

## Unity

### **Ephesians 2:14 – 22 Unity between Israelites and Gentiles**

- Many Israelites overlooked the promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3), and repeated many times in the Old Testament, that “all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” See also Genesis 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14)
  - Psalm 22:27, Messianic psalm from David, “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You.” See also Psalm 33:8, 47:1 – 2, 67:1 – 7, 72:8 – 17, 82:8, 86:8 - 10
  - Isaiah 49:6, concerning the Messiah, “I will give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”
  - Jeremiah 3:17, “Jerusalem shall be called the Throne of the Lord and all the nations shall be gathered to it...” See also 33:9.
  - Daniel 7:14, concerning the Messiah, “Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him..”
  - And many more.
- (14) Jesus broke down the wall between Israelites and the rest of the world.
- (15) The Law of Moses was given only to the nation of Israel (Exodus 19:3 – 6, Deuteronomy 5:1 – 3). God condemned many of the behaviors of the surrounding nations, but never asked them to follow the Law nor condemned them for not following it. Further, Israelites were enjoined not to intermarry with those of other nations. So, the Law became the cause of separation between Israelites and Gentiles. Further, Moabites and Ammonites could never be included (Deuteronomy 23:3); Egyptians and Edomites not until the third generation (Deuteronomy 23:7 – 8).
- (16) All the faithful are included in the one body, the church. See also 3:6.
- (17) The gospel was preached to both Jew and Gentile. Paul specifically targeted Gentiles (3:8).
- (18) Paul will address the “one Spirit” idea again in 4:4.
- (19) No faithful people are excluded (Colossians 3:11, Galatians 3:28). Household of God (Galatians 3:10). Family of God (John 1:12, 1 John 3:1 – 2, 1 Timothy 3:15)

### **Ephesians 4:1 – 7, Unity is based on these concepts**

- Attitudes that produce unity (4:2 – 3)
  - Character traits: humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, love, peace
  - Remember how you got here: sealed with the Spirit (1:13), given wisdom and knowledge and godly character (1:17 – 20), access to God (2:18), strengthened (3:16).
  - Unity is based on these character traits, neither by authority nor by office, not by sameness but by diversity.
  - Unity is a natural result, not a goal of enforcement.
- Concepts that produce unity (4:4 – 7)
  - One body (one church)
    - Do we think in terms of one congregation (or a collection of congregations) or in terms of the universal church, including angels?
    - Do we think in terms of manufacturing copies of my ideal or in terms of the diversity of body parts?

- One Spirit (one set of attitudes initiated by the indwelling Spirit)
  - The Spirit is responsible for our diverse growth through diverse gifts (e.g., Romans 12:3 – 16, 1 Peter 4:7 – 11)
  - The Spirit will not give gifts in opposition to one another, but only in harmony.
- One Lord (one leader, but through service, not authority John 13:1 – 20)
  - Lesser authorities are not mentioned.
  - As will be explained in 5:15 – 33, this Lordship is that of a sacrificial husband, not a commander or slave master.
- One faith (one set of promises in which we trust)
  - Also trusting that the distribution of those promises will be according to God's desire, as needed in the Kingdom, not with legalistic equality.
  - Unity cannot exist without knowledge of the promises we share.
- One baptism (one level of commitment)
  - My sins are washed away. (Acts 22:16, Hebrews 10:22)
  - I am reserved for godly purposes. (1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:26)
  - I am a sacrifice like Jesus. (Romans 6:3 – 4, 12:1)
  - I walk in newness of life. My spirit is resurrected: reconnected. (Romans 6:4, Titus 3:5, Colossians 2:12)
  - I will be raised on Judgment Day. (Romans 6:5)
  - I am freed from slavery to sin. (Romans 6:6)
  - I will achieve miraculous unity. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
  - I am being transformed (Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 3:27) into the image of Jesus.
  - I am rescued from an evil world. (1 Peter 3:21)
  - I receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

**John 17:20 – 23, Our unity is a proof that Jesus is from God.**

- Disunity denies that Jesus is the Messiah.
- The parade of godly character traits (glory) presented by the church is part of that unity.
- The consistency of the faithful (acting out what they profess) proves the love God has for the faithful.

**2 Corinthians 10:7, Unity demands that the faithful assess others as they assess themselves.**

- God has been patient with me, so I can be patient with you.
- I have corrected many of my own misunderstandings while considering myself faithful, so I can consider you faithful as you work through yours.

**Philippians is all about fellowship, how we remain spiritually connected.**