

REMEMBER WHAT LIFE IS LIKE SINCE CHRIST CAME: RECONCILIATION AND PEACE EPHESIANS 02:11-18

Introduction: New Creation, The Church

In verses 11-22 Paul wants the reader to grasp what God has done for man from three points of view.

1. From an *historical view*. Before Christ, God dealt with man through the Jewish nation. Since Christ, God has been moving on a worldwide scale to include both Jews and Gentiles who are willing to follow Christ. God takes both Jew and Gentile believers and He makes them the citizens of His *new race*. His *new nation*, His *new creation* (see notes, Eph. 2:14-15; 4:17).
2. From an *individual view*. The Jewish nation was made up of individual Jews, and the Gentile nations are made up of individual Gentiles. Therefore, God deals with each single person even as He deals with the Jewish nation and with the corporate nations of the Gentile world (1 Cor. 10:32; Eph. 2:10).
3. From a *new creation view*. God is no longer dealing with earthly divisions of nations. He is dealing with a new nationality of people, a *new body* of people who make up the true citizens of His Kingdom. These citizens are individuals from all the nations of the world who now approach God through the Lord Jesus Christ. God promises to *spiritually recreate* any person who approaches Him through Christ. God causes that person to be *born again*; He makes a *new man* out of him. God further promises the *new man* that he will become a member of God's *new body* and *new nation* of people — His true church (1 Cor. 10:32). It is these believers — those who believe in Christ — who are to constitute the true *family of God* and to inhabit the *new heavens and earth* which God is to create in the future (2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1f.)

The present passage is one of the most wonderful passages in all of Scripture. Remember what life is like since Christ came: reconciliation and peace.

- I. We were far off and separated from God (vv. 11-13).
 - II. Christ brings us near to God (v. 13).
 - III. Christ brings us peace (vv. 14-15).
 - IV. Christ brings us reconciliation (vv. 16-17).
 - V. Christ brings us access to God (v. 18).
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I. *Ephesians 02:11–12 State of Man: Division, Separation*

We were far off and separated from God. Note that Paul addresses the second person here, “you.” He is referring to Gentiles, that is, to everyone who was not a Jew. Glance at the words “far away” in verse 13. There was a time when all of us who are Gentiles were “far away” and separated from God, a time when great division separated us from heaven. When? Before Christ. Before Christ there was a great gulf, a great distance that separated most of the world from God. This is the discussion of these two verses. Six things kept us from God. (Note: the same six things keep a man from God today.)

1. We were barricaded from God by the Jews. God Himself had caused the Jewish nation to be born of Abraham. He had challenged the Jews to be the missionary force to the world, proclaiming that He and He alone was the only true and living God, and that He was going to send the Messiah to save the world. But the Jews failed in their mission. They became exclusive, super-spiritual, prideful and boastful in their religion and failed to reach out to the other people of the world.

=> They took their own name, Jews, and called themselves by that name, but they classified everyone else in a package by the name of Gentile.

=> They took the major ritual of their religion, circumcision, and called themselves by that name, but they classified everyone else as the uncircumcised.

The point is that we as Gentiles were barricaded from God by religion, a religion that had known the truth but had allowed itself to become corrupted. (See *Israel, God’s Special People*, Jn. 4:22; *Circumcision*, Phil 3:3.)

Thought 1. Religion can keep a man from God — a corrupted religion. We must be on guard to protect the truth of Jesus Christ from corruption.

2. We were “separate from Christ.” This means that we as Gentiles neither knew nor expected the Messiah, that is, the anointed One of God. As Gentiles we had no hope of the coming Saviour for the world.
3. We were “excluded” from God’s people, that is, from Israel. This means that we as Gentiles were not citizens of God’s people — the nation of people being built by God for Himself. As Gentiles we had no destiny.
4. We were “foreigners to the covenants of the promise.” This means that we as Gentiles were not the covenant people of God. God did not approach the Gentiles directly with the covenant relationship. The Jew’s alone had a covenant relationship with God.
5. We “were without hope.” This means that we as Gentiles lived in all the fears and the anxieties of life and in constant expectancy of death. We were without hope of a life beyond this world beyond human history.

6. We were “without God in the world.” This means that we as Gentiles stood alone in this world. We had no source of strength or hope beyond that which we ourselves could muster or which others like us could provide. There was nothing to which we could look beyond ourselves. We had “many gods and many lords” (1 Cor. 8:5), but we were alienated from the only living and true God.

