

Date: March 5, 2014
Title: The Consequences of His Cross: In Himself He Might Make the Two Into One New Man
Text: Ephesians 2:11-22
Theme: The believer's reconciliation in Christ produces unity among the various members of the one body.

Introduction:

Chapter 2:1-10 speaks in detail of the salvation of Gentiles. Verses 2:11-22 elaborates about the impact that this has on Jews and Gentiles. "[Here we see God reconciling] the Jews and Gentiles, previously hostile people, not only to himself but also to each other through Christ (vv.11-16)."¹

Ephesians 1:3-14 speaks to the great lengths God has gone to secure worshippers for Himself. In this ingathering, He fashions them into His body, the Church that is the fullness of Him who fills all in all (1:23). This is God's design from the beginning. Ephesians 2:1-10 grants a large overview of the entire *Story* as it works from death to life. Ephesians 2:11-22 depicts the consequences of God's work in the bringing together of all things in Christ.

THE NET BIBLE labels this section, "New Life Corporately."

The big idea of this text is to show how the blood of the Messiah has brought Jews and Gentiles together for the creation of a new man. This new man is neither Jew nor Gentile. This new man is the very body of Christ.

The Storyline:

God's intent was always to have both Jews and Gentiles within the one family. The curse caused a division where none was sought. God, in Christ, reconciled the races and the races with Himself.

"Throughout the Bible we see that the greatest privilege a people can have is to be near to God (Exod. 19:4-6; Rev. 21:3) and the greatest curse is to be banished from his presence (Gen. 3:23; Ho. 1:9)."²

The Problem:

We are always separating because of class or race. This is contrary to the gospel.

Questions:

1. What is the point of vv.11, 12?
2. What type of picture is Paul painting of his audience?
3. What does v.13 do?
4. What assumptions can we make from v.13?
5. What is this "middle/dividing wall"?
6. What is the predominant thought of v.14?
7. What two parties have been brought together and made one?
8. In what way have we been made one?

9. What are vv.15 and 16 doing?
10. What does "in his flesh" speak of?
11. What was abolished?
12. What has been established?
13. Both v.15 and v.16 speak of enmity. What is this enmity?
14. What is it making the law?
15. What does v.18 begin to describe?
16. What are the consequences of being reconciled?
17. What is the agent whereby this access is made possible?
18. What does this mean?
19. How do we promote a oneness within this community of faith?
20. What might a biblical ecumenicalism look like?
21. Where do you draw your ecclesiastical lines? How might they differ from others and how are they the same?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile but one new man.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Christ as our peace.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of His peace working in us and through us to those around us.

Outline:

"There are three sections: vv. 11-15, 16-18, and 19-22."³

I. What Happened: "You who once were far off have been brought near" (2:11-13).

A. What We Were Before Salvation / "Separated and alienated" (2:11-12)

"Paul begins this section with the strong inferential conjunction which can be translated "for this reason," to alert the Gentiles of the unenviable position of their having no relationship with God. The present imperative may suggest continuance, and hence the Gentiles were to continue to remember their former plight."⁴

It would appear apparent that Paul is addressing Gentiles who are apart from and thus aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and all that this would entail (i.e., having no hope and without God in the world). "All these expressions emphasize the distance of unbelieving Gentiles from Israel, as well as from Christ."⁵

Before we assume too much, let us not forget verses 16-18. Both Gentiles and Jews were in need of the peace offered by the person and work of God.

¹⁶"and might **reconcile them both** in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. ¹⁷AND 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** our access in one Spirit to the Father" (Eph. 2:16-18).

Throughout Ephesians, Paul paints the darkest picture possible of what life is like apart from Christ. Today, you might never have felt the bite of depravity's sting, yet this is what you were and still are if you are without Christ.

Gentiles were separated from the Messiah and thus had no hope and without God in the world. How bleak such a picture painted.

"Note that Paul believed that all Gentiles apart from Christ were unsaved and without God."⁶

Through covenants with the nation of Israel, the world was to be reconciled. Israel failed, but God would not, and in time He would keep the covenants of promise for the people of the world.

