

# “Peace with God”

(Ephesians 2:11-22 ~ Part 2)

## Introduction

➤ As we saw last week, every unbeliever is at enmity with God. For the sinner, by nature and by choice, is in rebellion against God – “*hostile to God*” (Rom.8:7; see Jms.4:4; Jn.15:23; Rom.1:30; 5:10; Col.1:21). Since the Fall of Adam and Eve (Gen.3), mankind has declared war against the holy God – defying His commands, rebuffing His love, profaning His name, ignoring His Word, and rebelling against His will. This was, and is, an unprovoked and unholy attack on God.

Consequently, every unbeliever is justly under the wrath and condemnation of God (Eph.2:3; Jn.3:18, 36; Ps.5:5; 7:10). God is under no obligation to forgive the sinner. In fact, God’s holiness and righteousness compel Him to punish sin and every evildoer. Apart from Christ, the sinner has no innate moral goodness (Jer.17:9; Rom.3:10-11, 23) and no measure of good works (Rom.3:12; Is.64:6). Left to themselves, sinners are helplessly and hopelessly (and justly) condemned as sinners.

➤ Psalm two graphically reveals the hostility between unholy people and the holy God – the sinner’s rebellion against God and God’s just response:

**Ps 2:1-3** ~ “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup>‘Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.’”

Ps 2:1-3 ~ “Why do the nations rebel? Why are the countries devising plots that will fail? <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth form a united front; the rulers collaborate against the Lord and his anointed king. <sup>3</sup>They say, ‘Let’s tear off the shackles they’ve put on us! Let’s free ourselves from their ropes!’” (NET)

**Ps 2:4-6** ~ “He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. <sup>5</sup>Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, <sup>6</sup>‘As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.’”

Ps 2:4-6 ~ “The one enthroned in heaven laughs in disgust; the Lord taunts them. <sup>5</sup>Then he angrily speaks to them and terrifies them in his rage, saying, <sup>6</sup>‘I myself have installed my king on Zion, my holy hill.’” (NET)

**James 4:1-5** ~ “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup>You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. <sup>4</sup>You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

➤ The sinner’s greatest need is to be “*reconciled*” (*katallassō*) to God. That is, to be at peace with God. However, since the sinner is “*dead in ... sins*” (Eph.2:1), and by nature a child of God’s “*wrath*” (Eph.2:3), there seems to be no way for the sinner to be reconciled to God. For God cannot be unholy or unjust, and the sinner cannot – on their own – be holy or righteous.

Thankfully, God made a way where there was no way. By His sovereign love and saving grace (and not the merit of the sinner), God made a way for the sinner to be reconciled to God. This is the “bad news” and “good news” of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God graciously made a way for us to be reconciled to Himself by sending His one and only Son to be our one and only Savior!

**Rom 5:1, 10-11** ~ “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ... <sup>10</sup>For if while we were enemies [*echthros*] we were reconciled [*katallassō*] to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled [*katallassō*], shall we be saved by

his life. <sup>11</sup>More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation [*katallagē*].”

- This reconciliation – or “peace with God” – is the central message of the passage before us this morning. In writing to the (predominantly) Gentile Christians in and around the city of Ephesus (1:1), writing words inspired by the Holy Spirit of God (2Tim.3:15-17; 2Pet.1:21), the apostle Paul describes how the unbeliever – specifically the Gentile unbeliever – is reconciled to God.

**Eph 2:11-22** ~ “Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands – <sup>12</sup>remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

<sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

<sup>14</sup>For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>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, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup>And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

<sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

- This long (eleven-verse) passage of Scripture contains only one imperative verb – which often indicates a command (i.e., something that is imperative to do). It is found in the opening verse, translated “*remember*” (vs.11; *mnēmoneuō*) meaning “recall to mind”, “be mindful of”, “to memorize”, or even “don’t forget” [note: the “*remember*” in verse twelve is added by the translators, not in the original]. Consequently, this imperative verb is a command that runs throughout this entire passage, and provides for us a three-fold exhortation.

## I. Remember who you were apart from Christ (vs.11-12)

- This is the “bad news” of the Gospel (*euangelion*; “good news/message”). As we saw in Ephesians 2:1-3, before we can understand the good news of the Gospel, we must first understand the bad news of the Gospel. That is, before we can truly understand what it means to be saved, we need to truly understand what it means to be condemned – before we can truly understand our need for salvation.

