**One New Humanity**

Ephesians 2:11-22

Key Verse 15b

“His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace”

**Introduction**



 God's work of reconciliation is not only between God and the individual, though it must begin there. It is also between groups of people that are at odds, such as Jews and Gentiles were in the days of Paul.

 Ephesians 1:8-10 reads, “With all wisdom and understanding,he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.” God uses the bringing together Jew and Gentile into the Church as a preview of His ultimate work of summing up all things into Jesus Christ. Since He can do this, He can also do that.

 Today’s passage shows that Apostle Paul describes how the Jews and the gentiles became one. There was clear distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles with barriers. But Jesus made them one through his death and resurrection and let them build one body, the church of Christ. The work of Jesus on the cross is the common ground of salvation for both Jew and Gentile. Therefore there is no longer any dividing wall between Jew and Gentile. Jesus broke that wall down. Today we can learn why we should build up unity in Jesus and why forming unity is a blessing.

1. **Read verses 11-13. What were the Ephesians called formerly? (11) What was their spiritual condition before meeting Christ? (12) What change has taken place in Christ Jesus? (13)**

 **1-1. Read verses 11-13.**

 **Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— 12 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. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

**1-2. What were the Ephesians called formerly? (11)**

 that formerly you who are **Gentiles by birth** and **called “uncircumcised”** by those who call themselves “the circumcision”

- ‘Gentiles by birth’- The Jews called the non-Jews ‘Gentiles’, because they didn’t receive God’s blessing.

- Jews called Gentiles ‘uncircumcised’ with the sense of despising and ignoring them.

- ‘uncircumcised’ referred to ‘not God’s chosen people’, ‘unholy people’, ‘sinners’ ‘idol worshipers’

**1-3. What was their spiritual condition before meeting Christ? (12)**

 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

- Separated from Christ : they didn’t belong to Jesus not knowing the salvation in Christ.

- Excluded from citizenship in Israel: They were not God’s chosen people.

- Foreigners to the covenants of the promise: God established covenants of promise with Israel. The Gentiles were not involved in these covenants at all.

- Without hope and God: they didn’t know the One True God. Rather they worshipped idols. They couldn’t have any hope, just waiting for God’s eternal judgment because of their sin.

- They had lived under God’s curse without any hope.

**1-4. What change has taken place in Christ Jesus? (13)**

 But now **in Christ Jesus** you who once were far away **have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

- They have been brought near to God by the blood of Christ.

- Thanks to Jesus’ blood sacrifice, they can have access to God without any hindrance or barrier.

Hebrew 10:19-21 reads,

 **19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.**

**2. Read verses 14-18. How did Jesus make the Jews and Gentile one? (14, 15a) What was Jesus’ purpose for the two groups? (15b, 16) What else did Jesus do for them? (17-18)**

 **2-1. Read verses 14-18.**

 **For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.**

**2-2. How did Jesus make the Jews and Gentile one? (14, 15a)**

 For he himself is our peace, who has **made the two groups one** and has **destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility**, 15 **by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations.**

- He himself is our peace : Jesus is the prince of peace who brings true peace among people through his redemption work on the cross.

- Made the two groups one : Jesus made Jews and Gentiles one through his cross.

- In the temple, in between the court of the Gentiles and the court of the women, there was a physical barrier, an actual **wall of separation** between Jew and Gentile.



- Destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility : the barrier was the wall that divided the temple into two parts; the holy place where only Jews could enter and the court of Gentiles where Gentiles were allowed to enter. Also the wall could be the law that distinguished Jews and Gentiles.

- Paul was, at the time of this writing, under house arrest in Rome, awaiting trial because he was falsely accused by the Jews of taking a Gentile into the temple past the literal wall of separation dividing Jew and Gentile.

- Paul makes it clear that in Jesus, the wall is gone.

- By setting aside in his flesh the law : Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law through his death on the cross.

- The **wall of separation** is gone because the common Lordship is greater than any previous division.

- If the Lordship of Jesus Christ is not greater than any difference you have with others - be it political, racial, economic, language, geography or whatever, then you have not fully understood what it means to be under the Lordship of Jesus.