B. What He Has Done In Salvation / "brought near" (v. 13b)

Verse 18 speaks to our access before the Father. "Because of the peace accomplished, we have continual access. It is something we possess. This access represents the freedom of approach. It breathes the idea of being familiar yet with no idea of contempt."⁷

II. How It Happened: "By the Blood of Christ" (2:13b-18)

The "for" of verse 14 is explanatory.

Notice again the intervention of God with, "But now!" "[This] denotes the contrast between their present condition and that prior to conversion."⁸ Peace and reconciliation are intertwined concepts. Because peace exists, reconciliation can take place. The word peace is used three times in this short paragraph (2:14, 15, 17). In addition to peace you have words like "brought near" (2:13), "one" (2:14, 15, 18), "reconcile" (2:16), "access" (2:18), "fellow citizens" (2:19), "joined together" (2:21), and "built together" (2:22). There is a oneness created by the cross that is to be manifested on earth as it is in heaven.

The question I would like to consider is how did this union happen? We begin in verse 13.

A. By the blood of Christ (vv. 13, 16 ["through the cross"])

We were once at "arms length", but are now brought into His presence. Verse 13 produces an element of hope where there is only darkness and despair. From verse 13 we can assume three things. First, apart from God's intervention we would still be without hope and without God in the world. Secondly, whereas once we were far off now we are near. Thirdly, the basis for this access is the life and death of Jesus Christ.

"As the sacrificial death of Christ is the only means of redemption, so also is it the only means of reconciliation. The cost of bringing the Gentile *near* was dear."⁹

There can be no peace that does not originate from the cross.

B. He broke down the barrier of the dividing wall (vv. 14, 15)

“Eph 2:14-16 is one sentence in Greek. A new sentence was started here in the translation for clarity since contemporary English is less tolerant of extended sentences.”¹⁰

From the text, verses 14 and 15 should be read as being in parallel. The breaking of verse 14 and the abolishing of verse 15 are the same ideas. The enmity of verse 15 is explained as the Law of commandments; contained in ordinances are those elements that formed the barrier of the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile.

“‘Rendered inoperative.’ This is a difficult text to translate because it is not easy to find an English term which communicates well the essence of the author’s meaning, especially since legal terminology is involved. Many other translations use the term “abolish” (so NRSV, NASB, NIV), but this term implies complete destruction which is not the author’s meaning here. The verb καταργέω (katargew) can readily have the meaning “to cause something to lose its power or effectiveness” (BDAG 525 s.v. 2, where this passage is listed), and this meaning fits quite naturally here within the author’s legal mindset. A proper English term which communicates this well is “nullify” since this word carries the denotation of “making something legally null and void.” This is not, however, a common English word. An alternate term like “rendered inoperative [or ineffective]” is also accurate but inelegant. For this reason, the translation retains the term “nullify”; it is the best choice of the available options, despite its problems.”¹¹

“The ‘middle wall of partition’ refers to the Mosaic Law, but may be symbolized by the wall in the temple which separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Jews, beyond which no Gentile was permitted to pass.”¹²

It is interesting to note how in verse 12 the Gentiles are alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and are strangers to the covenants of promise, whereas here in verses 14 and 15 the Law of commandments are broken down and abolished. The life and death of Christ made the demands of the law no longer applicable.

The language used by Paul is graphic. He speaks of a broken wall and abolished law and killing the hostility that existed between Jew and Gentile and between God and man. His intent was to reconcile humanity to the Father and Jew to Gentile. All of this happened because the Father blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ and as a consequence we became the adopted sons and daughters of God.

The Law given by God was never His means of reconciling sinners to Himself. Man’s rebellion put the Law, the shadow, in place of the Law-giver and the gift became the object of affection rather than the giver of the gift. Because of humanity’s perversion, the Law became a barrier between Jew and Gentile and between mankind and God. The Law’s intent was to bring us to

Christ, not keep us from Christ or replace Him with Law. The Law is a wonderful servant but a horrible master.