Paul emphasized this point because it is all too easy for us (as believers) to forget or to misremember. We need to be reminded of, and commanded not to forget, what we need to remember. For failing to remember (biblically) can lead us into unbiblical thoughts about our lives apart from Christ [i.e., thinking that we were ‘basically good’; that our sins were ‘not that bad’ (or not as bad as others); that we did ‘not need God’s mercy’ (or not as much as others); or that we somehow, or to some measure, deserved God’s grace].

- In Ephesians 2:11-12, Paul did this by reminding these (predominantly) Gentile Christians that – apart from Christ – A) they did not belong to God’s people, and B) they did not have God’s salvation: “*Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands – <sup>12</sup>remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world*” (vs.11-12).

- Gentiles were by nature without Christ, without grace, without promise, without hope, and without God. While no one is saved by ancestral lineage or human bloodlines – “*not all who descended from Israel belong to Israel*” (see Rom.9:6-8; Jn.1:11-13) – the Gentiles were uniquely estranged from the saving grace and promises of God.

## II. Remember what Christ did for you (vs.13-18)

- The first command: remember who you were apart from Christ (vs.11-12). The second command: remember what Christ did for you: “*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>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, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup>And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup>For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father*” (vs.13-18).
- While it is important to remember the enormity and depravity of our sin (i.e., the “bad news” of the Gospel; see Eph.2:1-3, 12), it is also important to remember the “*rich ... mercy*” (2:4), “*the great love*” (2:4), and “*the immeasurable riches of ... grace*” (2:7; 1:7) of our Savior (i.e., the “good news” of the Gospel).
- These verses identify three specific ways in which Christ reconciled us to God.

### A. Christ reconciled believers to God by His blood (vs.13)

- Notice first that this truth is only for those who are “*now in Christ Jesus*” (vs.13). No one can be reconciled to God except through faith in His Son Jesus Christ (Eph.2:8; Rom.3:22; 5:1; Gal.3:26). This is not a promise to every person (i.e., universalism, or Christian universalism), or to every religious person, or even to every professing Christian (Matt.7:21). It is only for those who are truly “*in Christ Jesus*” (vs.13), which is true only for those who believe that Jesus Christ is the one and only Son of God and the one and only Savior from God. Only those who have truly received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are “*now in Christ Jesus*” (vs.13).

**John 14:6** ~ “Jesus said ... ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” (see Jn.3:18, 36; 17:3)

**Acts 4:12** ~ “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

**1 John 5:11-12** ~ “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

- In addressing his Gentile readers (which is true for most, if not all, of us), Paul wrote: “*you who once were far off have been brought near*” (vs.13). The idea behind the phrase “*once were far off*” (vs.13) is not merely that they were unsaved (at enmity with God), but that Gentiles were not a part of God’s covenant people: “*the uncircumcision*” (vs.11), “*alienated from the commonwealth of Israel*” (vs.12), “*strangers to the covenants of promise*” (vs.12).

**Eph 2:17** ~ “And he came and preached peace to you who were far off [i.e., Gentiles] and peace to those who were near [i.e., Jews].”

**Acts 2:39** ~ “For the promise is for you and for your children [i.e., Jews] and for all who are far off [i.e., Gentiles], everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

**Rom 3:29-30** ~ “Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup>since God is one – who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.”

**Gal 3:26-29** ~ “for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup>For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”

- By God’s sovereignty, the Gentiles were always to be included in God’s redemptive plan – first for the Jew and then for the Gentiles (Rom.1:16; Jn.4:22). As the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would come from the Jews so also salvation would come from the Jews (see Acts 13:23; Rom.11:26). Everyone – whether Jew or Gentile – would only be saved through faith in Jesus Christ (see Rom.9:30-33). No one is saved by family lineage, or by good works (keeping the law), but by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone!

This is explicitly clear as we read the end of verse thirteen: *“you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ”* (vs.13). The Gentile Christians are saved by the same means as Jewish Christians – by the same grace, the same faith, the same Messiah, the same cross, the same resurrection.

- Scripture reveals for us that *“the wages of sin is death”* (Rom.6:23) and *“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins”* (Heb.9:22), and that *“it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins”* (Heb.10:4). There is absolutely no hope for salvation apart from the substitutionary death of God’s Son Jesus Christ.

