that can produce hope (cf. Col 1:27), and being reminded that in reality in the past they had no hope should cause the readers to appreciate all the more that hope which they now enjoy (cf. 1:18; 4:4).*” [Lincoln, 138]

‘REMEMBER’ # 5 — WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD

and without God in the world — καὶ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ [kai atheoi en tō kosmō.] “The term ἄθεοι [atheoi, ‘without God’] occurs nowhere else in the NT or LXX. *Where it is used in Greek writings, it can denote either a person who does not believe in a deity, an impious person, or a person forsaken by God or the gods. Again [Paul’s] language here is not that of a straightforward description in either of the first two senses, for Gentiles could have a pantheon of gods and be devoted to their religion. The term is used as an evaluation. The Gentile readers may have believed in a god or gods, but they did not have the true God, Israel’s God.* This evaluation is similar to that of Paul in 1 Cor 8:5, 6; Gal 4:8; 1 Thess 4:5.” [Lincoln, 138; see also O’Brien, 190] “ἄθεοι [atheoi, ‘without God’] can mean: (1) those who do not believe in God; the word was used in this way against both Jews and Christians since they did not worship any of the gods recognized among the Gentiles; (2) godless, impious; a moral rebuke which would hardly be in place here; (3) abandoned by God or the gods. In using the word [Paul] will have intended some combination of (1) and (3). Neither charge could have been made to stick absolutely. *Paul is not going against his*

Jewish upbringing when he allows that Gentiles have some knowledge of the true God (Rom 1.18ff; cf. Acts 17.16ff), nor as a Christian had he completely abandoned them for he planned their ultimate redemption (Rom 9-11). Pagans might have laughed scornfully at [Paul's] charges, but his Gentile-Christian recipients would have agreed with them. While [Paul] associates hopelessness and godlessness many today who do not believe in God would deny that they were without hope, though their hope might lack a transcendental dimension." [Best, 243]

THOSE WITHOUT CHRIST ARE WITHOUT GOD — *We often hear of those who 'love God' while denying Jesus Christ. That is an impossibility according to Scripture.* "But at no period were the Ephesians, or any other Gentiles, destitute of all religion. Why, then, are they styled *Atheists*? for an *Atheist*, strictly speaking, is one who does not believe, and who absolutely ridicules, the being of a God. That appellation, certainly, is not usually given to superstitious persons, but to those who have no feeling of religion, and who desire to see it utterly destroyed. I answer, Paul was right in giving them this name, for he treated all the notions entertained respecting false gods as nothing; and with the utmost propriety do godly persons regard all idols as 'nothing in the world' (1 Corinthians 8:4). *Those who do not worship the true God, whatever may be the variety of their worship, or the multitude of laborious ceremonies which they perform, are without God: they adore what they know not (Acts 17:23) Those who were formerly declared to be without Christ, are now declared to be without God; as John says, 'whosoever hath not the Son, hath not the Father,' (1 John 2:23); and again, 'whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God' (2 John 1:9).... It is not to one age only, or to one nation, that the saying of our Lord applies, 'I am the way;' for he adds, 'No man cometh unto the Father but by me.'* (John 14:6)." [Calvin, Ephesians]

v13 — **But now** — **νυνὶ** [nuni de] "now" is emphatic by position, picks up the "once" of v. 11 and the "at that time" of v. 12. Greek scholar A. T. Robertson says this is a "Strong contrast, as opposed to 'at that time.'" [Robertson, Word Pictures]

in Christ Jesus — **ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ** [en Christō Iēsou] as a part of this phrase, "in Christ Jesus" refers to no longer being apart from Christ but being with him. As has been mentioned in previous studies, *any blessing anyone ever receives is due to their relationship through and in Christ!*

you who once were far off have been brought near — **ὑμεῖς οἱ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγενήθητε ἐγγύς** [humeis hoi pote ontes makran egenēthēte engus] "The use of the language of 'near' and 'far' here does not constitute a quotation of Isa 57:19, or even necessarily an allusion to it. The writer speaks of those far off having come near, a notion not found in Isa 57:19, but one which uses terminology common in Jewish discussions of proselytism. The terminology from proselytism does prompt a reference to Isa 57:19 later, in v 17, but that OT test is not yet in view in v 13. *Often in the OT, the Gentile nations can be described as 'far off' (cf. Deut 28:49; 29:22; 1 Kings 8:41; Isa 5:26; Jer 5:15), while Israel is thought of as 'near' to God (cf. Ps 148:14). These terms, 'far' and 'near,' later occur frequently in discussions about proselytes.*" [Lincoln, 138f]

"For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:39 NKJV)

"Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 22:21 NKJV; Paul giving his testimony before the Jews in Jerusalem after his arrest)

"Once they were 'afar' but now they are 'near'. While the implications of this change begin to be worked out here they are brought out more fully in vv. 14-18.... *'Afar' and 'near' are relative terms requiring a fixed point from which to be measured. This could be Judaism, the church, or God.* It can hardly be the church even though the characteristics of Judaism which the Gentiles lack have been described in v. 12, since those described as 'near' are actually in the church and not just 'near' to it. The choice is then between Judaism and God; since 'the blood of Christ' is normally used in relation to redemption it may seem better to understand the nearness as that to God; yet the mention of nearness after v. 12 and the use of the terms in v. 17 leave us also with the thought of Gentiles as near to Israel. *There is then a certain degree of ambiguity or ambivalence, and this runs right through vv. 14-18 in that it is difficult to separate the 'horizontal' relation of Gentiles to Jews from their, and also Jews', 'vertical' relation to God. For their part the Gentiles, once far off (Deut 29.22; 1 Kgs 8.41; cf Deut 4.7; Ps 148.14) and without God (v. 12) , are now near to him.*" [Best, 245]

THE WORD 'PROSELYTE' COMES FROM THE GREEK WORD MEANING 'COME NEAR' — *"The noun 'proselyte' is, of course, derived ultimately from the Greek verb προσέρχεται [proserchesthai], 'to approach, come near'."* [Lincoln, 139] This is confirmed by several on-line English dictionaries:

pros·e·lyte – noun, *a person newly converted to a religious faith or sect; a convert, esp. a gentile converted to Judaism; from Church Latin proselytus; from Greek proselutos meaning recent arrival, convert; from proserchesthai to draw near* [from Collin's online Word English Dictionary]

Word Origin & History: proselyte – late 14c., from O. Fr. *proselite* (13c.), from L.L. *proselytus* (c.200), **from Gk. proselytos 'convert (to Judaism), stranger, one who has come over,' lit. 'having arrived,' from second aorist stem of proserkhesthai, from protī 'toward' + root of eleusesthai 'to be going to come'** [from Etymonline]

are made nigh — **ἐγενήθητε ἐγγύς** [egenēthēte engus] "First aorist **passive** indicative of [ginomai]." [Robertson, Word Pictures] That the word is passive emphasizes this is a work of God on believers; see below.

by the blood of Christ — **ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ**. [en tō haimati tou Christou.] this qualifying phrase goes with the verb and is understood instrumentally. The Gentiles are "brought near" by means of the death of Christ. "As the rest of the passage

will show, it does not mean that these Gentile Christians, like proselytes, have now become members of the commonwealth of Israel, but rather that *they have become members of a newly created community whose privileges transcend those of Israel, as vv 19-22 in particular make apparent. In addition, in the coming near of which this writer speaks, there are of course no special conditions to be fulfilled, since all that is necessary has already been accomplished through Christ's sacrificial death — 'through the blood of Christ.'*" [Lincoln, 139]