III. What reconciliation looks like

A. Both Jews and Gentiles are now one (vv. 14, 15).

“There is only one unified people of God.”¹³

“In the present context **kainos** is used to show that Christ has created a whole new person entirely different from the two former persons, namely, Jews and Gentiles.”¹⁴

It isn't that Gentiles become Jews or Jews become Gentiles. It is from Jews and Gentiles that God creates a new man, something that is neither Jew nor Gentile, but rather His own unique body.

“In this context the author is not referring to a new individual, but instead to a new corporate entity united in Christ (cf. BDAG 497 s.v. *καὶνός* 3.b: “All the Christians together appear as *κ. ἄνθρωπος* Eph 2:15”). This is clear from the comparison made between the Gentiles and Israel in the immediately preceding verses and the assertion in v. 14 that Christ “made both groups into one.” This is a different metaphor than the “new man” of Eph 4:24; in that passage the “new man” refers to the new life a believer has through a relationship to Christ.”¹⁵

I think it is impossible for us to fully grasp the severity of this union. Think of the oppression that has and does exist because of gender and race. Because of both we have sought to slaughter entire people groups. This travesty still exists within our world, but God in Christ has reconciled all people groups to one another and to Himself.

I believe N.T. Wright is correct when he notes, “If our churches are still divided in any way along racial or cultural lines, he would say that our gospel, our very grasp of the meaning of Jesus’ death, is called into question.”¹⁶

“Modern progress has made the world a neighborhood: God has given us the task of making it a brotherhood. In these days of dividing walls of race and class and creed we must shake the earth anew with the message of the all-inclusive Christ, in whom there is neither bond nor free, Jew nor Greek, Scythian nor barbarian, but all are one.”¹⁷

When you contrast our strained relationships with those of existing nations and people groups it would seem as if we are extremely petty and small. And yet God reconciled the Jews and the Gentiles into one new man. Remember Isaiah 19, where God speaks of Egyptians and Assyrians joining Israel as the people of God and worshippers? Remember how strained such a thought currently appears? The cross makes all of this possible.

B. God and humanity has been reconciled (vv. 16, 18).

“On the cross, Christ put to death the hostility between Israel and the other nations.”¹⁸

Without the death of our Lord Jesus, the penalty for sin would still stand as an imposing and insurmountable wall between the sinner and His God. Our redemption is by grace, our reconciliation is by blood and thus accomplished. The cross and our position in Christ grant us unlimited access to the Father.

“The word Paul uses [for reconciliation] is the word used of bringing together friends who have been estranged.”¹⁹

“In this context the word indicates a lack of hostility and a mutual acceptance between those who were hostile or appeared to be hostile. It is not only a lack of hostility but it is also acceptance or friendship.”²⁰

Notice how the Gentiles are being described in this passage as: uncircumcised (v.11), aliens (v.12), having no hope (v.12), without God (v.12), afar off (v.17), strangers (v.19), and foreigners (v.19). What did they need? To be reconciled to God (vv.16, 18). Notice how the Jews are described as being near. Yet despite this, what did they need to be? To be reconciled to God (vv. 16, 18).

Now Paul turns to our relationship and thus stressing our unity.

IV. What we are now: “You are a dwelling place for God” (2:19-22)

Paul draws a conclusion to his thoughts with “consequently, therefore.”

“‘Consequently.’ Paul indicates that the unity described in vv. 19-22 is based on what Christ did through his death, described in vv. 14-18.”²¹

“Paul indicates with ‘so then’ that he is drawing out key implications of what he has taught in vv. 11-18. The Christian’s assurance is based on these facts.”²²

“Because the prophets appear after the mention of the apostles and because they are linked together in 3:5 as recipients of revelation about the church, they are to be regarded not as Old Testament prophets, but as New Testament prophets.”²³

A. Negatively stated (v. 19a)

“‘So then,’ Paul indicates that the unity described in vv.19-22 is based on what Christ did through his death, described in vv.14-18.”²⁴

The next statement is in contrast to that which has proceeded.