It is important to note that Jesus’ blood was not magical or divine, but a literal and symbolic description of His sacrificial and substitutionary death (crucifixion). The blood of Christ represents the suffering and sacrifice He endured through His death on the cross. It was the substitutionary death of Christ that atoned for sin, as He shed His literal blood in the sacrificial pouring out of His life for sin.

**Eph 1:7** ~ “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”

**1 Peter 1:18-19** ~ “knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”

**Col 1:19-22** ~ “For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him to reconcile [apokatallassō] to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. <sup>21</sup>And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup>he has now reconciled [apokatallassō] in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him”

- The *“blood of Christ”* (vs.13) *“cleanses us from all sin”* (1Jn.1:7) as through His substitutionary death on the cross, Jesus paid the full penalty of sin for all who would ever believe (Rom.6:23). In the New Testament, we see clearly that Jesus Christ – and the blood He shed during His crucifixion – is our perfect, eternal, all-sufficient sacrificial Lamb. Unlike the sacrificial offerings in the Old Testament (which were an illustration of the need for a “once-for-all” Savior), the sacrificial blood of Jesus truly cleanses the believer from all sin.

#### **B. Christ reconciled believers to God by His peace (vs.14-17)**

- A second way in which Christ reconciled believers to God was by making peace. This is essentially saying the same thing twice – Christ reconciled us to God by being our reconciliation, or Christ ended the enmity between us and God by being our peace. Peace, however, is the aftermath of reconciliation. In Christ, we are not longer at war with God, no longer enemies of God, no longer condemned by God.

➤ The New Testament word for “*peace*” (*eirēnē*; which occurs more than 90 in the NT) refers to the absence of war, hostility, enmity, anxiety or fear. Synonyms of “peace” would be harmony, prosperity, tranquility, and blessing. This peace replaces conflict and animosity with serenity and benevolence.

Notice that Paul described the reconciling peace of Christ in three different ways: “*He Himself is our peace*” (vs.14); He “*making peace*” (vs.15); “*He came and preached peace*” (vs.17).

### 1. “*He Himself is our peace*” (vs.14)

First, we see that Jesus Christ is the personification of God’s peace: “*For he himself is our peace*” (vs.14). As the incarnate Son of God, Jesus (perfectly, completely) personified all of God’s communicable attributes (see 1Cor.1:30; Rev.19:11). In other words, Jesus does not merely reveal God’s peace (which He does), nor is He only the source of God’s peace (which He is), but He is also the very essence (the quintessence) of “*our peace*” with God.

**Isa 9:6-7** ~ “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

**John 14:27** ~ “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

**John 16:33** ~ “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Implicitly we see here that a person cannot be at peace with God apart from Jesus Christ. For Christ is the essence of God’s peace, the source of God’s peace, the manifestation of God’s peace, the personification of God’s peace. Without Jesus Christ, mankind could never be at peace with God.

A person cannot be at peace with God, let alone have the peace of God, by doing good deeds or trying to be a good person. A person cannot, in and of themselves, make their peace with God. A person cannot be reconciled to God apart from receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. A person cannot be right with God if they are not right with Christ.

### 2. “[*He made*] *peace*” (vs.15)

Jesus is “*our peace*” (vs.14) with God, but He is the one who “[*made*] *peace*” (vs.15) with God for us: “... *who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility* <sup>15</sup>*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,* <sup>16</sup>*and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility*” (vs.14-16).

Once again Paul is discussing the hostility that existed between Jews and Gentiles – not merely racial tension but, more importantly, the spiritual divide. As the one and only Son of God, and the one and only Savior from God, Jesus Christ is the Savior of all who would ever believe – first for the Jew and then for the Gentile (Rom.1:16; Jn.4:22). So, both Jews and Gentiles are united in Christ: “... *who has made us both one*” (vs.14).

**John 10:16** ~ “And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

**Acts 2:38-39** ~ “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup>For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.’”

Jesus accomplished this not by giving speeches, holding rallies, or staging protests. He made peace between God and man by willingly sacrificing His own life through His substitutionary death on the cross. For Jesus *“has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility”* (vs.14). The *“dividing wall of hostility”* (vs.14) probably (among other things) refers to the literal wall in the Temple that separated the inner court of the Jews from outer court of the Gentiles.

✓**Illust:** “According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the wall dividing Jews from Gentiles was marked at intervals by stone inscriptions stating that no foreigner was permitted to enter the Jewish enclosures upon penalty of death.

