

The Way
Fruit of the Church: Ephesians
Lesson 35: Gentile and Jewish Believers Have Been Made One in Christ

We are indebted to [Ethnos360](#) for providing the basis of these lessons

Scripture

Ephesians 2:11-22

Review (Where We've Been)

Paul's Writing So Far...

- *In Ephesians 1:1-14*, Paul wrote of **spiritual blessings** they possessed so they could be confident God had fully equipped them to live as He had called them
- *In Ephesians 1:15-23* Paul wrote about **spiritual prayers** to God on their behalf
- *In Ephesians 2:1-10* Paul wrote about their **spiritual standings** before God
 - ✓ Past Standing – Dead in Trespasses and Sin
Ephesians 2:1 (ESV) ...you were dead in the trespasses and sins...
 - ✓ Present Standing – Alive in Christ
Ephesians 2:4 (ESV) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...
 - ✓ Future Standing – Trophies of God's Grace and Glory
Ephesians 2:7 (ESV) ...so that in the coming ages [*church age, millennial kingdom, New Heaven/Earth*] He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

BIG Idea

Paul continues the theme he introduced in Ephesians 2:10 – *being a new creation in Christ and what good works will be reflected in daily life.*

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

What does a new creation in Christ look like?

- There will be unity among Christ's people (Ephesians 2:11-15)
- There will be peace with, and access to God (Ephesians 2:16-18)
- There will be a new relationship and a new establishment (Ephesians 2:19-22)

Let's talk about this more in depth.

Information (What You Need to Know)

What does a new creation in Christ look like?

▪ **There will be unity among Christ's people** (Ephesians 2:11-15)

- ✓ Gentiles were living apart from God and excluded from fellowship among the Jewish people

Ephesians 2:11 (NLT) Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. **12** In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

- Paul reminded the Gentiles of their condition before hearing the gospel – *living apart from Christ, excluded from Israel, no covenant promises, without hope and God*
- The Jews, as God's chosen people, had been given many signs/promises-circumcision, promise of a Deliverer, chosen nation, hope

"Because the Jews had been chosen by God and given His laws, the Jews believed they were superior to the Gentiles who were ignorant of God and His will and worshiped idols. The Gentiles knew that the Jews despised them, and they, in turn, despised the Jews and their arrogant attitude." – Firm Foundations

- ✓ But now Christ had broken down the wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile, making one new people

Ephesians 2:13 (ESV) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14** For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility **15** by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace...

▪ **There will be peace with, and access to God** (Ephesians 2:16-18)

Ephesians 2:16 (ESV) ...and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. **17** And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. **18** For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

- ✓ The cross of Christ gave peace with God to those who believe (ignorant Gentiles and arrogant Jews alike)
- ✓ In Christ, both Jew and Gentile have access to God

Hebrews 4:16 (ESV) Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

“When conflict arises among Christian groups of different backgrounds, you can be sure that they forget 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.” – David Guzik

- **There will be a new relationship and a new institution** (Ephesians 2:19-22)
Having explained the union of Jew and Gentile believers as one people, Paul then describes the result of that union: a new relationship and a new institution.
 - ✓ **The new relationship (saints and members of God’s household)**
Ephesians 2:19 (ESV) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...
 - ✓ **The new institution (the church)**
Ephesians 2:20 (ESV) ...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, **21** in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. **22** In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
 - Held together by the person and work of Christ (cornerstone)
“When a building was constructed in Paul’s time, the cornerstone was the first stone laid down. It was the starting point of a building and was part of the foundation. It was placed at the junction of two primary walls and helped to join them together. The Lord Jesus is the first stone that was laid down in the Lord’s temple, and we are all built around Him.” – Firm Foundations
 - Built on the foundation of the Scriptures (teachings and writings of the apostles and prophets) – “Thus saith the Lord”
2 Peter 1:21 (ESV) For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
 - Growing into a holy temple for the Lord
1 Peter 2:4 (ESV) As you come to Him [*Christ*], a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, **5** you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
“Believers are living stones built on the Living Stone, comprising a spiritual temple for God’s glory. We are also priests in this temple, offering up spiritual sacrifices through Christ. Christ, the Stone, is rejected of men; but whoever believes on Him will not be ashamed. Unbelievers stumble over

this Stone and will one day be crushed by it; but to us [*the Church*], He is precious.” – Warren Wiersbe

Application (What You Need to Do)

Adam Clarke explained how God’s work in the Church gave glory to the wisdom, power, and love of God. Seeing all this, we should praise God for His glorious Church.

There is nothing as *noble* as the Church, seeing that it is the temple of God.

There is nothing so worthy of *reverence*, seeing God who *dwells* in it.

There is nothing so *ancient*, since the *patriarchs* and *prophets* worked to build it.

There is nothing so *solid*, since *Jesus Christ* is the *foundation* of it.

There is nothing so *high*, since it reaches as high as to the *heavenly places in Christ Jesus*.

There is nothing so *perfect* and *well proportioned*, since the *Holy Spirit* is the *architect*.

There is nothing more *beautiful*, because it is adorned with building stones of every age, every place, every people; from the highest kings to the lowest peasants; with the most brilliant scientists and the simplest believers.

There is nothing more *spacious*, since it is spread over the whole earth, and takes in all who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

There is nothing so *Divine*, since it is a *living* building, *animated* and *inhabited* by the *Holy Spirit*.