Ephesians 2:15-16 Commentary

Ephesians 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: ton nomon ton entolon en dogmasin katargesas, (AAPMSN) hina tous duo ktise (3SAAS) en auto eis ena kainon anthropon poion (PAPMSN) eirenen, (note "in His flesh" en sarki auto" is found in the Nestle-Aland Greek text at the end of verse 14)

Amplified: By abolishing in His [own crucified] flesh the enmity [caused by] the Law with its decrees and ordinances [which He annulled]; that He from the two might create in Himself one new man [one new quality of humanity out of the two], so making peace. (Amplified Bible - Lockman)

NET: when He nullified in His flesh the law of commandments in decrees. He did this to create in Himself one new man out of two ("in order to create the two into one new man"), thus making peace,

NLT: By his death he ended the whole system of Jewish law that excluded the Gentiles. His purpose was to make peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new person from the two groups. (NLT - Tyndale House)

Phillips: By his sacrifice he removed the hostility of the Law, with all its commandments and rules, and made in himself out of the two, Jew and Gentile, one new man, thus producing peace. (Phillips: Touchstone)

Wuest: the enmity, in His flesh having rendered inoperative the law of the commandments in ordinances, in order that the two He might create in himself, resulting in one new man, making peace,

Young's Literal: the enmity in his flesh, the law of the commands in ordinances having done away, that the two he might create in himself into one new man, making peace,

BY ABOLISHING IN HIS FLESH THE ENMITY: katargesas, (AAPMSN):

- note that the phrase "in His flesh" "en sarki auto" is found in the Nestle-Aland Greek text at the end of verse 14
- Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 10:19, 20, 21, 22
- Ephesians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
Abolishing modifies "broke down" in Ep 2:14 (note).

**Abolishing** (2673) \(\text{katargeo} \) from \(\text{kata} = \text{intensifies meaning} + \text{argeo} = \text{be idle from argos} = \text{ineffective, idle, inactive from a = without + ergon = work} \) (Click word study on katargeo) literally means to reduce to inactivity. The idea is to make the power or force of something ineffective and so to render powerless, null and void. To cause something to come to an end or to cease to happen. The **aorist tense** in this context depicts a once for all completed action in the past.

The word abolish simply means “to nullify.” The Law no longer holds sway over either Jew or Gentile, since in Christ believers are not under Law but under grace.

**Hughes** writes asks how did Christ abolish the law

How did he do this, especially since he said in his Sermon on the Mount, “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” (see note Matthew 5:17)? **Christ fulfilled the moral law, keeping all its requirements, but he abolished the Jewish ceremonial law.** Thus, the requirements of the ceremonial law (the washings, the Sabbath restrictions, etc.) which had been such a barrier were gone. And since he fulfilled the moral law, taking away its condemnation, all have free access through grace (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:6-15). The gospel is now, “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” (Eph 2:8, 9), and because of this we fly across the barrier to God! (**Hughes, R. K.: Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ, Crossway Books**)

The Net Bible note adds that "abolishing" can be translated “rendered inoperative.” This is a difficult text to translate because it is not easy to find an English term which communicates well the essence of the author’s meaning, especially since legal terminology is involved. Many other translations use the term “abolish” (so NRSV, NASB, NIV), but this term implies complete destruction which is not the author’s meaning here. The verb katargeo can readily have the meaning “to cause something to lose its power or effectiveness”, and this meaning fits quite naturally here within the author’s legal mindset. A proper English term which communicates this well is “nullify” since this word carries the denotation of “making something legally null and void.” This is not, however, a common English word. An alternate term like “rendered inoperative [or ineffective]” is also
accurate but fairly inelegant. For this reason, the translation retains the term “nullify”; it is the best choice of the available options, despite its problems. (The NET Bible Notes. Biblical Studies Press)

**Flesh** (4561) (sarx) (Click word study on sarx) refers to Jesus' physical flesh.

**In His flesh** - In context Paul refers to the physical death of Christ, which the Father made possible because "when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law. (Galatians 4:4)

*Comment:* The Divine Son of God was also the Son of Man, born by the Spirit of a woman and so fully God and fully Man, His perfect Humanity being necessary so that He could abolish the enmity in His physical flesh and free us from our sins by the New Covenant in His blood.

**Barnes** writes "By the sacrifice of his body on the cross. It was not by instruction merely; it was not by communicating the knowledge of God; it was not as a teacher; it was not by the mere exertion of power; it was by his flesh--his human nature--and this can mean only that he did it by his sacrifice of himself. It is such language as is appropriate to the doctrine of the atonement--not indeed teaching it directly--but still such as one would use who believed that doctrine, and such as no other one would employ. Who would now say of a moral teacher that he accomplished an important result by his flesh? Who would say of a man that was instrumental in reconciling his contending neighbors, that he did it by his flesh?... No man would have ever used this language who did not believe that Jesus died as a sacrifice for sin. (Albert Barnes. Barnes NT Commentary).

**Enmity** (2189) (echthra from echthros = enemy, hostile) means hostility, a reason for opposition, enmity, hatred. Enmity suggests positive hatred which may be open or concealed whereas hostility suggests an enmity showing itself in attacks or aggression.

