

Ephesians 2:14-22

Ephesians 2:14-22 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, (15) having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, (16) and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. (17) And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. (18) For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. (19) Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (20) having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, (21) in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, (22) in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Questions On The Text

In what way is Christ our peace?

Verses 14: Christ has made both Jew and Gentile one by breaking down the dividing wall and thus creating peace between the two groups whereas there was previously hostility. In fact, there was a stone wall separating the inner and outer courts of the Jerusalem temple. There were notices in Greek and Latin attached to the wall in various places warning Gentiles, under the threat of death, not to go into the inner court.

How was peace between Jew and Gentile achieved?

Verse 15: Christ abolished the basis for hostility by abolishing the law of commandments which separated Jew and Gentile and giving the Holy Spirit to all who come to Him in repentance and faith, so that by the Spirit they can now fulfil the righteous requirements of the law (see Romans 1:4). Both groups now come to God on the same basis and are no longer two separate groups, but one. Christ is then the basis of peace between Jew and Gentile.

How did Christ bring about reconciliation to God?

Verse 16: Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God in one body – the church (see 1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:24; Ephesians 1:22-23) – through the cross of Christ.

What was the purpose of Christ's coming?

Verses 17-18: Christ came to preach peace to those who were far away from God – the Gentiles – and to those who were near. The word for “preached” means “proclaimed good news” and comes from the same word as “gospel” which means “good news.”

This is not to say that Jesus proclaimed the gospel to Jews and Gentiles. Rather, His life, death, and resurrection were a proclamation from God of the peace and reconciliation that He Himself desired and initiated. The good news is that both groups now have access to the Father by the Holy Spirit through Christ's substitutionary work on the cross.

What is the status of Gentile Christians?

Verse 19: Gentile Christians have changed from being strangers and foreigners (a word meaning “resident aliens”) and are now fellow-citizens and members of God's household just as much as Jewish Christians.

What is the church built on?

Verse 20: Paul uses a metaphor of a building to describe the church. In this building, the apostles and prophets (see 1 Corinthians 12:28) are the foundation. Christ is referred to as being the chief cornerstone. Scholars are divided into two camps over the meaning of this word. The first possibility is that it is the foundation stone of the building, the first stone laid that gives the walls their line.

The second option is that it is the top stone, the last stone placed in position as the crowning stone of the building. My own opinion is that God has perhaps left the meaning deliberately obscure because both are true. After all, Christ is “the First and the Last.” (See Revelation 1:17)

What sort of temple is God building?

Verse 21: The temple that God is building is a holy one, not made with hands, but comprising the people of God. Holiness is something that God desires in His people.

How is God building the temple?

Verses 21-22: First, the temple is being fitted together as the people of God are built together. This implies that each person in the church has their God-ordained role and is actually functioning in it. Second, the temple is in the Lord, so not only is the church founded on Christ, but its growth and destiny are all dependent on Him too. In this way, the church becomes a dwelling place of God as He inhabits His people.

Further Questions For Discussion:

What caused the hostility between Jew and Gentile and how was it removed?

How are Jews and Gentiles reconciled to God?

Why did Jesus come to earth?

What is the status of believing Gentiles?

If the church is a building, where does Christ fit it?

In what way are the apostles and prophets the foundation of the church?

How important is it for God’s people to be holy? See Hebrews 12:14.

What is your God-ordained role in the church? Are you functioning in it?