

RECONCILED IN ONE BODY THROUGH THE CROSS

Summary of what we will learn: The many families (ethnicities) of the earth which have descended from Adam and Noah's three sons have a host of divisions and hostilities between them. Yet we who enter the Church are all reconciled to one another *through the Cross of Jesus*. So we no longer consider ourselves, or one another, according to the flesh, but "in Christ."

Ephesians 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—¹² 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. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ 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, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 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, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Do you remember and can you recite *Ephesians 2:8-10*

Let's talk about Race vs. Ethnicity and especially Jew vs. Gentile

- Ancestry: Adam ---- Noah ---- Nations (ethne) and Families/Tribes (genne) and Tongues
- Jewish People, Israelite Religion, and the non-Jews (Gentiles)
- A thorny issue for the early Church – see Acts 10 & 15

How does Paul characterize the Gentile converts to Christianity in verse 12?

Verse 13 answers "what changed"? Is it mere moral conduct or intellectual enlightenment?

This is *sacramental* language, as Dr. Winger shows- "Christ's blood, shed once for all on the cross (Col 1:20), is sprinkled equally on all Christians through the cleansing water of Holy Baptism, which unites them with his death on the cross (Eph 2:16)...They also remain 'near' to God through their ongoing, eucharistic participation in that sacrificial blood through the cup of blessing (1 Cor 10:16). The liturgical context of this pericope is important. The Gentiles who were once far off from the *worship* of the inner parts of the temple are now drawn near to join with the Jews in one new 'temple' (Eph 2:21), receiving God's gifts and praising him."

Who is being reconciled to whom in verses 14-16?

What is “the dividing wall of hostility” (v. 14)?

Verse 18 is not just clearly *Trinitarian*, but overcomes “racism” and ethno-centrism by giving us a new allegiance, a new family, a new patrilineage. “*Through [the Son] we both [ethnic Jew & Gentile] have access in one Spirit to the Father.*”

So we are *incorporated* – in the body (the corpse) as stones in a building – a new Temple, in which the presence of the Holy Spirit matters more than melanin, language, or lineage

Dr. Stoeckhardt on the temple of the Lord (v. 22)- “The Christian Church is a temple, a dwelling of the Holy Trinity. The great, wonderful God, the Triune God, He who sits high in heaven, He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, has a place of abode here upon earth, in the very midst of this wicked world of sinners, namely, in the Church of the living God. True, this glory of the Church is as yet veiled and hidden, but when the fullness of its time has come, then this Church, the masterpiece of God’s creation, shall appear in all its beauty and glory, then the entire world, also the world of the angels, will look with amazement and admiration upon that which has evolved from the little and despised congregation of the Lord, which consisted of poor, rescued sinners, but has now grown to be a great, impressive temple; then the brightness and glory of the Holy Trinity, God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will illuminate the entire structure. Then will appear before the eyes of all: ‘Behold, a tabernacle of God with men.’”

Dr. Stoeckhardt on vv. 19-22 “The same faith in Christ, which lives in all, is that which joins them inwardly and binds them, as it were, together. However, this unity in the faith is then also apparent in their life and walk, in the community life of the Christians together. The living stones which compose the building of the Church are not uncut, broken bits of rocks. Men, in their corrupt state, as unconverted sinners, without Christ, live in enmity and in more or less internecine warfare with one another, they simply do not get along very well with one another. Christians, however, are sanctified by their faith in Christ, they are the [saints], they have a new, changed nature, they have the mind of Christ, live not to themselves, but serve one another in love. They instruct, admonish, comfort, and edify one another. Each does not look on his own things, but also on the things of others. One bears the burden of the other. One bears with the weakness and defects of the other.”