**Echthra** - 6x in 6v - Luke 23:12; Rom 8:7; Gal 5:20; Eph 2:14, 16; Jas 4:4

**Echthra** is that spirit that looks with evil suspicion on anyone of a different race, tongue, nation, or creed. It is the “attitude of heart and mind that puts up barriers and draws the sword,” but Christ has broken down the barrier and has taught us to love those who are “hostile”.

Here enmity refers to the personal and national prejudice and exclusiveness between Jews and Gentiles a result primarily of the separating influence of the Mosaic legal system. Christ abolished this at Calvary effecting a great reconciliation and uniting hostile members of the human family. Christ, the prophesied Prince of peace, is the world’s only hope of lasting peace! Let us therefore "pray for the peace of Jerusalem", realizing this is a prayer in essence for our Lord to return. Maranatha!

Regarding enmity Barnes explains that "The idea is, that the ceremonial law of the Jews, on which they so much prided themselves, was the cause of the hostility existing between them. That made them different people, and laid the foundation for the alienation which existed between them. They had different laws; different institutions; a different, religion.
The Jews looked upon themselves as the favorites of Heaven, and as in possession of the knowledge of the only way of salvation; the Gentiles regarded their laws with contempt, and looked upon the peculiar institutions with scorn. When Christ came, and abolished by his death their peculiar ceremonial laws, of course the cause of this alienation ceased. (Albert Barnes. Barnes NT Commentary)

John Eadie writes that the enmity between Jew and Gentile was "hatred which rose like a party wall, and kept both races at a distance. Deep hostility lay in their bosoms; the Jew looked down with supercilious contempt upon the Gentile, and the Gentile reciprocated and scowled upon the Jew as a haughty and heartless bigot. Ample evidence is afforded of this mutual alienation. Insolent scorn of the Gentiles breaks out in many parts of the New Testament (Acts 11:3, 22:22; 1Thess. 2:15), while the pages of classic literature show how fully the feeling was repaid. This rancor formed of necessity a middle wall of partition, but Jesus, Who is our Peace, hath broken it down. (John Eadie, D., LL.D. The Epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians - Online)

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**WHICH IS THE LAW OF COMMANDMENTS CONTAINED IN ORDINANCES:**

- Galatians 3:10; Colossians 2:14,20; Heb 7:16; 8:13; 9:9,10,23; 10:1-10
- [Ephesians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 2:11-22 Our Biography In Brief](#) - Steven Cole

Note that order of words in the Greek is "the enmity in his flesh, the law of the commands in ordinances having done away" which signifies that our Lord abolished the Law by His death on the Cross.

**Law** (3551) (nomos) in its primary meaning relates to that which is conceived as standard or generally recognized rules of civilized conduct.

**Vincent** has this note...

The law, etc., depends in construction on having abolished, and is not in apposition with the enmity, as A. V. The middle wall of partition, the enmity, was dissolved by the abolition of the law of commandments. Construe in His flesh with having abolished. Law is general, and its contents are defined by commandments, special injunctions, which injunctions in turn were formulated in definite decrees. Render the entire passage: brake down the middle-wall of partition, even the enmity, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances (Ephesians 2)

**Commandments** (1785) (entole from entellomai = order, give commandments) is most common of the words meaning commandment, stressing the authority of the one
commanding, while entalma (G1778), a religious commandment, stresses the thing commanded. It refers to law in general.

*Contained* is added by the translators for continuity.

**Ordinances** (1378) *(dogma* from dokéo = to think) refers to a fixed and authoritative decision or requirement (see the "decree" [dogma] of the emperors in Lu 2:1, Acts 17:7).

**NIDNTT** writes that in classic Greek dogma "stems from the verb dokeo (think, suppose, imagine, conclude), and means opinion, conclusion, belief. It occurs only 3 times in the pre-Socratic writers and always in connection with Pythagoras. From Xenophon onwards in the fourth cent. B.C. it has the following meanings: (1) opinion (in ordinary speech); (2) a doctrine (in philosophy, e.g. Epicurus, De rerum natura, 14, 1, 15 and 28); (3) a decree of God (in religious writers); (4) a decree, ordinance, edict (in official language, with the emphasis on public promulgation). (See Arndt, 200.)... Where dogma is used in a general, secular sense as an official, public decree, it has only indirect theological significance... With the death of Christ, the law with all its commandments and ordinances “is removed from the world as a factor in salvation”... The use of dogma is, therefore, all the more surprising when used in a positive sense (cf. above OT) for teaching that is binding on the whole church. Acts 16:4 lays the foundation for the idea of dogma as an ecclesiastical decree, requiring intellectual assent. It runs the risk of turning the gospel of Christ into legalism. On the other hand, the pressure from the Judaizers forced the Jerusalem council to take a stance in defining their attitude. The dogmata of the council were in fact decrees proclaiming liberty within a defined area rather than a series of tight restrictions. (*Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan*)

**TDNT** sums up dogma...


1. In the NT sense d. occurs in Lk. 2:1; Acts 17:7; Heb. 11:23
2. In Colossians 2:14 (note) the reference might be to the new edict of God but in 2:20 we definitely have legal ordinances (sense e.), so that the real point in 2:14 is that Christ has canceled these. Eph. 2:15 carries a similar reference to the ordinances of the law.
3. In Acts 16:4 the term is used for the resolutions of the apostolic council. The apostolic fathers then adopt the term for the teachings of Jesus. (*Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans*)

**Dogma** refers to a formal statement concerning rules or regulations that are to be observed -- the idea is a formalized sets of rules which might refer to an ordinance, a decision or a command. This is the primary meaning of dogma in Ephesians 2:15. **Dogma**
thus refers to the rules and requirements of the law of Moses, in this verse specifically referring to the "ceremonial laws" or ordinances covering the various aspects of the Jewish feasts, sacrifices, offerings, laws of cleanliness and purification, and all other such distinctive outward commandments for the unique separation of Israel from the nations. Paul is saying that "in His flesh" on the Cross, Jesus abolished or made to no effect these dogma.