Romans 7:4 reads,

 “**So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.”**

Galatians 3:13 reads,

 **“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.”**

**2-3. What was Jesus’ purpose for the two groups? (15b, 16)**

 **His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two**, **thus making peace**, 16 and **in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross**, by which he put to death their hostility.



- The purpose of Jesus’ redemption work was to create one new humanity out of the Jews and Gentiles in him through his death and resurrection so that the two groups may become one for peace.

- Early Christians called themselves a "third race" or a "new race." Early Christians recognized that they were not Jews, not Gentiles, but **one new man** embracing all who are in Jesus.

- Through the cross : This means that Jesus' prayer in [John 17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/john/17/1-26/s_1014001) (that they all may be one) wasn't "just" a prayer. It was a prayer Jesus prayed knowing that His work of the cross would accomplish and a prayer He was willing to pray knowing His agony would be used to answer.

John 17: 23 reads,

 **“I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”**

Galatians 3:26-29 reads,

 **“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”**

2 Corinthians 5:17 reads,

 “**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”**

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 reads,

 **“So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man**.”

- The purpose was also to reconcile both Jews and Gentiles in one body to God through his cross.

- The one body refers to the church of Jesus Christ. The church is Jesus’ body and each member is part of the church.

Colossians 1:18 reads,

 “**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy**.”

1 Corinthians 12:13 reads,

 **“For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”**

**2-4. What else did Jesus do for them? (17-18)**

 He came and **preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near**. 18 For **through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit**.

· Jesus preached peace to both Gentiles and Jews through his death on the cross.

· Both Gentiles and Jews can have access to God by one Spirit through Jesus.

· Gentiles and Jews became one in one Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

. When conflict arises among Christian groups of different backgrounds, you can be sure that they forgot that they were saved by the same gospel and that they have the ***same access*** to God. One or both groups usually feel they have superior access to God.

1 Corinthians 12:13 reads,

 **“For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.**

 **3. Read 19-22. What are the new identities for believers in Jesus now? (19) What foundation have believers been built on ? (20) What happens to believers who are built into God’s household and are part of the whole building? (21, 22)**

**3-1. Read 19-22.**

 **Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.**

**3-2. What are the new identities for believers in Jesus now? (19)**

 **Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household**

- Jews and Gentiles, both are fellow citizens of God’s people and his kingdom in Jesus and they are God’s family members together.

- Paul refers to Christians of Gentile background. They should not regard themselves as "second-class citizens" in God's kingdom in any regard. They are not only full citizens, but also full and equal members of God's household.

**3-3. What foundation have believers been built on? (20)**

 **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.**

· The foundation of the apostles and prophets : The foundation where the Gentiles and Jews were built to be God’s people is the gospel and the prophecy of Christ Jesus. Both of them became God’s people by believing and obeying what they preached.

· Christ Jesus is the chief cornerstone of the community of the believers, the church of Jesus Christ. Jews and Gentiles were built to be one building having Jesus as the cornerstone.

**3-4. What happens to believers who are built into God’s household and are part of the whole building? (21, 22)**

 In him the whole building is **joined together** and rises to **become a holy temple** in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to **become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit**.

· The believers are joined together as one building in Jesus and become a holy temple where God dwells.

. The Church is a building, perfectly designed by the Great Architect. It is not a haphazard pile of stones, randomly dumped in a field. God arranges the Church for His own glory and purposes.

. The Church is a dwelling place, a place where God lives. It is never to be an empty house that is virtually a museum, with no one living inside. The Church is to be both the living place of God and His people.

. This tells us that the Church is a temple, holy and set apart to God. We serve there as priests, offering the spiritual sacrifices of our lips and hearts, our praises to God.

**Conclusion**

 Jesus made the Jews and the Gentiles one, destroying barriers through his death on the cross and brought them near to God through His blood. Jesus created a new humanity in both Gentiles and Jews by making them one in Him, reconciling them to God. In Jesus the Jews and the Gentiles became one body and a holy temple where God dwells by His Spirit. God wants us to keep full unity in Jesus as one body and serve God in one spirit and one mind as His holy people and children.

**One word: One New Humanity in Jesus**