Mat 15:8 “These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”

Rom 1:20-22, 25 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen.

Eph 4:17-19 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

II. Ephesians 02:13 Reconciliation Through the Blood of Jesus Christ

Christ brings us near to God. The words “but now” are cataclysmic, a forceful contrast. Christ Jesus has now come into the world. There was a time when He had not entered the world, a time when men were divided and separated from God and from each other, *but now* Christ has come to bring all men to God and to each other. How does Christ bring us near God? Note how clearly and unmistakably Scripture declares: “Through the blood.” It is through the blood of Christ that men are brought near God. But why blood? Why was it necessary for Christ to die in order to bring us near God? There are at least two reasons.

1. Man was estranged from God: he had rejected and rebelled against God, committing high treason against Him. Man was working all kinds of evil and injustice in the world — all against the will and law of God. And, even as the case is among men, the penalty for high treason and insurrection is exile and separation or death.

Now note: there was only one way man could ever be brought back to God — if God loved him enough to forgive his transgression and rebellion. The glorious gospel is that God did love man that much. God was willing to forgive man. However, there was one problem. The judgment of exile or death had already been pronounced, and the Lord’s Word could not be revoked. What could God do? Only one thing: God had

to provide a Perfect, Ideal Man for men, a Man who could stand as the Pattern for all men. If He could provide the Ideal Man, then He could die *for man* and His death would stand for the death of all men.

This God has done. God has loved man with a perfect love — a love so strong that He was willing to substitute His Son for man. Only God and God’s Son could love that much. This is the first reason Christ had to die, to shed His blood for man.

2 Cor 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Heb 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

1 Pet 1:18-19 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1 Pet 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

1 Pet 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

2. God wanted to show just how much He loves the world. No “greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13). However, God has gone much farther than just giving His life for His friends. But note the point: we were not friends of God. We were enemies, in rebellion against Him, rejecting Him and every righteous law of His. Therefore, when Christ died, He died for men who were...

- “powerless” (Rom. 5:6)
- “ungodly” (Rom. 5:6)
- “sinners” (Rom. 5:8)
- “enemies” (Rom. 5:10)

Rom 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom 5:8-10 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

III. *Ephesians 02:14–15 Reconciliation, Peace, Brotherhood*

Christ brings us peace. Note that Jesus Christ Himself is our peace.

- => Christ brings us peace when we realize that He died for us and offers us deliverance from the bondage of sin and death and a life of eternity with God.
- => Christ brings a deeper sense of peace when we realize that He gives the daily power to overcome the aggravating and terrible weight of anguish, guilt, loneliness, emptiness and fear.
- => Christ brings a still deeper sense of peace when we realize that He has brought perfect love and unity to the world — that He has eliminated all divisions and barriers and differences between God and man and between men.

Christ is *man's peace* because He does four things for man.

1. Christ brings peace by bringing men together as “one” (v. 14). Note that He has made “the two one,” that is, Jew and Gentile. There are two ways that Christ makes men as one.
 - a. All men now approach God on the same basis, on an equal footing: through the blood of Jesus Christ. There is no other way. Therefore, when a man comes to the cross, he comes with everyone else who is standing at the feet of Jesus. He stands as one with them — all on an equal basis: sinners who need a Saviour. Standing there he is not accepted by God because he is better, healthier, wealthier, more intelligent, more capable or more religious than anyone else. He is acceptable to God because He acknowledges his unworthiness and nothingness — his desperate need — to be saved by the blood of Christ. He is acceptable to God because he acknowledges that he is as all other men — lost and needful — and he comes as one with all other men to confess Christ as his Saviour.

John 14:27 *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Eph 2:14 *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.*

Col 1:20 *And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

b. All men who come to Christ for salvation receive a common love, purpose and work.

=> First, there is the common love. Every believer who comes to Jesus Christ loves Him, and that common love *among* believers stirs a common love between believers. Love for Jesus Christ stirs love for all those whom Christ loves — which is everyone. Christ leads men to love one another.

=> Second, there is the common purpose and work: that of living righteously and bearing testimony to the glorious message of salvation and to life eternal.