**Decree** *(Webster)* = an order usually having the force of law; a religious ordinance enacted by council or titular head; An edict or law made by a council for regulating any business within their jurisdiction. In general, an order, edict or law made by a superior as a rule to govern inferiors *(Luke 2:1)*

**Dogma** is used of certain decrees of the apostles relative to right living *(see Acts 16:4)*

**Dogma** can refer to something that is taught as an established tenet or statement of belief *(dogma)*.

**Dogma** was especially used in ancient Rome to describe the public decrees of the Roman Senate.

**Dogma** is used 5 times in the NT and is translated: decree, 1; decrees, 3; ordinances, 1. **Dogma** is found in the Septuagint *(LXX)* only in Daniel *(Da 2:13; 3:10, 12, 29; 4:6; 6:8ff, 12f, 15, 26)*

Luke 2:1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

Acts 16:4 Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.

Acts 17:7 and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus."

Ephesians 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,

Colossians 2:14-note having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

The law consisted of decrees or commands. **Dogma** is used for God's laws and the external precepts of the Mosaic Law. It referred to a legal obligation which was a binding law or edict which was placed on a public place for all to see.

In English, **dogma** means something held as an established opinion; a definite authoritative tenet; code of authoritative tenets; doctrine or body of doctrines concerning faith or morals formally stated and authoritatively proclaimed by a church -- if one is "dogmatic" he is unduly and offensively positive in laying down principles and expressing
opinions

In the late Judaism of the first century AD, Philo and Josephus understood the Mosaic law as a system of holy tenets, referred to as the **dogmata** of a divine philosophy. As the most exalted of all systems, it was superior to the doctrines of the rest of ancient philosophy.

The Law of Moses was a single legislative code which was in turn composed of separate, formal commandments, which in turn consisted of **dogmas** or decrees covering many, if not most, areas of life.

The Law did set up Israel as God’s chosen earthly people, but unfortunately many Jews became arrogant and treated Gentiles with contempt. The Gentiles responded with deep hostility, known all too well as anti-Semitism. And yes, it still exists even in the Church of Jesus Christ!

Wayne Barber explains what was abolished writing that...

The Law was divided into the **moral law** and the **ceremonial law**. He didn’t abolish the moral law. That has always been here and is fulfilled when we obey the Lord Jesus Christ (eg, Mt 5:18, 19-see notes Mt 5:18; 5:19). The moral law says that we love God with all of our heart and our mind and our strength, and we are to love one another (Ro 13:9, 10-see notes Ro 13:9; 13:10). That is always there and is morally built in. He did not make that obsolete. He did not make that ineffective. What He did do was to render ineffective the ceremonial law. It says here, the "**commandments contained in ordinances**". In other words, what He did was put religion to death. No longer could the Jew say, "Oh, I sacrifice. I go to the Temple. I worship on the Sabbath. I do this. I do that. God loves me more than He loves you." Oh, no. He took all the external stuff and threw it out. He says, "Now there is only one way to God, and that’s through Me. You can’t work your way up the ladder." (Ephesians 2:15-18 Christ the Author of Our Peace - 2)

John MacArthur has some instructive comments on this section writing that...

The greatest barrier between Jew and Gentile was the ceremonial law, the Law of commandments contained in ordinances. The feasts, sacrifices, offerings, laws of cleanliness and purification, and all other such distinctive outward commandments for the unique separation of Israel from the nations were abolished. That God’s moral law was not abolished is clear from the phrase contained in ceremonies. His moral law reflects His own holy nature and therefore can never change (cf. Matt. 5:17, 18, 19)... All the ceremonial laws which distinguished and separated Jews from Gentiles were obliterated. Before Christ those groups could not eat together because of restricted foods, required washings, and ceremonial contamination. Now they could eat anything with anyone. Before Christ they could not worship together. A Gentile
So that (2443) (hina) introduces a purpose clause.

**In Himself** - He is the medium or means of reconciliation.

**Make** - more literally "create". This work was a new creation on a new foundation with the cornerstone being Christ Himself.

**He might make** (2936) (ktizo) was a word meaning to create something out of nothing such as God in the act of creation of the universe, but in the present context referring to a spiritual creation, the church, an entity that had never existed prior to this time. In fact, there is no mention of the church in the Old Testament, although many commentators who espouse a non-literal interpretation of Scripture, have wrongly interpreted many of the promises God specifically gave to Israel as being applicable to the church.

Paul had just used the same verb, ktizo, pointing to the saints, each one representing God's new creation in Christ.

For we are His workmanship, created (ktizo) in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (see note Ephesians 2:10)

Paul uses ktizo two more times in Ephesians, the first referring to God's creation of the universe...

