

Ephesians 2:11- 22.

In Christ we are Loved & Accepted

What are the main things, which divide people in our community these days? What are some of the labels we use to separate people? Sometimes these labels can divide members of the Christian church. Although dealing specifically with the difference between Jew and Gentile, this passage gives reasons against accepting any divisions between Christians.

1. Describe a situation you have been in where you felt like you didn't belong.
2. What advantages did the Jews have compared to the Gentiles before Christ came v11,12?
3. Look at the progression in verse 12. "No hope of a Messiah . . . aliens from the society whose king was God . . . strangers who did not possess God's promises . . . without hope . . . without God." What is the logical conclusion to the conditions described? What does it mean to you to say that someone is *without* God?
4. How does a person's concept of Jesus Christ and a person's relationship to him affect their view of the meaning of life? Their view of the direction of history?
5. Before Christ came, Jew and Gentile were separated by a mutual dislike and contempt (v14). There was a wall beyond which the Gentile could not go into the inner areas of the temple v14. God's commandments were possessed by the Jews and not the Gen-tiles (v15). How did Christ break down these barriers and bring peace between Jew and Gentile? How do both Jew and Gentile now come to God?
6. List all the things accomplished in Christ for the Gentile (those *far off*), and for the Jew (those *near*), verses 13-17.
7. In what sense did Christ abolish the law of command-ments and ordinances (v15)? See Ro 10:4; Acts 15: 1, 6-11; Gal 3:23-26; Eph 2: 8-10; Mark 15:37, 38; Heb 10:19, 20.

8. What do Christian believers of different backgrounds (culture, race, or colour) have in common? See 2:8□10, 13, 18. What should be our attitude toward any continuing hostility between believers? What practical steps can we take to learn to accept each other?
9. Paul compares Christian believers to a temple being constructed. Upon what does the unity of the whole structure depend? Upon what other foundation do people sometimes try to establish the church? Why? What is the purpose of this temple?
10. What are the barriers in the Christian church, which many today accept as normal? What practical things can we do about them? Remember the key phrase in v 13, is '*in Christ*'.