Rom 12:5 So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Eph 4:12-13 To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

2. Christ brings peace by breaking down all barriers (v. 14). This is a picture taken from the temple. The temple was surrounded by a series of courts. Each court had a high wall separating it from the preceding court. As one approached the temple, he entered first of all the outer Court of the Gentiles. This is where the buying and selling of animals and the exchanging of money for foreign worshippers (Jewish proselytes) took place (see Mk. 11:15). Then there was the Court of the Women. A Jewish woman was limited to this court unless she had come to make a sacrifice. The next court was the Court of the Israelites. This is where the whole congregation gathered on the great feast days and where sacrifices were handed over to the priests. The Court of the Priests was next. This court was in the temple proper where the temple itself stood. This area was considered sacred and was accessible only to the services of the priests. Finally, within the very heart of the temple stood the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place where the very presence of God was to dwell. Only the High Priest could enter the Holy Place and he could enter only once a year — at the great Passover Feast.

Partition after partition separated people from the presence of God. Tablets hung around the wall of the Gentile Court announcing that if any Gentile walked into any other court, he was to be put to death. The picture is that of Jesus Christ breaking down all barriers and walls that separate man from God. All men can now approach God equally through the death of Jesus Christ. Men build all kinds of barriers and prejudices against other men. Society is plagued with barriers and prejudices built around such things as...

- race
- health
- organizations
- morality
- appearance
- religion
- ability
- position
- colour
- commitment
- wealth
- dress

But Christ has now done away with all barriers and prejudices. He has destroyed them all through the blood of His cross. All men now approach God and become worthy on the same basis: by bowing before the cross and surrendering their lives to God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mat 23:8 "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers."

Acts 10:28 But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.

Rom 10:12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

James 2:5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

Prov 22:2 Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all.

3. Christ brings peace by wiping out the hostility of the law against us. Before Christ, man had to approach God through law. However, man discovered something: the law did not make him acceptable to God: it condemned him and showed him how far away from God he really was — totally depraved. Every time he broke the law, the law cried out "guilty" and pronounced the penalty of being imperfect, unworthy, and unacceptable to God. Man discovered that the law was against him — at enmity with him. But now, Christ has done away with the enmity and condemnation of the law.

=> He has lived a sinless life, fulfilling the law perfectly; and thereby He has secured the Perfect and Ideal Righteousness.

=> He has also paid the penalty for man's having broken the law. As the Ideal and Perfect Man He could do this. When He died on the cross, He bore our condemnation and punishment for us.

The point is this: when Christ fulfilled the law, He became the embodiment of the law. He is now the Way. A man is to approach God through Him, not the law. Therefore, there are no laws, no rules, and no decrees to keep men from God. There is only one thing that keeps a man away from God: refusing to come to God through His Son

Jesus Christ. (See *Justification*, Gal. 2:15-16; *Faith vs. Works*, Gal. 2:16; notes, Gal. 2:19-21; 3:13-14; 4:4-7; *Christ Fulfills Law*, Rom. 8:3.)

Mat 5:17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

Rom 8:3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man.

Gal 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

Gal 4:4-5 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

4. Christ brings peace by creating a “new man.” God planned and promised a “new creation” — the creation of a *new man* individually and corporately, a new man in whom Jesus Christ dwells (Col. 1:27).

Individually when a man turns to Christ, Christ causes the man to be *born again*. He recreates the man — creates the man *all over again*. The man has a new life; he begins life all over again. He has a new beginning, and this new beginning brings peace — peace of heart and mind. (See note, *New Man*, Eph. 2:10.)

Corporately in Jesus Christ all men who believe, both Jew and Gentile, make up *one new body* (Eph. 2:16), *one new family* (Eph. 2:19), *one new building* (Eph. 2:20-22), *one new temple* (Eph. 2:21), *one new fellowship* (Eph. 1:22). (See note, Eph. 4:17; *New Preson, Self*, Eph. 4:24.)

IV. Ephesians 02:16–17 Reconciliation in Jesus Christ

Christ brings us reconciliation. The word *reconcile* (apokatallasso) means to change, to change thoroughly, to exchange, to change from enmity to friendship, to bring together, to restore. The idea is that two persons who should have been together all along are brought together; two persons who had something between them are restored and reunited.

Five points should be noted about reconciliation.

1. The thing that broke the relationship between God and man was sin. Men are said to be enemies of God (Rom. 5:10), and the word “enemies” refers back to the sinners and the ungodly (Rom. 5:6, 8). The “enemies” of God are the sinners and ungodly of this world. This simply means that every man is an enemy of God, for every man is a sinner and ungodly. This may seem unkind and harsh, but it is exactly what Scripture is saying. The fact is clearly seen by thinking about the matter for a moment.