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created (ktizo) all things (see notes Ephesians 3:8, 3:9)
Two (1417) (duo) is the cardinal number 2 here referring to the "duo" of Jew and Gentile now joined together.

One (1520) (heis) is the cardinal numeral one and in this verse defines that which is united as one in contrast to being divided or consisting of separate parts. Heis speaks of oneness, unity and identity, Jew and Gentile united in position and privilege. Now race and national distinctions disappear as Paul explained to the Galatians writing that...

There is neither Jew nor Greek (Gentile), there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one (heis) in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

New (2537) (kainos) means new in kind or quality, unprecedented, unheard of, new in sense that it brings into the world a new quality of thing which did not exist before.

Net Bible Notes - In this context the author is not referring to a new individual, but instead to a new corporate entity united in Christ... This is clear from the comparison made between the Gentiles and Israel in the immediately preceding verses and the assertion in Ephesians 2:14 that Christ “made both groups into one.” This is a different metaphor than the “new man” of Eph 4:24; in that passage the “new man” refers to the new life a believer has through a relationship to Christ. (The NET Bible Notes. Biblical Studies Press)

Kainos signifies qualitatively new in contrast to néos which indicates temporally new or new with respect to age. Neos is new simply in point of time; a thing which is neos has come into existence recently, but there may well have been thousands of the same thing in existence before. A pencil produced in the factory this week is neos, but there already exist millions exactly like it. Kainos on the other hand is new in point of quality, new in sense that it brings into the world a new quality of thing which did not exist before.

In the present context the thing which had never existed was believing Jew and believing Gentile together as one entity.

In rabbinic Judaism, a pagan Gentile coming to know God is thought of as if he had been created by whoever helped him to attain knowledge of God

Kainos denotes the new and miraculous condition that is emphasized especially in the church age. Thus we see kainos as a key term in eschatological statements -- the new heaven and earth in Rev 21:1; 2Pe 3:13-note, new Jerusalem in Rev 3:12; 21:2, new wine in Mk 14:25, the new name in Rev 2:17; 3:12, the new song in Rev 5:9, the new creation in Rev 21:5. This new creation, which is the goal of hope, finds expression in Christian life (2Cor 5:17). The new aeon has come with Christ. In him Jews and Gentiles are one new man (Eph 2:15). Believers are to put on the new nature that they are given (Ep 4:24-note). God’s saving will is worked out in the promised new covenant that Jesus has established
(Lk 22:20; 1Cor 11:25; He 8:8-notes.; He 9:15-note). This is a better covenant (He 7:22-note), infallible (Hebrews 8:7), everlasting (Heb 13:20-note), grounded on higher promises (He 8:6-note). The fact that the old and the new cannot be mixed (Mk. 2:21, 22) stresses the element of distinctiveness. The new commandment of love has its basis in Christ's own love (Jn 13:34).

**One new man** - Corporately not individually. In other words, this truth in this context refers to Christ's body, the church, which is in turn composed of individual new creations in Christ (cf 2Cor 5:17). Note that God is not making a new world, but a new man. God makes no attempt to improve world conditions by repairing the old systems, but He replaces the old, earthly nationalisms by a new order whose citizenship is of heaven.

**Paul** summed up this new entity (**one new man**) when he said,

“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for ‘Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved’ ” (Ro 10:12-13).

**MacDonald** explains that...

The church is new in the sense that it is a kind of organism that never existed before. It is important to see this. The NT church is not a continuation of the Israel of the OT. It is something entirely distinct from anything that has preceded it or that will ever follow it. This should be apparent from the following:

1. It is new that a Gentile should have equal rights and privileges with a Jew.
2. It is new that both Jews and Gentiles should lose their national identities by becoming Christians.
3. It is new that Jews and Gentiles should be fellow members of the Body of Christ.
4. It is new that a Jew should have the hope of reigning with Christ instead of being a subject in His kingdom.
5. It is new that a Jew should no longer be under the law.

The church is clearly a new creation, with a distinct calling and a distinct destiny, occupying a unique place in the purposes of God.  

(MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson)

Clement of Alexandria wrote

“We who worship God in a new way, as the third race, are Christians.”
The Epistle of Diogenes calls believers “this new race.”

In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North,
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

John Oxenham

Chrysostom gives a striking illustration...

“Let us imagine that there are two statues, one of silver and the other of lead, and then that both shall be melted down, and the two shall come out gold. So thus He has made the two one.”

Eadie explains one new man this way...

One new man—both races being now enabled to realize the true end of humanity; Gentile and Jew not so joined that old privilege is merely divided among them. The Gentile is not elevated to the position of the Jew—a position which he might have obtained by becoming a proselyte under the law; but Jew and Gentile together are both raised to a higher platform than the circumcision ever enjoyed. The Jew profits by the repeal of the law, as well as the Gentile. Now he needs to provide no sacrifice, for the One victim has bled; the fires of the altar may be smothered, for the Lamb of God has been offered; the priest, throwing off his sacred vestments, may retire to weep over a torn veil and shattered temple, for Jesus has passed through the heaven “into the presence of God for us;” the water of the “brazen sea” may be poured out, for believers enjoy the washing of regeneration; and the lamps of the golden candelabrum have flickered and died, for the church enjoys the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual blessing in itself, and not merely pictured in type, is possessed by the Jew as well as the Gentile. (John Eadie, D., LL.D. The Epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians - Online)

THUS ESTABLISHING PEACE: poion (PAPMSN) eirenen:

- **Ep 4:16; 2Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Col 3:10**
- [Ephesians 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 2:11-22 Our Biography In Brief](#) - Steven Cole

Establishing (4160) (poieo) means to make or produce. The present tense speaks of the continual effect to make peace between Jew and Gentile at all times and seasons because the barriers that separated them have been torn down at the Cross. All are on equal
footing at the foot of His Cross.