B. Positively stated (vv. 19b-22)

The meaning of ἀκρογωνιαίος (akrogwniaio") is greatly debated. The meaning "capstone" is proposed by J. Jeremias (*TDNT* 1:792), but the most important text for this meaning (*T. Sol.* 22:7-23:4) is late and possibly not even an appropriate parallel. The only place ἀκρογωνιαίος is used in the LXX is Isa 28:16, and there it clearly refers to a cornerstone that is part of a foundation. Furthermore, the imagery in this context has the building growing off the cornerstone upward, whereas if Christ were the capstone, he would not assume his position until the building was finished, which vv. 21-22 argue against.²⁵

Notice the contrast created between vv. 11, 12 and v. 19. Once we were aliens and afar off, but now we are fellow citizens.

The coming together of Jew and Gentile and both being reconciled to God and granted access before Him is described as a "new man" (v.15), "one body" (v.16), and a "household of God" (v.19). There is a sense that "the building is under construction and inherent is the dynamic growth of the church."

"Although several important witnesses (κ¹ A C P 6 81 326 1739^c 1881) have πᾶσα ἡ οἰκοδομή (pasa Jh oikodomh), instead of πᾶσα οἰκοδομή (the reading of κ* B D F G Ψ 33 1739* Ἰ), the article is almost surely a scribal addition intended to clarify the meaning of the text, for with the article the meaning is unambiguously "the whole building." tn Or "every building." Although "every building" is a more natural translation of the Greek, it does not fit as naturally into the context, which (with its emphasis on corporate unity) seems to stress the idea of one building."²⁶

Notice the three-fold description of our new relationship as saved Gentiles.

1. God's People - We are citizens of His kingdom/country
2. God's Household - We are family members of His household
3. God's Temple - We are a temple for His indwelling

God creates a country, a household, a building, and a temple where He is its King, Father, Architect and God. This is something new. It is not marked by gender or geography. It is marked by Christ.

Notice the progression of thought found in vv. 20-22. First, we have a building built on a foundation and a cornerstone (v.20). Secondly, the cornerstone is what holds the entire building together (v.21). Thirdly and finally, the building is the habitation of God (v.22).

"The first two metaphors are important to communicate the relational security that we have, with increasing intimacy. We learn first that we have a place in the kingdom, and then we learn that we have a place at the King's table. The third metaphor is particularly rich in theological significance. The temple in the Old Testament was the physical representation of the divine manifestation."²⁷

Shepherding the Sheep: (What's the NEXT STEP)

1. The reader should know what we once were, but now are in Christ.
2. The reader should understand how the work of Christ produces change in the life of the recipient.
3. The reader should apply the finished work of Christ in his interaction with others within the same body.
4. The reader should see what a Christ-like life looks like as found in Ephesians 2:11-22?
5. A Christ-like life is unified and at peace with one another and with God.
6. A Christ-like life comes boldly to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.
7. A Christ-like life keeps growing as the dwelling place of God.
8. The Christian can live the Christ life because that which separated us from others and God has been destroyed.
9. This paragraph stresses our redemption. Have you received God's gracious gift? Do you know you are saved and on your way to heaven? What proof can you offer that would support your claim?
10. This paragraph (vv. 11-18) stresses our reconciliation. Have you been reconciled to God? Do you see how hopeless your past condition was apart from God? Without God taking the initiative you would never have been reconciled.
11. This paragraph (vv.19-22) stresses our relationship. We are now one with the saints and with God. We are the dwelling place of the Almighty and Holy God. Think of the electrifying effect these truths should have on our lives.
12. This is really the nuts and bolts of salvation's consequences in the plan of God.
13. Many people still wish to see Israel as somehow special in God's dealings today. Our passage before us speaks concerning the issue.

¹ NIV Study Bible

² Gospel Transformation Bible, English Standard Version, *Ephesians 2:11-16*, Kevin DeYoung.

³ ESV Study Bible, *Ephesians 2:11-22*, S.M. Baugh.

⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 353.