The sinner cannot be said to be a friend of God. He is antagonistic toward God, opposing what God stands for. The sinner is...

- rebelling against God
- disobeying God
- fighting against God
- rejecting God
- denying God
- cursing God
- refusing to live for God
- ignoring God

When any of us sin, we work against God and promote evil by word and example.

=> When the sinner lives for himself, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because God does not live for Himself. God gave Himself up in the most supreme way possible: He gave His only Son to die *for* us.

=> When the sinner lives for the world and worldly things, he becomes an enemy of God. Why? Because he chooses the temporal, things which pass away, over God. Man chooses temporal things when God has provided eternal life for him through the death of His Son.

This is the point of God's great love or reconciliation. He did not reconcile and save us when we were righteous and good. He reconciled and saved us when we were enemies, ignoring and rejecting Him. As stated above, it is because we are sinners and enemies that we need to be reconciled.

2. The way men are reconciled to God is by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Very simply stated, when a man believes that Jesus Christ died for him...

- God accepts the death of Jesus Christ *for* the death by the man.
- God accepts the death of Jesus Christ *for* the death of the man.
- God accepts the sins borne by Christ as the sins committed accepts the condemnation borne by Christ as the condemnation due to the man.

Therefore, the man is freed from his sins and the punishment due his sins. Christ bore both the sins and the punishment for the man. The man who truly believes that God loves that much — enough to give His only begotten Son — becomes acceptable to God, reconciled forever and ever.

3. God is the One who reconciles, not men. Men do not reconcile themselves to God. They cannot do enough work or enough good to become acceptable to God. Reconciliation is entirely the act of God. God is the One who reaches out to men and reconciles them unto Himself. Men *receive* the reconciliation of God.

4. All men can be reconciled to one another, can be brought together, if they look up to God "through the Lord Jesus Christ." Men who look up to Jesus Christ for reconciliation and peace with God are linked arm in arm under the same Lord. (See Jn. 14:27; Eph. 2:13; 2:14-15; 1 Jn. 1:3-4; 2:1-2.)

5. Men learn about reconciliation by the preaching of Jesus Christ. Christ was the first to preach the message. His followers are to follow in His trail, for there is no other way men can ever know that they can be reconciled to God apart from preaching.

2 Cor 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. (see vv. 19-21)

Eph 1:6 To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves.

Eph 2:16 And in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Col 1:20 And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Heb 2:17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

V. Ephesians 02:18 Access to God

Christ brings us access to God. The word *access* (prosagoge) means to bring to, to move to, to introduce, to present. The thought is that of being in a royal court and being presented and introduced to the King of kings. Jesus Christ is the One who throws open the door into God's presence. He is the One who presents us to God, the Sovereign Majesty of the universe.

Note that it is the Holy Spirit who escorts us into God's presence. The idea is that of daily access – hour by hour, moment by moment. The Holy Spirit keeps us in the presence of God.

=> The Holy Spirit is the Divine Nature of God within us that gives us permanent access into God's presence. (Jn. 3:5; Rom. 8:11; 2 Pet. 1:4).

=> The Holy Spirit is the One who works in us and stirs us to move more and more into God's presence (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 4:6-7).

=> The Holy Spirit is the constant companion with us, teaching us to live in God's presence (Jn. 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:12-13).

=> The Holy Spirit is the One within us who bears witness that we are children of God and should approach God continually (Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:4-6). ■

JOHN 04: 22 ISRAEL, GOD'S SPECIAL PEOPLE

“You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.” John 04:22

Why did Jesus Christ come to the Jewish nation and come to earth as a Jew? Very simply stated, the Jews were God's special people. They had been born by a special act of God. It all started long, long ago. God had wanted four things.

1. He wanted a people who would love Him supremely and give Him their first loyalty. (See Gen. 17:7; Isa. 43:10.)
2. He wanted a people who would witness to all other nations that He and He alone was the one true and living God. (See Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Acts 13:26, 47.)
3. He wanted a people through whom He could send the promised Seed, the Saviour and Messiah, Jesus Christ, to all men everywhere. (See Gen. 3:15; 17:7; 22:18; Gal. 3:16; Jn. 4:22.)
4. He wanted a people through whom He could send His written Word, the Holy Bible, and preserve it for all generations. (Rom. 9:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:10-12.)