**Peace (1515)** (*eirene* from the verb *eiro* = to bind or join together what is broken or divided) means in essence to set at one again or join together that which is separated. In secular Greek *eirene* described the cessation or absence of war. Christ has established peace between Jew and Gentile by removing the cause of hostility, by imparting a new Spirit indwelt nature, and by creating a new union, the body of Christ. The Cross of Christ is God’s answer to racial discrimination, segregation, anti-Semitism, bigotry, and every form of strife between men. Paul relates this same truth in Colossians affirming that the saints have...

...put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. (see notes Colossians 3:10, 3:11) - see especially

**Lightfoot** paraphrases (Col 3:11) as follows “Christ is all things and in all things. Christ has dispossessed and obliterated all distinctions of religious prerogative and intellectual preeminence and social caste; Christ has substituted Himself for all these; Christ occupies the whole sphere of human life and permeates all its developments.” (Lightfoot).

**Hendriksen** sums "Christ is all and in all" (Col 3:11) commenting that "Christ, as the all-sufficient Lord and Savior, is all that matters. His Spirit-mediated indwelling in all believers, of whatever racial-religious, cultural, or social background they be, guarantees the creation and gradual perfection in each and in all of "the new man, who is being renewed for full knowledge according to the image of him who created him." Thus, most appropriately, the very theme of the entire letter, namely, “Christ, the Pre-eminent One, the Only and All-Sufficient Savior,” climaxes this passage." (Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. New Testament Commentary Set, 12 Volumes. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House)

**Wayne Barber** has an interesting discussion of what Jesus did when He abolished "in His flesh the enmity"...

The word "abolished" is katargeo. That is the word that means to make useless, to render ineffective. He gave them a brand new way. Jesus abolished the Law.

He said it was an enmity. The word "enmity" here in this context means the cause of enmity. What was the cause of enmity between the Jew and the Gentile? It was their Laws and their observances, which they thought made them more spiritual than anybody else and had become their source of pride. Jesus put an end to the cause of the hatred that existed between the Jews and the Gentiles. How did He do it?

It says, "by abolishing in His flesh the enmity" There are two things that are brought into that.
First, by living a sinless life, Jesus fulfilled the Law, which no man could do. Once He fulfilled it, He was qualified to take it from there...

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that *the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled* in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (See notes Romans 8:3; 8:4)

Not only that, when He took sin upon Himself, He satisfied the curse of the Law. He became a curse for us.

"CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE " [Gal 3:13]"

The Scripture says. The curse of the Law was satisfied, therefore, rendering the Law ineffective when a person comes to Jesus Christ [Ro 7:1-6]. The person who rejects Jesus is guilty of all points of the Law. If a person comes to Christ, the Law has no effect whatsoever in his life to ever condemn him again. In Christ we find the fulfillment of that Law [Ro 8:3-4]. We find what we are looking for, that is the oneness that we need with God.

In effect, what Jesus did when He came He lived the sinless life and went to the cross and made the Law obsolete and rendered it ineffective. What He also accomplished did was that He took all the Jewish customs ("the dividing walls") and all the Jewish observances and made them useless. Jesus put an end to external religion and replaced it with an internal relationship with the Father through Himself.

When He established peace, the Jew could not say, "Ah, but we honor the Sabbath." Jesus says, "What Sabbath?" "Oh, we have a dividing wall." Jesus would say, "What dividing wall?" The Gentiles on one hand ended paganism when they came to Christ, and the Jews had to end "religionism" when they came to Christ. You see, sin is sin. All of the external things they were doing that separated them from the Gentiles made them feel that pride that God put to death on the cross. He has brought in something now that is absolutely brand new. He removed the barriers to our peace.

But do you know what people have done? They don’t want to relate to Jesus and have peace with Him. Therefore, they come up with the exact same thing the Jews did. If you want to know what you are like in the flesh and what I am like in the flesh, study Israel. They are a picture of the vine of flesh in the Old Testament. They had to have everything
external. They had no internal relationship with God. God said, "I have come in and made a new order. I didn’t raise the Gentiles up to the level of the Jews. I didn’t lower the Jews to the level of the Gentiles. I raised them both up into a brand new man, brand new to this world. The world doesn’t have a clue about us."

If you will think about it, some of the biggest problems we will ever face as a church are organizational problems. They will be external things that have nothing to do with the Word of God. I am going to tell you something, folks. May God deliver us from ever having the shackles of what this world does to govern what people think the church of Jesus Christ is. We are not an organization. We are an organism, which by necessity organizes itself. We are not here for the sake of organization. We are here for the sake of the organism, the body of Jesus. Folks, that means God could care less about how many people we have in Sunday School if we are not living daily that internal relationship with Him. Watch us in the conflicts of life. Watch how we raise our children. Watch how we deal when things go wrong in our family. Listen, I would rather have somebody who didn’t have a clue about how to organize but who was filled with the Holy Spirit of God and exemplified the character of Jesus in everything that he did.