In the last century or so several of these inscriptions have been found. One incomplete inscription was discovered as recently as 1935. Another whole inscription was unearthed in 1871 and is now in a museum in Istanbul. It reads: ‘No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade [railing/barrier] and embankment around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his death which follows’” (James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expositional Commentary*; Eph.2:14-18).

This *“hostility”* (*echthra*; vs.15, 16; “enmity” Rom.8:7; Jms.4:4) was more than emotional or racial. It was spiritual. As God’s chosen people, the Jews were blessed to be the first to receive God’s saving grace. Thus, making a distinction between Jews and Gentiles. While this manifested itself sinfully in racism and legalism, God’s redemptive plan was to make salvation to the Jews and through the Jews.

Salvation was never to be for the Jews only, and never to be a result of merit or works. God’s salvation has always been by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. The Old Testament saints were saved by God’s grace through faith in the Christ [i.e., “Messiah” or ‘anointed One’] who was still to come. New Testament saints (including us) are saved by God’s grace through faith in the Christ who has come. Everyone who has ever been saved, and will ever be saved, is saved through faith in Christ alone!

This Paul explained in the following verses: *“[He] has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>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”* (vs.14-15). As the Christ, Jesus “abolished” (vs.15; *abolishing*”; *katargeō*; nullify, destroy) *“the law of commandments”* in two ways.

First, He nullified the ceremonial laws which served as a constant symbol of our need for spiritual cleansing and forgiveness. As both our Great High Priest (Heb.4:14-15; 9:11) and Our Passover Lamb (Jn.1:29, 36; 1Cor.5:7; Rev.5), Jesus forever (*“once for all”*; Heb.7:27; 10:10) abolished the need for ceremonial and sacrificial offerings (Heb.8:13; 9:9-10, 23; 10:1-10). Thus he *“[killed] the hostility”* (vs.16) that existed between Jews and Gentiles.

Secondly, Jesus “abolished” our need to perfectly keep the moral law of God. Jesus did not destroy the moral law of God, He fulfilled it (Matt.5:17). As the sinless Savior, Jesus paid the full penalty of our sin and imputed to us the full measure of His righteousness (2Cor.5:21; 1Pet.3:18). For, apart from Christ, the law justly condemns everyone because no one keeps the law perfectly (Jms.2:10; Gal.3:10). Thus he *“[killed] the hostility”* (vs.16) that existed between God and man.

**Rom 3:27-31** ~ “Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. <sup>29</sup>Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup>since God is one – who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. <sup>31</sup>Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.” (see Rom.6:1-2)

**Col 2:11-15** ~ “In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup>by canceling the record of

debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

Through His sinless life, substitutionary death, and supernatural resurrection, Jesus abolished the law and created *“in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace”* (vs.15). Through Christ, God’s salvation has no racial, gender, or cultural restrictions. For salvation is by God’s grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Everyone is *“[reconciled] to God ... through the cross”* (vs.16) of Christ, and only through the cross of Christ.

**Gal 3:26-29** ~ “for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup>For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (see Gal.4:4-5)

**Eph 2:19** ~ “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God”

**Eph 3:6** ~ “This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”

### 3. *“He preached peace”* (vs.17)

Jesus is not only God’s peace personified, and the means to which one can be at peace with God, He also proclaimed a message of peace – to both Jews and Gentiles: *“And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near”* (vs.17). This is actually a reference to the Prophet Isaiah (57:19), which again shows that Christ is the fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan.

Notice that Paul is explaining that Jesus *“preached peace”* (*euangelizō eirēnē*; vs.17) to both those *“who were far off”* (vs.17; cf. vs.13) and to those *“who were near”* (vs.17) – both the Gentiles and the Jews! Christ proclaimed Himself as the peace of a God for all who would ever believe.

**Matt 4:17** ~ “From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

**Acts 10:34-43** ~ “So Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup>As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) ... <sup>43</sup>To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.’”

➤ Christ is our peace with God, Christ’s work accomplished our peace with God, and Christ proclaimed Himself as our peace with God.