⁵ NIV Study Bible

⁶ ESV Study Bible, *Ephesians 2:12*, S.M. Baugh.

⁷ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 388, 389.

⁸ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 361.

⁹ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 363.

¹⁰ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ephesians+2:11>

¹¹ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ephesians+2:11>

¹² *Criswell Study Bible*). "The wall is the Law" (Compton, Class Notes, Summer 1985). BKC disagrees, p. 626.

¹³ ESV Study Bible, *Ephesians 2:11-15*, S.M. Baugh.

¹⁴ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 378.

¹⁵ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ephesians+2:11>

¹⁶ N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters*, 27.

¹⁷ William Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 113.

¹⁸ ESV Study Bible, *Ephesians 2:16-18*, S.M. Baugh.

¹⁹ William Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 117.

²⁰ Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 367.

²¹ The NIV Study Bible, *Ephesians 2:19*, Walter L. Liefeld.

²² ESV Study Bible, *Ephesians 2:19-22*, S.M. Baugh.

²³ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ephesians+2:14>

²⁴ NIV Study Bible

²⁵ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ephesians+2:14>

²⁶ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ephesians+2:14>

²⁷ Gospel Transformation Bible, English Standard Version, *Ephesians 2:19-22*, Kevin DeYoung.

Slide 1

Ephesians

From Garden Ruin to Resurrection glory
God Dwells in the Local Church for the Joy of All People

Slide 2

Ephesians 2:11-22

- The big idea of this text is to show how the blood of the Messiah has brought Jews and Gentiles together for the creation of a new man. This new man is neither Jew nor Gentile. This new man is the very body of Christ.

Slide 3

Ephesians 2:11-13b

- I. What Happened: "You who once were far off have been brought near" (2:11-13).
 - A. What we were before salvation / "separated and alienated" (2:11-12)
 - B. What He has done in salvation / "brought near" (v. 13b)

Slide 4

Ephesians 2:13b-15

- II. How it happened: “by the blood of Christ” (2:13b-18)
 - A. By the blood of Christ (vv. 13, 16 [“through the cross”])
 - B. He broke down the barrier of the dividing wall (vv. 14, 15)

Slide 5

Ephesians 2:14-18

- III. What reconciliation looks like
 - A. Both Jews and Gentiles are now one (vv. 14, 15).
 - B. God and humanity has been reconciled (vv. 16, 18).

Slide 6

Ephesians 2:14-18

- It isn't that Gentiles become Jews or Jews become Gentiles. It is from Jews and Gentiles **God creates a new man**, something that is neither Jew nor Gentile, but rather His own unique body.

Slide 7

Ephesians 2:14-18

- “The word Paul uses [for reconciliation] is the word used of bringing together friends who have been estranged.”

- William Barclay, *Galatians and Ephesians*, 117.

Slide 8

Ephesians 2:14-18

- “In this context the word indicates a lack of hostility and a mutual acceptance between those who were hostile or appeared to be hostile.”

- Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 367.

Slide 9

Ephesians 2:19-22

IV. What we are now: “You are a dwelling place for God” (2:19-22)

A. Negatively stated (v. 19a)

“you are no longer strangers and aliens”

B. Positively stated (vv. 19b-22)

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Ephesians 2:19-22

IV. What we are now . . .

1. We are citizens of His **kingdom/country**.
2. We are family members of His **household**.
3. We are individual elements making up His **building**.
4. We are a **temple** for His indwelling.

Slide
11

There is no oneness apart
from Him and there is no
division within Him.

Slide
12

Where does this leave us?



You tell me.

Ephesians

'From Garden Ruin to Resurrection Glory'

God Dwells in the Local Church for the Joy of All Nations

GROUP DISCUSSION—STUDY 4 —EPHESIANS 2:11-22 [Write down first impressions]

1. How are the unbelieving described in verses 11-13?

2. How are the far off brought near (vv. 13, 16)?

3. What does reconciliation mean and what does it look like?

4. What do we have because of the gospel (v. 18)? What is the significance of this to you personally?

5. How do verses 19-22 fit into the one *Story* of God?

