

Christ Gives Unity and Peace to Believers

July 25th & 26th, 2015

Ed Jackson

Ephesians 2:14-18

Christ's role as the peacemaker

❖ Christ fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy that the coming Messiah would be the Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9:6*

❖ Paul outlines how Christ makes peace between the Jew and the Gentile.

Ephesians 2:14 "...He Himself is our peace,..."

Ephesians 2:15 He has made peace.

Ephesians 2:17 "...He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near."

❖ The Gentiles were those who were far off and the Jews were those who were near.

The word peace has many meanings.

❖ In Isaiah 9:6, the word peace used in the Hebrew language is Shalom.

Shalom: connotes health, well-being, prosperity, happiness, and cessation of enmity.

f Isaiah prophesied that the coming Messiah would bring these qualities to His people.

❖ Jesus bridged the wide gap between Jew and Gentile through the shedding of His blood and broke down the wall that separates the Jew and the Gentile. *Ephesians 2:13-14*

In the Temple, there were dividing walls that separated various classes of people.

f The court of the Gentiles; the court of the women; the court of the Israelite; the court of the priests

The rules of separation were very strictly enforced.

❖ It was extremely difficult for both the Jew and the Gentile to eliminate this wall; their philosophies were worlds apart.

f The Jew was and still is very focused on having their actions speak for their faith. *James 2:14-18*

f The Gentiles were very Hellenistic in their approach which means that they were very knowledge oriented.

When the church was initially founded ...

... The Jew said that for the Gentile to become part of the church they needed to first become Jews.

... The Gentile, on the other hand, said for the Jew to be Christian they had to give up their time honored Jewish customs and beliefs such as dietary laws (kashrut) and religious festivities such as circumcision.

❖ There were five components for this enmity between the Jew and Gentile:

➤ Gentile envy of the special statutes accorded by God to Israel in the Torah

➤ Jewish pride at being chosen

➤ Gentile resentment of that pride

➤ Mutual dislike of each other's customs

➤ The Jewish people's response to the Torah with its 613 commands set forth in the form of ordinances.

Jesus Christ, "... is our Peace, who made both groups into one"; this was a revolutionary idea!

❖ When Jesus makes peace between individuals or between nations, that peace will be a complete, totally satisfying experience.

❖ Through Jesus, we no longer need the priest to yearly go behind the veil and communicate with God or make animal sacrifices for the covering of our sins. *Hebrews 10:11-14*

- ❖ We can now, through the blood shed by Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit, have access to the Throne Room of God.

For centuries there has been a **division between Jew and Gentile**.

- ❖ This division dates back to Isaac and Ishmael and the conflict between Jew and Gentile is very difficult to bridge.
- ❖ Man is trying to solve the problem without following the path that Jesus established and the efforts for peace have been totally against scripture. *Leviticus 25:23*
 - f These efforts for peace have been based on the principle of “Land for Peace” but God won’t allow peace based on actions against His Word.
- ❖ To live at peace, one must be at peace with Jesus Christ.
 - f As Bible believers, we cannot get caught up in the actions and philosophies of the world which includes joining the world’s stand against Israel’s sovereignty in an attempt to achieve man made peace. *Romans 12:2, Jeremiah 6:14*

Peace, to the Arab, has a completely different meaning than Shalom.

- ❖ In Arabic, there are three different words meaning peace.
 - 1.Salaam: Absence of disobedience against Islam. This meaning assumes the existence of two worlds.
 - World ruled by Islam - Can only be peace or obedience
 - World of War - Lands not under Arabic/Islamic control. War is necessary.
 - In the mind of some Islamists there can never be Salaam peace because there will always be lands under control of non-Islamists.
 - 2.Hudna: Cease-fire or temporary lack of war.
 - 3.Suhl: Reconciliation. This is never used in conjunction with relations with Israel.
- ❖ In Arab/Israel relations there is no peace because there is no peace with Jesus Christ.
- ❖ To make peace with Israel or recognize them as a state is dangerous for Middle East leaders and this hostility and danger carries over to the Israeli nation as well.

God has a plan for peace and has laid out the outline for peace in the Book of Ephesians.

- ❖ We are in a very large spiritual war against the forces of darkness.
- ❖ God has not forgotten his covenant with Israel. *Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrew 8:8-12*
- ❖ This new covenant is a Messianic prophecy meaning it will be fulfilled with the coming of Jesus who will bring Peace for all Gentile and Jewish believers.

Endnote:

- ♦ Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960,1962,1963,1968,1971,1972,1973,1975, 1977,1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.