### C. Christ reconciled believers to God by His **ACCESS** (vs.18)

- Thirdly, as we are commanded to remember what Christ did for us, we are reminded that it was *“through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father”* (vs.18). This is again for *“both”* (vs.18) Jews and Gentiles, who are together *“in one Spirit to the Father”* (vs.18). Notice that our salvation involved the entire Triune God – God the Son [*“him”*]; God the *“Spirit”*; God the *“Father”* (vs.18) – chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son, regenerated by the Spirit.
- Everyone who puts their faith in Jesus Christ as the one and only Son of God and one and only Savior from God – truly receives Him as their Lord and Savior – has *“access”* (vs.18; *prosagōgē*) to God. As sinners, we could never approach God or be in the presence of His holiness (Hab.1:13). The only way in which a sinner can approach the holy God is by the access of His Son, Jesus Christ.

✓Illust: “*Prosagōgē* (access) is used only three times in the New Testament, in each case referring to the believer’s access to God (see also Rom.5:2; Eph.3:12). In ancient times a related word was used to describe the court official who introduced persons to the king. They gave access to the monarch. The term itself carries the idea not of possessing access in our own right but of being granted the right to come to God with boldness, knowing we will be welcomed. It is only through our Savior’s shedding of His blood in sacrificial death on Calvary and by faith in Him that we have union in His Holy Spirit and have access to the Father” (John MacArthur; *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians*; 2:18).

**Rom 5:1-2** ~ “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup>Through him we have also obtained access [n., *prosagōgē*] by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

**Eph 3:11-12** ~ “This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>12</sup>in whom we have boldness and access [n., *prosagōgē*] with confidence through our faith in him.”

**1 Peter 3:18** ~ “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to [vb., *prosagō*] God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit”

➤ This spiritual reality was gloriously illustrated during Christ’s crucifixion.

**Matt 27:50-54** ~ “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. <sup>51</sup>And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup>The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, <sup>53</sup>and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. <sup>54</sup>When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’” (Mk.15:37-39; Lk.23:44-49)

➤ Supernaturally, God tore “*the curtain of the temple*” (Matt.27:51) – which was “an elaborately woven fabric of 72 twisted plaits of 24 threads each. It was 60 feet high and 30 feet wide” (*ESV Study Bible*; notes on Matt.27:51) – easier than you or I could tear a piece of paper. This curtain literally cordoned off “*the most holy place*” from within the temple (see Ex.26:33; Heb.9:3). Only the high priest could enter the most holy place, and even then, he could only enter once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Heb.9:2-7).

Additionally, the fact that it was torn “*from top to bottom*” (Matt.27:51; Mk.25:38) symbolically indicates that it was God who tore the temple curtain in two. The tearing of this curtain symbolized that Jesus Christ is now the (sole, supreme) intercessor and advocate between God and man (see Rom.8:34; 1Tim.2:5; Heb.7:24-25; 9:12, 24; 10:19-22; 1Jn.2:1). It is through His substitutionary death on the cross that Jesus gave us “*access ... to the Father*” (vs.18).

✓Illust: “Now the important thing to realize here is that the Lord Jesus Christ does not merely prepare or open the way to this. He actually effects it; He actually produces it Himself. It is He who introduces us to the Father, brings us, takes us by the hand and ushers us into His presence ... the grand object of salvation is to bring us into the presence of God – nothing less, nothing short of that”

(D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones; *An Exposition of Ephesians*; v.2; 2:18).

➤ Jesus Christ is our only access to God – not a priest, not the apostles, not “the virgin Mary.” The only way we can be at peace with God, the only way we can be with God, is through Jesus Christ. Christ alone is our “*advocate with the Father*” (1Jn.1:1). Christ alone is our intercessor in heaven (Rom.8:34; Heb.7:25). Christ alone is the “*mediator between God and men*”(1Tim.2:5). Christ alone is our Savior from God and our peace with God.

**Matt 10:32** ~ “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven”

**John 14:6** ~ “Jesus said ... ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”



## Conclusion

➤ A person is not right with God if they are not right with God's Son. A person is not reconciled to God if they have not been reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ. A person is not at peace with God unless they have received God's Son as the only Lord and Savior.

**1 John 2:23** ~ "No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also."

**John 5:22-23** ~ "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."

Rom 8:6-8 ~ "For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to [*echthra*; or "is enmity against" (KJV)] God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom.1:30; 5:10; Col.1:21)

James 4:4 ~ "You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity [*echthra*] with God?"

➤ To understand the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we must remember three doctrinal realities: Who we were apart from Christ (vs.11-12); What Christ did for us (vs.13-18); and, Lord willing, what we will discover next Lord's Day.