That’s what Jesus did. He raised us out of this thing. He took away "religionism" from the Jew, paganism from the Gentile and raised us up to a brand new standard, a person who is a mystery to this world; a person filled with the Spirit of God, a person who has a divine relationship who walks in peace with God. As a result of that, he walks in peace with men. If you are not living in that relationship of grace which effects peace, then you have a contentious relationship with someone, and that contention is tied to that which Jesus made obsolete on the cross.

If you’ve got contention in your heart towards anybody, the key is very clear. Jesus has come to be the very essence of your peace with God. He is the enabler of your peace with man. You can’t come to me. You had better go to Him and get it right with Him [Ro 12:14,17-21]. Once you get it right with Him, He will enable you to get it right with man. It never says man will get it back right with you. Oh, he may spit in your face. Jesus died forgiving all men, and some people still spit in His face. It is a cycle that goes full circle. But we are to forgive one another and be at peace with one another. Why? Because Jesus is the essence of our peace with God, the enabler of our peace with man. (CHRIST, THE AUTHOR OF OUR PEACE, PT 1)


cross, by it having put to death the enmity. (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** kai apokatallaxe (3SAAS) tous amphoterous en eni somati to theo dia tou staurou, apokteinas (AAPMSN) ten echthran en auto.

**Amplified:** And [He designed] to reconcile to God both [Jew and Gentile, united] in a single body by means of His cross, thereby killing the mutual enmity and bringing the feud to an end. (Amplified Bible - Lockman)

**NET:** and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by which the hostility has been killed. (NET Bible)

**NLT:** Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. (NLT - Tyndale House)

**Phillips:** For he reconciled both to God by the sacrifice of one body on the cross, and by this act made utterly irrelevant the antagonism between them. (Phillips: Touchstone)

**Wuest:** and in order that He might reconcile the both in one body to God through the Cross, having put to death the enmity by it,

**Young's Literal:** and might reconcile both in one body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity in it,

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**AND MIGHT RECONCILE THEM BOTH IN ONE BODY TO GOD:** kai apokatallaxe (3SAAS) tous amphoterous en eni somati to theo:

- Romans 5:10; 2Corinthians 5:18, 19, 20, 21; Colossians 1:21, 22
- Ephesians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Ephesians 2:11-22 Our Biography In Brief - Steven Cole
- Ephesians 2:16-22 The Unity of the Body, Part 3 - John MacArthur

**RECONCILIATION OF JEWS & GENTILES**

**Might reconcile** (604) (apokatallasso) from apó = from or state to be left behind + katallasso = reconcile <> from katá = an intensifier + allásso = change <> is an intensified reconciliation (stronger than katallasso) and pictures the total, complete, and full restoration of the relationship of disturbed peace. One might paraphrase it that Christ "might reconcile thoroughly them both."

The idea inherent in reconcile is to take enemies and change them to friends. From...
Vincent remarks that "The verb contains a hint of restoration to a primal unity."

Donald Barnhouse on the Greek idea of reconcile - The Greek word translated "reconciled" comes from the world of the moneychanger. If you give two dimes and a nickel in exchange for a quarter, or vice versa, you have made an equal exchange. This was the original meaning of the word as used by Aristotle and others. Later the word was used for the adjustment of a difference in business dealings, and finally for a difference between two personalities who had become estranged. The transition from the material to the emotional and psychological was made, and the word was used as in Shakespeare’s Richard III: “I desire to reconcile me to his friendly peace.” (See the full message Romans 5:9-10 Reconciliation)

S Lewis Johnson illustrates reconciliation writing that...

When we think of an illustration in the New Testament, one of the illustrations that comes to my mind is the parable of the forgiving father, often called the parable of the prodigal son (See Luke 15:11-32). But the important person in the parable is not the son, the important person is the father. That’s the way we do, we tend to want to look at things so selfishly that by the time we read one of the Lord’s parables we’ve turned it around and made it something else. In the parable of the forgiving father, the father with the two sons, one of whom is the prodigal and the other is the one who stayed at home, in that parable, the climax of the parable is when the father sees the son finally returning, and races down the road in order to fall upon his neck. It’s Jesus Christ’s picture of God. And the picture of the return of the prodigal, who forgives beforehand - who has already forgiven - is the picture of the reconciliation of the Jew to God and the Gentile to God, and of both together to the Lord God.

“That he might reconcile both to one God in one body.”

We often think of God as a God Who requires that we do certain things before he will love us. But that is so foolish. The Bible does not present to us a God before whom we must do certain things in order for Him to love us. The Bible presents a God Who has loved us before, and has given the Son as the redeeming sacrifice in order to save His people. Sometimes we sing Wesley’s “Arise my Soul, Arise (if this up tempo version of Charles Wesley's 1742 hymn doesn't put a song in your heart, I don't know what will!).” It has a stanza that goes,

“My God is reconciled, his pardoning voice I hear.”
The Greeks spoke of people in opposition to each other being “reconciled” or being made friends again. When people change from being at enmity with each other to being at peace, they are said to be reconciled. The root verb *katallasso* meant to legally reconcile two disputing parties in court and in the New Testament is used of a believer’s reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ.