In searching the earth for such a people, God could find none (Rom. 1:18-32). God could do only one thing. He had to find one man and through him raise a new people, a new nation.

1. God found and chose Abraham and through him established the Jewish nation. (Gen. 12:1-5; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8, 15-19; 22:16-18; 26:2-5, 24; 28:13-15; 31:13; 35:9-12.) God chose one man and challenged him to worship God supremely. If that man would worship God supremely, then God would cause a special people to be born of his seed. That man was Abraham. Abraham was the first Jew (Gen. 12:1-4; Gal. 3:16). In the Old Testament the Jews and their land (Palestine) were continually pointed to as the very special people and land of God. They were called...

=> God's treasured possession (Exo. 19:5; Deu. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Psa. 135:4).

=> the LORD's portion (Deu. 32:9).

=> the LORD's land (Lev. 25:23; Jer. 2:7; 16:18; Hos. 9:3).

=> the holy land (Zec. 2:12).

However, the Jewish nation failed to obey God supremely. The whole plot of the Old Testament centres around God's pleading and dealing with the Jews. Again and again, He gave the nation the opportunity to obey Him. He dealt with them in mercy and in judgment, but at every turn they refused to heed His pleading.

2. God chose the family of David. (see *Jesus Christ, King of Israel*, Jn 1:49). God had no choice but to make another move, so He chose one faithful family within the Jewish nation and gave to that family one great promise. The family was that of King David, and the promise was that of the Messiah, God's great King, God's very own Son. God's Son was to come through the line of David and establish an eternal nation of people who would love God supremely. However, the Jewish nation again failed God. They misinterpreted God's Word — the prophecies of His coming.
 - a. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying the seed of Abraham included only the Jewish nation. In their minds, God had no children except the children of the Jewish nation. The Bible says explicitly that the seed of Abraham is Christ, and the special people of God are those individuals within all nations who worship God supremely (Gal. 3:16).
 - b. The Jews misinterpreted God's Word by saying that the eternal kingdom promised to David was the Jewish nation and the Jewish nation only. They expected Israel to be established as an earthly nation forever and all other nations to be subservient to Israel. But again, God's promise was not that narrow, nor was it that prejudiced. The Bible says there is not, and never has been, any respect of persons with God (Deu. 10:17; 2 Chr. 19:7; Job. 34:19; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9 ; Col. 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:17). God did say that Christ was to come from the Davidic line, but He also said that He was going to establish an eternal nation made up of people everywhere who would love God supremely (Rom. 2:28-29).

By misinterpreting God's promises, the Jews failed to be the missionaries to the world that God had chosen them to be. They became earthly bound and materialistic minded. They twisted the idea of the promised Messiah to fit their own schemes. They conceived of Him as One who was to establish an earthly kingdom for the Jewish nation alone. They failed to see that God was speaking...

- of an eternal kingdom of righteousness.
 - of a kingdom that is of another dimension entirely — the spiritual dimension.
 - of a new heaven and a new earth that would give each person an eternal life beyond just one earthly generation.
3. God had no choice but to make a third move. This He did by sending His own Son into the world through the Jewish nation. God sent Him so that the world through Him might be saved (Jn. 3:16-19). However, man rejected God's Son and crucified Him. This act — the killing of God's Son — was the final blow. When man slew the only Son of God, the whole world *was* involved. Both Jew and Gentile were represented symbolically in the Jewish religionists and the Roman authorities.

They both actually did the plotting, sentencing, and execution. If the world were ever to be saved, it was now perfectly clear that God had to make every move Himself.

This He did once-for-all. In His eternal purpose and plan for man's salvation, God took the sins of all men and laid them upon His Son while He was being slain upon the cross. He allowed His Son to bear the sins of the world (1 Pet. 2:24). Then He took His Son and raised Him from the dead — never to die again. He did what man had always failed to do: in His Son's resurrection God began to build a lasting kingdom of righteousness, a new nation that is presently being made up of men from all earthly nations who desire and are willing to follow Jesus Christ supremely. He is calling out and forming a new people who have genuinely been born again — spiritually. These new born people shall live eternally — beyond just one earthly generation. These people are identified as His church, as a body of people who genuinely believe and follow Him. They are destined to be the inhabitants of the new heavens and earth. Believers become God's new community, new society, new race, new nation of people. They become His church, His new creation — spiritually and supernaturally born again — who comprise the true family of God (Lk. 8:21; Eph. 2:11-18; 4:17-19.)

