

“Real Racial Unity”

Ephesians 2:11-18

Generally speaking, throughout history, before Christ came, Jews and Gentiles hated each other. But Christ came as the “Prince of Peace” and through His sacrificial death and resurrection He made peace possible between these two groups and actually formed one new humanity or heavenly race called the “Church.” **In this passage Paul tells how all believing Jews and Gentiles have now been reconciled to each other spiritually and relationally:**

1. through the sacrificial death of One Savior
“now in Christ Jesus you... have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (2:13)
“He Himself” (2:14)
“in His flesh” (2:15)
“through the cross” (2:16)
“through Him” (2:18)

2. for the purpose of creating One Body
“made both groups into one” (2:14)
“make the two into one new man” (2:15)
“reconcile them both in one body” (2:16)
“one Spirit” (2:18)

3. now sharing continual access to One Father
“reconcile them...to God” (2:16)
“we both have our access...to the Father” (2:18)

Study helps:

- 2:11—after talking about the glories of personal, *individual salvation* from 1:3 to 2:10, Paul now transitions and begins talking about *corporate salvation*, the building up of the Body of Christ, which he hinted at in 1:22
- 2:12—“covenants of promise” refers to a) the *Abrahamic Covenant*, which promised land, seed and blessings (Genesis 12:1-4; 13:14-18; 15:1-21; 17:1-21); b) the *Davidic Covenant* which expanded the *Abrahamic Covenant* (2 Samuel 7:12-17); and c) the *New Covenant* which further expanded the *Abrahamic Covenant* while displacing the *Mosaic Covenant* (Jeremiah 31:31; 32:38; Ezekiel 36:33). The fictitious “covenant of works” and the “covenant of grace” are nowhere found in Scripture and were invented in the aftermath of the Reformation.
- 2:12—“without God” is actually one Greek word = “atheoi” from *atheos* from which we get the English “atheist.”
- 2:14—“the dividing wall” is the OT Law, which is holy, just and good (Romans 7:12).
- 2:14 (NIV); 2:15 (NASB)—the “hostility/enmity” is the sin of hatred that the Jews and Gentiles had as a result of abusing the Law which distinguished them
- 2:15—“abolishing” is from “katergeow” and means “nullify, render inoperative, invalidate”—NOT “abolish” or “destroy”—Christ did not come to abolish the Law (Matt 5:17), but rather by fulfilling the Law He rendered it inoperative for those who believe
- 2:15—“regulations/ordinances” is from the Greek word here “dogma” which means “doctrine/truth/decrees”; so the NT has the word “dogmatic” in it—that’s not an inherently bad word after all...
- 2:15—“one new man” = the church
- 2:16—“one body” = the church
- 2:16—“enmity/hostility” = the hatred that existed between sinners and a holy God
- 2:17—“He came and preached” = through His apostles and the early Church