



Lesson 6: Unity In/Through Christ

Text: Ephesians 2:11-22

Key thought: Everyone in Christ is part of one, big family!

Intro: Before we discuss how God unites both Jews and Gentile through Christ, let's consider what led to the sharp division between them. God birthed through one man, Abraham, and his seed a new nation and people. He called them out of the masses and to live separately and uniquely under His rule and commands. They were to believe differently and act differently. This included males being circumcised.

1. Gentiles are referred to as the "uncircumcised" (*Ephesians 2:11*). Circumcision was a physical mark of distinction for Jews who followed Yahweh and also non-Jews who converted to Judaism. It was a sign of the covenant God made with Abraham. When was it to be done and to whom? (*Genesis 17:1-4, 10-14, 21:4, Luke 1:59 & 2:21*)

A.

2. The term "uncircumcised" came to symbolize Gentiles or non-Jews who didn't ascribe to Judaism (*Ephesians 2:11*). It was somewhat of a derogatory term used to describe people Jews considered unclean and unholy. Why did God place restrictions on interaction between Jews and the uncircumcised people groups who dwelt in the land He gave to them? (*Exodus 23:31-33, 34:12-16*)

A.

3. How is the distance or hostility between Jews and Gentiles evident from the following N.T. texts? (*John 4:5-9 & Acts 10:24-28*)

A.

4. Today, the nation of Israel is surrounded by nations that hate them. Besides that many people dislike or hate Jews and the nation of Israel. Why do you think that is the case?

A.

5. Read Ephesians 2:11-12. Before Paul describes God's amazing work of uniting people through Christ, He first describes the non-Jewish, unbelievers of his day as "outsiders". What does he mean by that?

A.

6. In Ephesians 2:12, Paul describes people "without Christ" as "having no hope and without God in the world". Stop for a minute and ask God to help you grasp the implications of this spiritual reality. Who does this include that you know and love? Who came to your mind first and why?

A.

7. Many feel Jesus is unnecessary and that we can get to God and come together without Him. Read Ephesians 2:13-18 and then answer the following questions. What specific action steps did Jesus Christ take? How do His actions benefit us?

A.

8. Time permitting. Before Jesus died on the cross, He specifically prayed and asked His Father to help all believers to "be one" (John 17:11). What could we as a local church body do to promote Jesus' goal of oneness within our church and/or other faith communities?

A.