

EPHESIANS 2B Study (NLT) "ONE" AUGUST 15, 2010

Main point: JEWS AND GENTILES - ONE PEOPLE. A huge issue in the early church was whether Christians also had to be Jews. There was a powerful conservative group among the first Jewish Christians that claimed that those who came to God through the Jewish Messiah, our Lord Jesus, had to be born Jewish or become Jews. Therefore, they had to be circumcised and observe Jewish traditions. • **Decision:** James, the Lord's half brother, spoke the decision of the Jerusalem conference dealing with this issue saying, "My judgment is that we should stop troubling the Gentiles who turn to God..." Acts 15:19 The Christian approaches God through faith in the finished works of Christ, not through his personal good works. • The bottom line is that all people - Jew and Gentile - "were once dead, doomed forever ...obeying Satan...following passions and desires...born with an evil nature and under God's anger..." (2:1-4) And that every single person who is saved is saved by God's "mercy and love .. a gift...not a reward for good things we have done." (2:4-8) • **Paul's persuasion:** "For Christ has **made peace** between us Jews and you Gentiles by making us **all one people**. He has **broken down the wall of hostility** that used to separate us." 2:14

• **2:11-13 Outsiders became insiders.** Paul was a missionary to the non- Jewish world. He traveled the lands around the Mediterranean Sea - present day Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy. He reminds these _____ Christians that they were _____ by _____. The Jews looked down on them because they were _____. They were _____ of their circumcision even though it affected only their _____ and not their _____ (or spirit where God connects with people). In the days before Paul showed up with the Good News that the Jewish Messiah was actually the world's Messiah, these Gentile people were _____ from God's people, _____. They did not know the _____ God had made. They were living out their lives on this _____ without God and without _____. But now they have taken the hand of Christ Jesus. They have moved from being _____ from God to being _____ to Father God because of the life's _____ of Christ that took away sin from the world and removed sins from the eyes of God - ended His anger toward sinners.

OUTSIDERS BY BIRTH - Jews and Gentiles: **Jew** comes from JUDAH. Judah was one of the 12 sons of Jacob whose name was changed to ISRAEL. After Solomon died, a rebellion caused 10 tribes to split off and become the Northern Kingdom. That kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians (Iraq), its people taken to Assyria as slaves or scattered. The Southern kingdom was comprised of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. It is that part of Israel - Judah - that existed in the time of the Lord and the first church.

Gentile (non- Jew) comes from the Hebrew word GOYIM, meaning nations, heathen, people—especially as being outside of - other than -- the God-chosen and God-favored people of Israel. Jewish tradition implied the Gentile was unclean and unsavable in God's eyes.

Vineyard Church • Great Falls, Montana

God's Plan: (1) Salvation was not just "for" the Jews but "through" the Jews for the "goyim." (2) Heaven will be filled with a "vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb...clothed in white ...shouting ...and worshipping..." Revelation 7:9-12

Place of the Jews: Always and forever specially favored by God. "Yet the Jews are still his chosen people because of His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Romans 11:28. And in the last days Israel will be saved too.

AFFECT... THE HEART: "You are not a true Jew because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the Jewish ceremony of circumcision. No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not a cutting of the body, but a change of heart produced by God's Spirit." Romans 2:28,29

• **2:14-18 The wall is down - all Christians are one family of God.** _____ has made _____ between Jewish and Gentile Christians. He has broken down the _____ of hostility caused by the Jewish rejection of Gentiles. He did this by changing the requirements for acceptance by the Holy Father. The Old Covenant required obedience to God's law given through Moses. The New Covenant requires faith - a personal relationship with Jesus. Christ Jesus gathered humanity to himself as a brother -- as one of us—when he _____ on the cross. Thus the system of _____ that excluded the Gentiles was ended. Instead Christ creates every Christian into a _____ person. There are no longer _____ groups but one made up of Christ-like people. There is no separation—no comparison - no judgment and therefore _____. The Christians are _____ body. Both Jews and Gentiles were _____ to God the same way—by his death—his life's blood poured out for his son. Jesus has brought this _____ of peace to Gentiles who were _____ and to the Jews who were _____. Now all of us may _____ to the Father through the _____, who flies our souls into the Father's presence.

DIED : The Holy Son of God was the last of those (animals) whose life's blood was poured out to pay for the sin caused by human failure to perfectly keep the Law. He was a sinless, holy sacrifice which paid for the sins of all people for all time. Every person who joins himself to Christ dies with him and has paid the price for sins. "...when we became Christians we were baptized to become one with Christ Jesus, we died with him...and just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives." Romans 6:3,4

PEACE: Most simply this is "the absence of war." The Father makes peace between different kinds of people--even those who were enemies to each other by transforming those who come to Christ into Christ's likeness and making us His family.

EPHESIANS 2B Study (NLT) "ONE" AUGUST 15, 2010

Vineyard Church • Great Falls, Montana

• 2: 19-22 We are God's house where he dwells. God's family who dwells with him. So now we _____ are ___ longer _____ and _____. We are _____ along with the rest of God's holy people.

We are members of God's _____. We are His _____ built on the foundation of the work of apostles and prophets. We who believe are joined together to become as a community a holy _____. We are a _____ place where God lives by His Spirit with and within us.

THE NEW ISRAEL: Peter speaking to the church says the same things about the church that used to be said only of Israel, *"...For you are a chosen people. You are a kingdom of priests, God's holy nation, his very own possession."* (I Peter 2:9) The Christian church is the new Israel.

TEMPLE: People have always built buildings to gather together to worship God and be there with him. His glory filled the temple that Solomon built and was so awesome that people were overwhelmed and fell to the ground. 2 Chronicles 5:13,14. However, God wants to live in the temple made with His hands, not human hands, in the people by His Spirit. *"He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples..."* Acts 17:24 He lives in the temple he made—the human spirit. God is spirit. He meets spiritual beings made in his image - in their spirit.

What Does This Scripture Say To You? _____