***Eph 2:18-22** For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief corner-stone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

God, acting solely upon His own through the death and resurrection of His Son, has fulfilled His promises to both Abraham and David. All the people of the nations of the world now have the opportunity to become children of God, the special people of God. □

PHILIPPIANS 03: 03 CIRCUMCISION

Before Christ, circumcision was the physical sign that a man was a follower of the true God. It was the sign that a man believed the promises that God had made to Abraham and Israel (see Gen. 17:10-14; Rom. 4:11). God never intended circumcision to have any value other than being a sign. It was not to bring righteousness to any man — not even to Abraham (Rom. 4:9-10). It was given only as a sign — a sign of the faith that a man already had in God's promises. Righteousness was imputed to the man because he believed God's promises; then the man was circumcised as a sign of his faith in God (see Rom. 4:11).

However, many abused God's purpose for circumcision.

1. Some made circumcision a substitute for true righteousness. A man was thought to be safe and secure in the arms of God if he was circumcised. Believing God and loving men had little to do with being a child of God. Many forgot the circumcision of a pure heart and became Jews of the circumcision in name only. Circumcision became merely an external and physical sign.
2. Some used circumcision as a way to divide and categorize people. A great wall of division was thrown up around the uncircumcised (cp. Acts 10:1; 1 Sam.17:26, 36; 2 Sam. 1:20). Any man who was uncircumcised was thought to be *cut off* and *far off*, not only from those thought to be the people of God (the Jews and the circumcised) but from God Himself. (See Acts 10:1-33.) An uncircumcised man was looked upon with bitter contempt. In the mind of the Jew, God was thought to love only Israel, despising and rejecting all other people (the Gentile nations).
3. God has done away with circumcision as a sign of righteousness since Christ has come (Gal. 5:6; 6:15; Col. 2:11). Righteousness is now of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter of rules and regulations (see Rom. 2:25-29; 4:8-12, 23-25). The truly righteous man is the man who is God's *inwardly* – the man whose spirit has been *recreated* into the very nature of God. God's very own righteous nature is implanted into the very nature of man when he is *born again*. A man *born again* by the Spirit of God is God's "new creation" (Jn. 3:3f; 1 Pet. 1:20; 2 Pet. 1:4). □

EPHESIANS 04: 24 NEW PERSON OR SELF

And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 04:24

A man *regenerated, renewed, born again* who has become spiritual minded. It is a *new person or self* created by Christ; he has been given a holy nature and an incorruptible life. It is opposed to the *old person or self* with a corrupt nature. It is a man who is...

- in fellowship with God
- obedient to God's will
- devoted to God's service

There are two Greek words translated by the English word *new*. There is the word *neos* which refers to something new that has just been made, but there are already many others existing just like it. There is the word *kainos* which refers to something new, something just made and there is nothing like it in existence. *Kainos* is the word used here. Jesus Christ makes a *new man* entirely – a creation unlike any other

creation existing. The Gentile believer is not made into a Jew; neither is a Jewish believer made into a Gentile. Each, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is made into a *new kind of person — a new person or self in God*. Every person *can begin life all over again*; every person can have a new beginning, a new life by coming to Jesus Christ.

How is this possible? By the power of God. When a person believes in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ — really believes and entrusts his life into the hands of Jesus Christ — God creates the spirit of the person in righteousness and true holiness. God takes the faith of the person and *credits it as the righteousness of Jesus Christ*. God actually credits the person's faith *as the perfect righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ*. Therefore, the person stands before God in the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ. But note: this is not all that God does. He does more marvelous things for the believer — all having to do with creating the believer into a new person.

1. God quickens or makes the spirit of the believer alive. Whereas the believer's spirit was dead to God, God creates it and makes it alive to God.
2. God causes the believer to be born again spiritually.
3. God actually places His divine nature into the heart of the believer.
4. God actually creates a new person or self out of the believer.
5. God renews the believer by the Holy Spirit. □

GALATIANS 02:15–16 JUSTIFICATION (DIAKIOUN)

“We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners.’ Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.” Galatians 02:15-16

To count someone righteous. It means to reckon, to credit, to account, to judge, to treat, to look upon as righteous. It does not mean to make a man righteous. All Greek verbs which end in “oun” mean not to make someone something, but merely to count, to judge, to treat someone as something.

There are three major points to note about justification.

