

“Brought Near By The Blood Of Christ”

Ephesians 2:11-22

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August 30, 2020

Teaching Aim: To demonstrate believing Jews and believing Gentiles are reconciled to each other and brought near to God through the blood of Christ. To recognize Jesus is our peace, having broken down the wall of separation, He now creates in Himself one new man from the two; we call this the Church. To realize the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Those once alienated now brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:11-13)

1. Who was Paul referring to in **verse 11** when he referred to the “*Uncircumcision?*” Who was Paul referring to when he spoke of “*the Circumcision?*” Was the term “*Uncircumcision?*” being used with respect or as an ethnic slur? (See Commentaries) Do people still refer to people today with ethnic slurs? Why is it always wrong to do so? (See **Gen. 1:26-27**)

2. Today, many parents have their children circumcised at a young age for health reasons. Why did the Jews have their children circumcised? (**See Gen. 17:10-14**) Circumcision symbolized the cutting off of the flesh (*or the old sin nature*) and the child’s inclusion into the covenant community of the Jews. What kind of circumcision does God ultimately desire for each believer to have? (**See Deut. 10:16; Rom. 2:28-29; Phil. 3:3**) What does this kind of circumcision symbolize?

3. Perhaps, one of the best words to describe our condition before coming to Christ is “*without.*” According to **verse 12**, what five things is the unbeliever without? Now contrast the unbeliever with the blessings of God’s covenant people Israel. According to **Rom. 9:3-5**, what special privileges does Israel have that the unbelieving Gentiles don’t?

4. What incredible truth is revealed in **verse 13**? What people group was Paul referring to as being “*far off?*” What placed them so far from God? According to **verse 13**, how are guilty sinners brought near to God? As an unbeliever, did you realize the blessings you were missing in Christ? What kind of lifestyle did you think of when you thought of Christians? What kind of lifestyle did you find after becoming a Christian?

5. According to **Eph. 2:8-9**, how is a person saved? What does **verse 10** say that we were saved unto? List three positive changes that have occurred in your life since coming to faith in Jesus Christ.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

Part II: The reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles through the ministry of the cross (Eph. 2:14-18)

1. The world is in desperate need of peace today. Even though most people don't realize it, what kind of peace do people need more than anything (**vs. 14**)? (See **Rom 5:1**) Who is the only person who can bring this kind of peace to the world? (See **Isa. 9:6-7**) What was the importance of the middle wall of separation in the temple (*the wall that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Jews in the temple*)? (See Commentaries) How did Jesus bring this wall down (**vv. 14-15**)?
2. Through His substitutionary atonement on the cross, Jesus abolished the Old Testament ceremonial and dietary laws. Does **verse 15** also mean that Christ abolished God's moral law (the Ten Commandments)? Why or why not? (See **Matt. 5:17,18; 21-22; 27-28**)
3. What is meant when a Christian says, "*The ground is level for everybody at the foot of the cross.*" (See **Rom. 3:23**) How would you define the word, "*reconcile*?" (See Dictionary) According to **verse 16**, who was being reconciled through the cross of Christ? What do we call these people today as they gather together as one for Christian worship? (See **Acts 20:28; 1Cor. 1:2**)
4. The earthly ministry of Jesus was primarily focused on the Jewish people. Did Jesus ever minister to the Gentiles (**vs. 17**)? If so, when? (See **Matt. 15:22-28; John 4:10**) Who did Paul refer to as being "*afar off*?" Who was Paul referring to when he spoke of, "*those who were near*" (**vs. 17**)? What can we learn about the mission of Jesus from **verse 17**? Who needs Christ as Savior?

5. According to **verse 18**, what is the one way that both Jews and Gentiles can have access to God? (**See 1 Cor. 12:12-13**) According to **Hebrews 4:15-16**, how should Christians approach the throne of grace? On what basis should they do this? What is the only way an unbeliever can have access to God today? (**See John 1:12-13; 3:16; Acts 4:12; 16:31; 1 John 1:9**)

Part III: Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-22)

1. What are some of the blessings that Gentiles receive as a result of being saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone (**vs. 19**)? Is *"the household of God"* comprised of New Testament saints only, or Old and New Testament saints combined? (**See Matt. 22:32**)

2. According to **verse 20**, what is *"the household of God"* built upon? What was the importance of the chief cornerstone to a building? (See Commentaries) How does this imagery relate to Christ and His church? Why is the illustration of a *"foundation" (or teachings of the apostles and prophets)* a good metaphor for what church teachings should be today? Why do you think so many Bible Colleges, Seminaries, and churches today are moving away from the foundation and Cornerstone of our Christian faith?

3. How does the illustration of a *"building, being fitted together to grow into a holy temple"* adequately portray the picture of believers who are in the process of being sanctified by the Holy Spirit and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ? According to **verse 21**, does every believer have their place in this temple? (**See 1 Cor. 12:14-27**) What is your place in God's Church?

4. God no longer dwells in buildings made by man in this age of grace, He dwells in the hearts of His people (**vs. 22**). (**See Acts 7:48; 1 Cor. 6:19-20**) According to **1 Pet. 2:5**, what is God's purpose for us as *"living stones?"* Are you fulfilling your role as a New Testament priest? How can we offer spiritual sacrifices to God today? (See **Rom. 12:1-2**) Are you living your life as a living sacrifice? (See **Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34-38**) If not, what is keeping you from doing so?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Jews and Gentiles alike are being brought near to God by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus is our peace; having broken down the wall of separation, He has made the two (believing Jews and believing Gentiles) into one Church.
- Jesus has reconciled His people to God through His death on the cross.
- Every Christian should understand that the ground is level at the foot of the cross. (**Rom. 3:19-24**)
- Born-again believers now have access to God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ.
- In Christ, we are fellow citizens with the saints (*both Old and New Testament*) and are equally members within the household of God.
- The Holy Spirit indwells each born-again Christian bringing spiritual life and the power to live his or her life for Christ.