See [Reconciliation - From Enmity to Amity](#) for numerous illustrations and stories regarding the powerful truth of reconciliation, not only between God and men, but between men and men.

Reconciliation takes someone who is hostile towards someone else, and changes that into a friendly relationship. This word means to change thoroughly. The double use of prepositions as prefixes (*apo, kata*) emphasizes the totality of the reconciliation.

There are only 2 other uses of *apokatallasso* in the NT, Colossians 1:20 and 1:22...

**Colossians 1:18 (see notes)** He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-- 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

It is important to emphasize that God never needed to be reconciled to man because He never hated us. God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. Sinful man however was separated from and hostile toward God and needed to be reconciled to Him. The work of Christ on the cross provided a righteous basis by which hateful sinners could be brought into His presence as friends! Amazing love!

**And Can It Be?**
And can it be that I should gain —
An interest in the Savior’s blood? —
Died He for me, who caused His pain— —
For me, who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! How can it be, —
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? —
Amazing love! How can it be, —
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

(Charles Wesley - play hymn - beautiful chorale version)

Vincent also comments that "The compounded preposition apo gives the force of back, hinting at restoration to a primal unity... (Writing on the root word katallaso Vincent says) “The verb (katallaso) means primarily to exchange, and hence to change the relation of hostile parties into a relation of peace; to reconcile. It is used of both mutual and one-sided enmity. In the former case, the context must show on which side is the active enmity. In the Christian sense, the change in the relation of God and man effected through Christ. This involves (1) a movement of God toward man with a view to break down man’s hostility, to commend God’s love and holiness to him, and to convince him of the enormity and the consequence of sin. It is God who initiates this movement in the person and work of Jesus Christ. See Ro 5:6, 8; 2Cor 5:18, 19 Eph 1:6 1Jn 4:19). Hence the passive form of the verb here: we were made subjects of God’s reconciling act. (2) a corresponding movement on man’s part toward God; yielding to the appeal of Christ’s self-sacrificing love, laying aside his enmity, renouncing his sin, and turning to God in faith and obedience. (3) a consequent change of character in man: the covering, forgiving, cleansing of his sin; a thorough revolution in all his dispositions and principles. (4) a corresponding change of relation on God’s part, that being removed which alone rendered Him hostile to man, so that God can now receive him into fellowship and let loose upon him all His fatherly love and grace (1Jn1:3, v7). Thus there is complete reconciliation.” (Word Studies)

Apokatallasso pictures the bringing together of friends who have been estranged. Through Christ, man’s enmity toward God is changed to one of friendship, and the enmity of Jew and Gentile for each other also is changed from hostility to friendship.

Wuest has an interesting thought writing that "The verb, apokatallasso, because of its prefixed preposition apo which gives it the force of back, hints at a restoration to a primal unity, that unity being the unity of the human race before God brought in the Jew as a separate and distinct nation, not numbered amongst the other nations. That is, Jew and Gentile in Christ Jesus, restored to a primal unity where there was neither Jew nor Gentile, are now reconciled to God... The “enmity” of Ephesians 2:15 is defined in its context as that between Jew and Gentile, for the purpose of God was to reconcile these two. The “enmity” of Ephesians 2:16 is that between the sinner and God, for His purpose was to reconcile both Jew and Gentile in one body to Himself.
Barnes writes that "This was another of the effects of the work of redemption, and indeed the main effect. It was not merely to make them harmonious, but it was that both, who had been alienated from God, should be reconciled to him. This was a different effect from that of producing peace between themselves, though in some sense the one grew out of the other. They who are reconciled to God will be at peace with each other. They will feel that they are of the same family, and are all brethren. (Albert Barnes. Barnes NT Commentary)

Both (297) (amphoteros from ámpho = both, the two) refers to each of two.

One (1520) (heis) means united as one in contrast to divided. So not only does the Cross of Christ effect reconciliation between Jew and Gentile but also of both of these groups of believers to God.

KJV Bible Commentary notes that "Previously there had been a state of alienation, estrangement, and enmity, but there has been a change of relations both Godward and manward. Christ has harmonized both the factional and the fractional divisions of mankind. (KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson)

Body (4983) (soma) refers to the organized whole made up of the parts. In this case it refers to the church, Christ's bride and spiritual body, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles.

Ephesians gives more attention to and makes loftier statements about the church than any other letter, despite the fact that the specific Greek word for church (ekklesia) occurs only three times outside the husband-wife analogy in Ephesians 5.

