

Week of August 20 - A New Temple Small Group Lesson 6

Connect

To some, Jews and Christians look very similar, possibly even the same.

If someone asked you their differences, what would you say? What could you say is similar, but at the same time is quite different?

Verses - Ephesians 2:11-22 (CSB)

11 So, then, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh—called
"the uncircumcised" by those called "the circumcised," which is done in the flesh
by human hands. 12 At that time you were without Christ, excluded from the
citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope
and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far
away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who
made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In his flesh,
15 he made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in
regulations, so that he might create in himself one new man from the two,
resulting in peace. 16 He did this so that he might reconcile both to God in one
body through the cross by which he put the hostility to death. 17 He came and
proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away 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 foreigners and strangers, but fellow
citizens with the saints, and members of God's household, 20 built on the
foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the
cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building, being put together, grows into a holy
temple in the Lord. 22 In him you are also being built together for God's dwelling
in the Spirit.

Study

1. According to vv.11-12, what were the gentiles lacking before believing in Jesus Christ? What changes when we also believe, and on what basis? (v.13; Hebrews 10:19-22; Romans 11:26)

2. Paul speaks of two conflicts that are both resolved in Christ. What are they? (v14-15, compare Acts 10:28; v16, compare James 4:4)

3. How were the enemies reconciled, and brought into a peaceful relationship? (vv.14,16,20; Romans 5:10)

4. What is the structure that is made by their unification and what is its purpose? (vv.21-22)

APPLY: In view of today's verses, as Christians, what should be our attitude towards Jews who have not accepted Christ? What can we learn from them? What should they "receive" from us? (See Romans 11, esp. vv.13-18)

DISCUSS: As believers in Christ, we have learned that we do not need to follow OT rules.

What may we disregard, and why? What is the guideline for this?

Please read 1 Corinthians 8:1, 10-13 and compare 1 John 2:23. What is it that unifies what not to do (rules about food etc) with what we should be doing?

Share

How do you benefit from reading the OT? How does the OT help you to understand the NT? How does the NT help you to understand the OT?

Grow

Minister to one another through sharing praise and specific prayer requests.

- Pray that God will reveal himself to us fully, through both the Old and New Testaments, and that the Holy Spirit will help us to understand as we read how all of this is centered on the cornerstone, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.