1. Why justification is necessary.
 - a. Justification is necessary because of the sin and alienation of man. Man has rebelled against God and taken his life into his own hands. Man lives as he desires...

- fulfilling the lust of the eyes and of the flesh (sinful nature).
- clinging to the pride of life and to the things of the world.

Man has become sinful and ungodly, an enemy of God, pushing God out of his life and wanting little if anything to do with God. Man has separated and alienated himself from God.

- b. Justification is necessary because of the anger and wrath of God. “God ...expresses His wrath every day” (Psa. 7:11). Sin has aroused God’s anger and wrath. God is angry over man’s...

- rebellion
- sin
- hostility
- desertion
- ungodliness
- unrighteousness

Man has turned his back upon God, pushing God away and having little to do with Him. Man has not made God the centre of his life; man has broken his relationship with God. Therefore, the greatest need in man’s life is to discover the answer to the question: How can the relationship between man and God be restored?

2. Why God justifies a man. God justifies a man because of His Son Jesus Christ.

When a man believes in Jesus Christ, God takes that man’s faith and counts it as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God considers and credits the man’s faith as righteousness. Why is God willing to do this?

- a. God is willing to justify man because He loves man that much. God loves man so much that He sent His Son into the world and sacrificed Him in order to justify man (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8).
- b. God is willing to justify man because of what His Son Jesus Christ has done for man.

=> Jesus Christ has secured the *Ideal* righteousness for man. He came to earth to live a sinless and perfect life. As Man He never broke the law of God; He never went contrary to the will of God, not even once. Therefore, He stood before God and before the world as the *Ideal Man*, the *Perfect Man*, the *Representative Man*, the *Perfect Righteousness* that could stand for the righteousness of every man.

=> Jesus Christ came into the world to *die* for man. As the *Ideal Man* He could take all the sins of the world upon Himself and die for every man. His death *could stand* for every man. He exchanged places with man by becoming the sinner (2 Cor. 5:19). He bore the wrath of God against sin, bearing the condemnation for every man. Again, He was able to do this because He was the *Ideal Man*, and as the *Ideal Man* His death could stand for the death of every man.

=> Jesus Christ came into the world to *arise from the dead* and thereby to conquer death for man. As the *Ideal Man* His resurrection and exaltation into the presence of God *could stand* for every man's desperate need to conquer death and to be acceptable to God. His resurrected life could stand for the resurrected life of the believer.

Now, as stated above, when a man believes in Jesus Christ — really believes — God takes that man's belief and...

- counts it as the righteousness (perfection) of Christ. The man is counted as *righteous in Christ*.
- counts it as the death of Christ. The man is counted as having already *died in Christ*, as having already paid the penalty for sin *in the death of Christ*.
- counts it as the resurrection of Christ. The man is counted as already having been *resurrected in Christ*.

Very simply, God loves His Son Jesus Christ so much that He honours any man who honours His Son by *believing in Him*. He honours the man by taking the man's faith and counting (crediting) it as righteousness and by giving him the glorious privilege of living with Christ forever in the presence of God.

3. How God justifies a man. The word justify (diakioun) is a legal word taken from the courts. It pictures man on trial before God. Man is seen as having committed the most heinous of crimes; he has rebelled against God and broken his relationship with God. How can he restore that relationship? Within human courts if a man is acquitted, he is declared innocent, but this is not true within the Divine Court. When a man appears before God, he is anything but innocent; he is utterly guilty and condemned accordingly.

But when a man sincerely trusts Christ, then God takes that man's faith and counts it as righteousness. By such God counts the man — judges him, treats him — as if he was innocent. The man is not made innocent; he is guilty. He knows it and God knows it, but God treats him as innocent. "God justifies the ungodly"— an incredible mercy, a wondrous grace. (See notes, Rom. 4:1-3; *Jews, the Seed of Abraham*, Rom 4:1-25; *Credited*, Rom 4:22; *Justification*, Rom 4:22.)

How do we know this? How can we know for sure that God is like this? Because Jesus said so. He said that God loves us. We are sinners, yes; but Christ said that we are very, very dear to God.

Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Acts 13:39 *Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.*

Rom 3:23-24 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Rom 4:3 *What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rom 5:9 *Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!*

Rom 6:7 *Because anyone who has died [counted dead, justified] has been freed from sin.*

Rom 8:33 *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.*

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Gal 2:16 *Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.*

Gal 3:6 *Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

Gal 3:24 *So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.*

Phil 3:9 *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. □*

**GALATIANS 02:16 FAITH VS. WORKS,
SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, OBSERVING LAW**

“We know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.” Galatians 02:16

Why is it that a man can never be justified nor secure righteousness by works and law? Why is it that a man can never approach God by works and law?