A T Robertson rightly observes that in this section of Ephesians "Paul piles up metaphors (see note) to express his idea of the Kingdom of God with Christ as King (the church, the body, the commonwealth of Israel, oneness, one new man in Christ, fellow-citizens, the family of God, the temple of God)." (Word Pictures)

THROUGH THE CROSS: dia tou staurou:

- Ep 2:15; Romans 6:6; 8:3,7; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 2:14; 1Peter 4:1,2
- Ephesians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Ephesians 2:11-22 Our Biography In Brief - Steven Cole
- Ephesians 2:16-22 The Unity of the Body, Part 3 - John MacArthur

Through (1223) (dia) speaks of the instrument (in this case the Cross) through which a result was effected or brought to pass. It is through the working of the cross in the lives of individuals that God transforms them from being enemies to friends. The response that we have to that is the response of gratitude.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
by Isaac Watts
When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o’er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

**Cross** (4716) **(stauros)** is an upright pointed stake often intersected by a crossbeam. Before the manner of Jesus’ death caused the cross to symbolize the very heart of the Christian faith, the Greek word for cross referred primarily to a pointed stake used in rows to form the walls of a defensive stockade. It also was originally an upright stake to which the corpse of an executed criminal was bound for public display or on which the living body of a condemned person was affixed to await death. Such stakes came to be eventually fitted with crossbeams as instruments of humiliation, torture, and execution for persons convicted as enemies of the state (foreign soldiers, rebels and spies, for example) or of civil criminals (such as robbers). Thus the Cross came to refer to an instrument of capital punishment and as such was one of the most dreadful and agonizing means of torture known.

The Cross was viewed a shameful, dishonorable mode of death among men. This mode of punishment was known to the Persians (Ezra 6:11; Esther 7:10) and the Carthaginians. However, it was most common among the Romans where it was used for punishing slaves and criminals. Crucifixion was introduced among the Jews by the Romans. It was not abolished until the time of Constantine who did so out of regard for Christianity. Persons sentenced to be crucified were first scourged and then made to bear their own crossbar
(not the whole cross) to the place of execution where an upright stake was already in place. A label or title was usually placed on the chest of or over the criminal. When the victim was affixed to the cross, he was stripped and mocked. His arms were affixed to the crossbar with ropes or nails, and the crossbar was then raised and attached to the upright stake. A small wooden block attached to the stake beneath the buttocks supported the weight of the suspended body, which was bound to the stake with ropes. Often the feet were also affixed to the stake with ropes or nails. Because deterrence was a primary objective, the cross was always erected in a public place. Death came slowly, often only after several days, and resulted from the cumulative impact of thirst, hunger, exhaustion, exposure, and the traumatic effects of the scourging. After death the body was usually left hanging on the cross to decay and become food for scavengers. Because of the extreme pain, the protracted suffering and the deep ignominy of this manner of execution, it was viewed by the Romans as the supreme penalty, the ‘most wretched of deaths’ wrote Josephus, and was generally reserved for the lowest classes and the most heinous crimes. As you might imagine in the first century AD crucifixion served as one of the strongest of deterrents against rebellion, insurrection or political agitation in the Roman provinces.

Paul explains that that on the Cross "God was in Christ reconciling (katallasso) the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (2 Cor 5:19)

**BY IT HAVING PUT TO DEATH THE ENMITY:** apokteinas (AAPMSN) ten echthran en auto:

- Ephesians 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Ephesians 2:11-22 Our Biography In Brief - Steven Cole
- Ephesians 2:16-22 The Unity of the Body, Part 3 - John MacArthur

Having put to death (615) (apokteino from apó = intensifies meaning + kteíno = slay) means to kill outright or to put to death in any manner. To kill someone results in a state of separation. The *aorist tense* speaks of an effective, completed action in the past. Through Christ's Crucifixion, God killed the enmity, utterly putting an end to this hostility that separated men from each other and from God.

**Apokteino** - 74x in 70v - kill(33), killed(29), killing(1), kills(5), put... to death(2), put to death(4).

Enmity (2189) (etchhra from echthros = enemy, hostile) means hostility, a reason for opposition, enmity, hatred. Enmity suggests positive hatred which may be open or concealed whereas hostility suggests an enmity showing itself in attacks or aggression.

As Johnson explains...

Now when he says he has slain the enmity he means that the Lord Jesus has taken upon Himself the judgment that the broken law required, that He has paid to the full for the people of God. And that’s why the people of God go free: their penalty has been paid. Therefore, heaven can exact no further penalty, and we must remember that. Everything was procured for us by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ – forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to God, propitiation for sins – all secured by the cross. (pdf)

Our Daily Bread - Just a Glimpse...

Travelers who drive across the flat landscape of Groom, Texas, are surprised by an unexpected sight. Looming up against the sky is a cross 190 feet high. That giant symbol of the Christian faith was erected by Steve Thomas in the prayerful hope that the thoughts of anyone who sees it might be turned to Jesus. When his handiwork was finished and dedicated, he said, "We want some converts out of this."

All Christians are grateful when a nonbeliever's attention is drawn to Jesus Christ and the cross. The awareness may be fleeting, but who can predict what even a split-second reaction may mean to an immortal soul? Suddenly a sinful person may begin to wonder why Jesus died on the cross. This may prompt him to seek answers from the Bible or from Christians he may know.

What about us as Christians? As we hurry along through life's often dreary landscape, are we grateful for any reminder of our Father's love that sent His Son to die? Through the cross, Jesus has reconciled us to God and given us His peace (Ephesians 2:14,16). Take some time today to reflect on the meaning of the cross, and let it flood your heart with praise to the Savior. —Vernon C Grounds (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Once from the realms of infinite glory,
Down to the depths of our ruin and loss,
Jesus came, seeking—O Love's sweet story—
Came to the manger, the shame, and the cross. —Strickland

To know the meaning of the cross, you must know the One who died there