

Gamma 11

Study 7

Ephesians 2:11-21

Section A (Exegetical Questions)

- 1. Paul highlights the wonderful power of Christ in the unity of the church by illustrating it with the situation of alienation between the Jews and Gentiles. What are the 5 things that separate the Jews from Gentiles?**
- 2. How are the Gentiles separated from Christ implying the Jews were not separated from Christ which they clearly were at this time as the Jews had rejected Jesus and killed him. (Hint look at the use of the term Christ in this context)**
- 3. How did Christ remove the barriers that divided Jews and Gentiles? Does the removal of the law mean we no longer have to obey the law? Does that not contradict what Jesus said on the Sermon of the Mount in Matt 5:17-18 when he said he had come to fulfil the law not to abolish it.**

The law as specifically given to the chosen nation Israel and the adherence to the law both the moral law and the ceremonial law made Israel distinct amongst all the nations of the world and became a particular sticking issue between those who had the law and those who did not which was the Jew Gentile division. When Christ set aside the Mosaic law by his death, he removed the hostile purposes to which human sinfulness had often put the Mosaic law's good, but temporary, commands about separating from the Gentiles. This toxic mixture of the law and human sinfulness (cf. Rom. 5:20; 7:5, 7-25; 1 Cor. 15:56) probably led Paul to speak of the law here in 2:15 in negative terms. The sinful use of the law produced a hostility that deprived Gentiles of access to God through the Scriptures (2:12). There is certainly more to be said about the Mosaic law than this, but a fuller explanation of its role did not fit Paul's purposes here. Instead, he speaks concisely, aligning the Mosaic law closely with "enmity" and saying in straightforward terms that Christ has set it aside .

4. What does Paul mean when he says Jesus is our peace what is peace?

The term 'peace' in both Old and New Testaments came to denote well-being in the widest sense, including salvation, the source and giver of which is God alone. 'Peace' was used for harmony among people and especially for the messianic. The term could describe the content and goal of all Christian preaching, the message itself being called 'the gospel of peace'. The biblical concept of peace has to do with wholeness, particularly with reference to personal relationships. Peace describes an order established by the God of peace, Christ himself is the mediator of that peace. He gives peace to believers indeed, he himself is that peace.

Old Testament messianic title, 'the Prince of Peace' (Isa. 9:6; cf. Mic. 5:5, 'he will be their peace').

Christ is the embodiment of peace for both Jewish and Gentile Christians, He is the central figure who effects reconciliation and removes hostility in its various forms. In accomplishing this, Christ has transcended one of the fundamental divisions of the first-century world'.

5. How does Jesus create one new humanity? How does this dovetail with God's ultimate plan for the universe in Ephesians 1:10

Section B

Reflection Questions

- 1. Can you reflect on the grand reality of the church is being one new humanity under Christ. How important is church unity within its members seen in that light. Why is it that there continues to be lots of barriers in the church despite the spiritual fact that God has in the church created one new humanity?**
- 2. What are the common barriers that we have personally experienced in the church today? How does the proper understanding of salvation by grace actually promote unity and peace within the church?**
- 3. In this new humanity does God promise equality of identity for each person in the church. What does being one new man then mean?**

Section C

Case history

Vivekenanda was worshipping in the 3rd Baptist church of Petaling Jaya. He was a former drug addict but found Christ and was rehabilitated in the Burning Bush Drug Rehab home and since then found a job as a cleaner.

His congregation was part of a larger Chinese congregation. One day a prominent member of the Chinese church had left his Ipad at the church hall. When he realised this and had come back for it, he found that it was no longer where he had left it. He noticed Vivekenanda loitering around the area with some of the other Tamil church friends and he immediately accused him of taking the Ipad even though there were other Chinese church members around and even an American tourist sitting in the hall. Vivekenanda and his friends were very much upset by the accusation and the situation turned ugly when they retaliated against the man who was aggressively pushing Vivekenanda to the ground. A fight broke out and the man was hospitalised with a broken jaw. The man then launched a law suit and police report against Vivekenanda. The actual thief was never found.

4. Why do you think that Vivekenanda and his friends were accused for theft?
5. Why do you think Vivekenanda and his friend retaliated violently?
6. Do you think being an Indian in a Chinese church is easy? What do you think would be Vivekenanda's feeling of self worth and esteem being a minority in the church?
7. If you were the church leader in this scenario how would you go about trying to sort this out and bring peace? Why is it important to sort out this problem why not let the police and the lawyers have a go at this after all it is not your problem right?
8. What are the steps that the 3rd Baptist Church should be consciously taking to better reflect the fact that the church is indeed one new man in Christ.
9. What are your personal views on people of other races, do we tend to treat certain races as more superior and others as inferior? Why didn't the person who lost his Ipad blame the American tourist sitting in the hall itself and instead blame the Indians outside the hall? What if your son or daughter were to marry a person of a race which you consider inferior what would you say? How do we take practical steps ourselves in overcoming racism