1. There are two ways that a man can try to secure righteousness and approach God.
 - a. A man can try to work to secure righteousness; he can do all he can to keep the law of God and to please God. But note: a man can do this...
 - only if he can keep the law perfectly, never breaking it once and never violating it a single time
 - only if he can make sure that every single thing he ever does or thinks is perfectly good and righteous and pure
 - only if he can please God in every act, word, and thought, never displeasing God in anything

Only if a man can do this can he secure righteousness by works and law. But what man can be perfect and good and righteous and pure in every single act, word, and thought? It is absolutely impossible to secure righteousness by works and law. A person may try to approach God through works and law, but he can never achieve perfection — not perfect righteousness and holiness without which *no person will ever see God.*

Heb 12:14 *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.*

Mat 7:22-23 *“Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

Rom 3:20 *Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

Gal 3:10 *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.”*

James 4:17 *Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*

- b. A man can believe that Jesus Christ is God's gift of righteousness to the world — that God so loved the world...
- that He gave His Son to live a perfect life upon earth in order to secure the Perfect and Ideal Righteousness for man.
 - that He gave His Son to take the unrighteousness of man upon Himself and to die for man, that is, to bear the judgment of unrighteousness for man.
 - that he gave His Son to arise from the dead for man in order to conquer death and to give man a new and perfect life that is eternal.

A man can believe that God loves him and takes his faith in Christ and counts it as righteousness.

A man can believe that God loves him and accepts him because he honours His Son Jesus Christ - honours Jesus Christ by believing and following Him.

A man can believe that God loves His Son so much that He will take any man who honours His Son and do anything for him. If the man believes in Jesus Christ for righteousness, then God will count the man righteous.

***Eph 2:8-9** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

***Titus 3:4-5** But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

2. Note another point: the two ways that men try to approach God are completely different from each other. Faith and works are incompatible. Faith is always the opposite of works.

=> If a man works to keep the law in order to be righteous, then he can offer to God only *self-righteousness*, only the righteousness of the works *he has done*.

=> If a man trusts the righteousness of Jesus Christ *for his righteousness*, then he can offer the righteousness of Christ to God. He can come to God in the righteousness of Christ.

God always accepts the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ. For any man who truly trusts the righteousness of Christ — who truly gives Christ all he is and has — God accepts that man's trust as righteousness. The man is not righteous, but God takes his trust in Christ and accepts it as righteousness.

3. Note still another fact: a man who *believes God for righteousness* approaches God entirely differently than the man who approaches God in his own self-righteousness.

- a. The man who approaches God in his own righteousness...
- presents his self-righteousness to God *by himself*.
 - depends upon his own righteousness.
 - trust his own righteousness.
 - believes in his own righteousness.
 - declares that he has the strength and power to make himself righteous and acceptable to God.
- b. The man who approaches God in the righteousness of Jesus Christ...
- presents his love and trust in the righteousness of Jesus Christ as his righteousness. (God could never turn down a person who loved and trusted His Son with all his heart.)
 - rejects dependence upon himself and depends upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
 - gives up trusting his own righteousness and trusts the righteousness of Christ.
 - no longer believes in his own righteousness, but believes in Christ for righteousness.
 - declares that he does not have the power to make himself righteous and acceptable to God; he trusts the power of God to make him righteous and acceptable.

Note what this is saying: a man either believes he has the power to save himself and to keep himself from dying or else he believes that God has the power to save him. A man either trusts his own power for salvation and life or else he trusts God's power. If he believes that he has the power to save himself, then he works to make himself righteous and to live forever. If he believes that God alone has the power to save him, then he trusts God for righteousness and life.

In conclusion, no one is ever justified by works or by law. We may try to secure righteousness by works and law, but it is always self-righteousness, and self-righteousness always ends up with self: in the grave — dead, having passed the way of all flesh — short of God's glory, perfection, and disqualified from ever living with God. Self-righteousness is never acceptable to God; works and law can never justify a man and make him perfect.

However, we can secure righteousness by faith. We can trust God as a child trusts his father. We can trust that God loves us enough to count our love and trust for His Son as righteousness. □