A. We Once Had No Hope (vv. 11-12):

a) Does not mean that they have actually forgotten what they were, only that Paul wants to call these matters to their attention so that they will have a greater understanding and appreciation of the past and the mighty reversal Christ has effected on their behalf. The privileges which they now enjoy would be appreciated all the more if they reflected carefully upon the spiritual condition from which they had been rescued.¹

b) In the Jewish temple, there was a wall that separated the “Court of the Gentiles” from the rest of the structure; and on this wall was a sign giving warning that any Gentile who passed beyond it would be killed.

- The Jewish historian Josephus informs us that thirteen stone slabs written in Greek and Latin stood at intervals on the barrier, warning Gentiles not to enter. Archaeologists have discovered two of these tablets.² The inscription reads: “No foreigner is to enter within the forecourt and the balustrade around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his subsequent death.” The fact of this barrier recently impressed itself upon Paul’s mind because he was falsely accused in Jerusalem for taking a Gentile, Trophimus, into the temple (Acts 21:28–29). This was the reason for his initial imprisonment in Jerusalem and then Caesarea.²

- The dividing wall in the temple was not broken down until eight years after the epistle was written.

1. In the flesh – uncircumcised:


a) In ancient Jewish beliefs, non-Jews could never participate in the fullness of the covenant without circumcision, although they could be saved by keeping some basic commandments. To be circumcised was to be grafted into the community of Israel, to become part of God's covenant people.

b) The Gentiles’ lack of the external sign of circumcision also meant that they lacked five privileges that God had given the nation Israel. First, they were separate from (lit., “without”) Christ not only personally (true also of many Jews) but also in that they had no national hope of the Messiah.

- **Second**, they were excluded from citizenship in Israel. They did not belong to the theocratic state of Israel (cf. Rom. 9:4). The word “excluded” is ἀπέλλοτριόμενοι, “alienated” or “estranged.” It is used only two other times (Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21). Though some Gentiles were admitted into Judaism as proselytes, Gentiles as a whole were excluded; they were thus alienated.

- **Third**, they were foreigners to the covenants of the promise (cf. Eph. 3:6). They were deprived of direct participation in God’s covenants and thus had no hope of future glory and blessing as Israel did. Israel’s “covenants” include the Abrahamic (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:18–21; 17:1–8), the Palestinian (Deut. 28–30), the Davidic (2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:1–4), and the New (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:24–30). These covenants—all pointing to “the promise” of the Messiah and of blessings through Him—assured Israel of a national existence, a land, a King, and spiritual blessings.

- **Fourth**, the Gentiles were without hope. Unlike Israel they had no expectation of a personal Messiah—Deliverer and the Messianic Age.

- **Fifth**, they were without God (αθεοί, “apart from God”) in the world. The Gentiles were in a desperate situation. They had no meaning, hope, purpose, or direction in life.

2. We did not have a covenant establishing our relationship with God. This was an indefinite separation. (talk about Adam and Eve – God made them in His image, which means they have a free will, He gave them a chance in His garden to decide to follow Him and they said no. God was released from any commitment to man – grown child at the house).

3. We had no covenant and no relationship. We were doomed for hell.

4. There was no reason for them to look for the Messiah.

   a) While the problem of sinners in general (vv. 1–10) was spiritual death, the problem of the Gentiles in particular was spiritual distance from God and His
blessings. Note in the Gospels that whenever Christ helped a Gentile, He did it at a distance (Matt. 8:5–13; 15:22–28).³

b) There are several things that divided the people:

- The lack of a covenant (vs. 12)
- Were not circumcised (vs. 11)
- Dividing wall (vs. 14)
- The laws (vs. 15)

5. Because of God’s covenant with Israel we were in a fixed state of not being allowed to be a part of anything Israel did to please God or God for Israel. We could not do anything to please God (John 9:31).

6. Could never be a part of the relationship God had with Israel.
7. We were not included in any pledge that God made to Israel – Rahab could not save herself. She needed the Jews (because of their relationship to God) to promise to save her.
8. Could never enjoy the benefits of God’s covenant with Israel. We could not do anything to please God (John 9:31).

9. Gentiles had no hope – Because we were in a set state of not being a part of Israel. Gentiles could continuously not expect obtaining anything God promised to Israel.
10. No expectation for God to anything for them.
11. No possibility of going to heaven.
12. God did not relate to the Gentile. A Gentile lacked a true knowledge of God.

B. Amazing Grace (v. 13):

1. But now:

   a) Introduce a contrast with the Gentile’s previous position (2:11–12). Christ brought peace (2:14) by joining the two groups into one.⁴

   b) Not only contrasts with “at that time” (vs. 12) but also introduces the contrast between “from Christ” (vs. 12) and “in Christ” (here).

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2. In Christ Jesus (1 Peter 2:9-10):

a) Jesus Christ tore down that wall! He tore down the physical wall, for in Christ all are made one (v. 15, and see Gal. 3:28–29). He tore down the spiritual wall and brought the “far off” Gentiles near (v. 13). He tore down the legal wall, for He fulfilled the Law in Himself and ended the reign of the Mosaic law that separated Jews and Gentiles (vv. 14–15). Christ not only made peace between sinners and God (Rom. 5:1), but He also made peace between Jews and Gentiles. He took sinful Jews and sinful Gentiles and through His cross made a “new man”—the church.\(^5\)

b) That true circumcision was not made with hands; it is the circumcision of Christ (Col. 2:11), which is now available to Gentiles and Jews in the new order established in the gospel of the Lord Jesus (cf. Rom. 2:28, 29; Phil. 3:2, 3).\(^6\)

c) Several things that took place as a result of Christ:
   - Christ and His blood (vs. 13)
   - Foreigners and Israel brought near (vs. 13).
   - Christ is our peace (vs. 14).
   - Broke down the dividing wall (vs. 14).
   - Abolish the law (vs. 15).
   - "To create in himself one new man out of two..." as a result Christ made peace (vs. 15)
   - Provided reconciliation through the cross (vs. 16).
   - Put to death hostility between the Gentiles and Jews (vs. 16).
   - He came specifically to preach peace (vs. 17).
   - Christ provided access to God (vs. 18).

4. We were continuously a long ways off from God’s presence or His benefits – There was no way that anyone could get into the Jewish temple. If they did not know about the temple they were doomed for hell.

5. Jesus brought us near – Despite the fact that there was no contract, Jesus death and resurrected once and for all created a new contract with God so that we now have access into the presence of God. The blood of Jesus included us into the benefits of God.


6. We are included in God’s kingdom (1 Peter 2:9-10).

7. We are now in the presence of God each day (Heavenly places, 1:3, 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 3:1-4):

   a) We are no longer far away (vs. 13).
   b) We now have peace in Christ (vs. 14).
   c) The creation of one new man (vs. 15).
   d) Removing hostility between Jew and Gentile (vs. 16).
   e) We now have access to the Father through the Spirit.